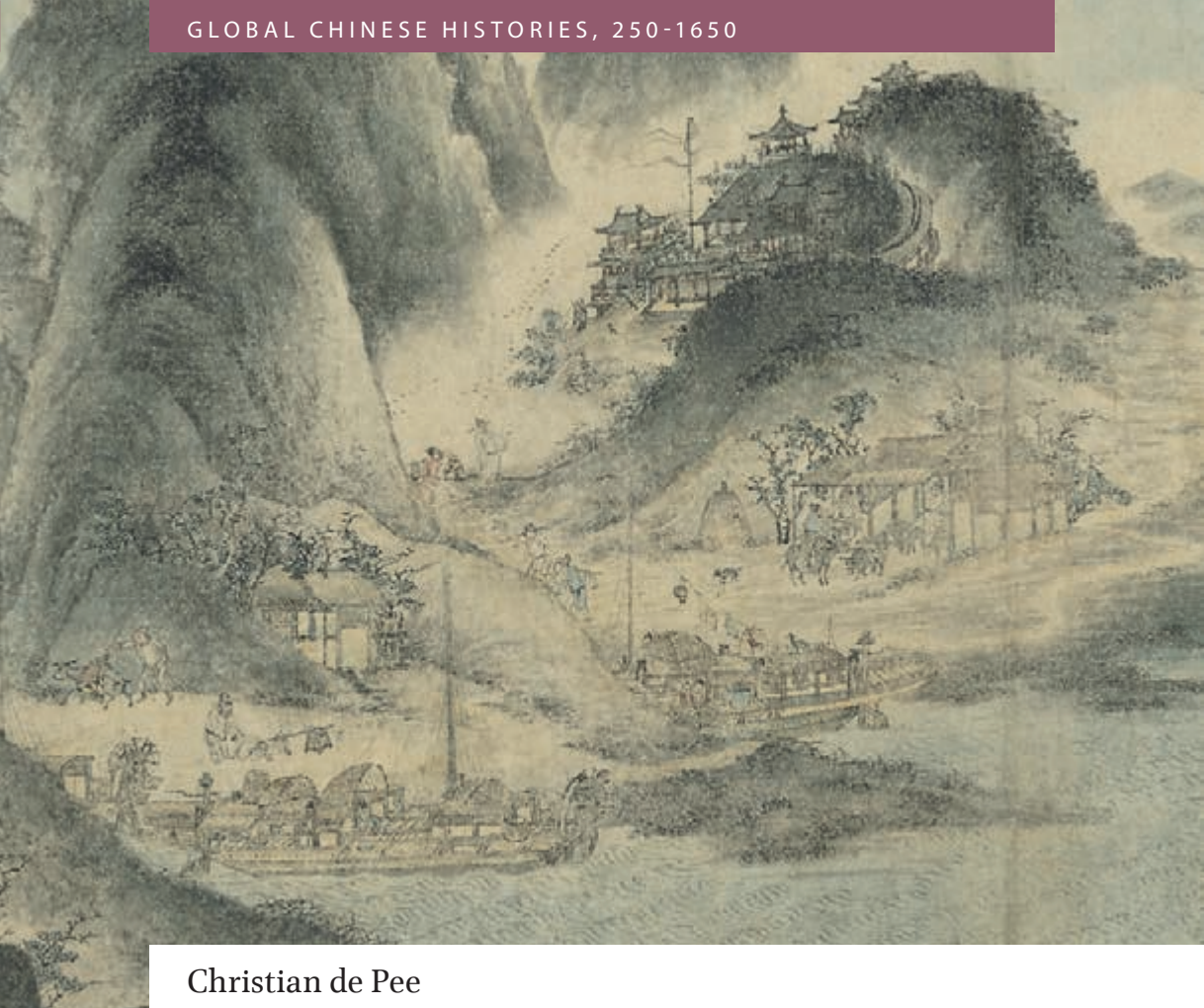


GLOBAL CHINESE HISTORIES, 250-1650



Christian de Pee

# Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in Middle-Period China, 800-1100

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in  
Middle-Period China, 800–1100 CE

# Global Chinese Histories, 250-1650

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*Christian de Pee*

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Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling. Street names must speak to the urban wanderer like the snapping of dry twigs, and little streets in the heart of the city must reflect the times of day, for him, as clearly as a mountain valley.

Walter Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (1938)

I walk among the enormous crowds of the capital, engulfed by the affairs of man. My former learning has been lost, and it has been a long time since I heard the language of humaneness and propriety.

Ouyang Xiu, "Reply to Song Xian" (1056)



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## Preface

The circumstances under which I wrote *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* differed sharply from the circumstances under which I wrote my first book, *The Writing of Weddings in Middle-Period China*. Most of that first book I wrote while I was unemployed, living in a tin-mining town in Southwest China. When I finished the manuscript and sent it to a press, only two other people had read any part of it.

This second book, by contrast, I conceived, researched, and wrote as a member of the Department of History at the University of Michigan, encouraged by kind, gifted colleagues and supported by internal funding as well as by outside institutions. I want to begin these acknowledgments by expressing my gratitude to the many dozens of my colleagues in the Department of History, current and former, who by their questions at talks and during workshops, by their writings, by their presentations, and by their conversation have increased the scope and depth of my research and writing. That their number is large is for once an inconvenience, because it prevents me from naming them all. I wish, however, to commemorate here with gratitude a number of colleagues whose friendship and insights gave me particular encouragement during the period in which I conceived and wrote this book: John Carson, Dario Gaggio, Will Glover, Webb Keane, Farina Mir, Rudolf Mrazek, Helmut Puff, and Mrinalini Sinha.

The research for *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* began during a semester of nurturance leave in the winter semester of 2008, in books purchased with the proceeds of a William T. Ludolph, Jr., Junior Faculty Development Award. Intending to write a book about representations of imperial power, I published two articles about eleventh-century capital cities—one about the Western Capital at Luoyang, the other about the Eastern Capital at Kaifeng. During the research for these two articles, I found that descriptions of urban streetscapes were few and wondered how and when the urban streetscape acquired a place in Middle-Period literature. I abandoned my plans for a book about imperial representations of power and decided instead to write a book about shifts in the geographic orientation of literary genres that allowed the emergence of the urban streetscape into writing. By reading through the collected works of individual authors, I hoped to discover in which genres literati first wrote the cityscape and thus to trace the antecedents of densely urban texts such as *A Dream of Splendor in the Eastern Capital* (*Dongjing meng Hua lu*, 1148).

During the 2010–2011 academic year, a Faculty Fellowship at the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan provided me with the time and the peace of mind to read through the collected works from the ninth and tenth centuries, from the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) through the early Song (960–1279). The collected works of the eleventh century I read in the 2013–2014 academic year, supported by a Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship for Recently Tenured Scholars from the American Council of Learned Societies, with residence at the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. The Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, Germany, where I was a Visiting Scholar during the 2016–2017 academic year, offered an ideal setting in which to think through the outline and arguments of the book and to write the first two chapters as well as two related articles. The third chapter, the introduction, and the conclusion I wrote in Paris and Leiden in the summer and fall of 2019, during a sabbatical leave, affiliated with the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden. My sojourns in Berlin and Paris were also supported in part by a grant from the Associate Professor Support Fund at the University of Michigan.

I am very grateful to all these institutions and organizations for their material support as well as for the trust they placed in my research and my abilities. I feel particularly privileged that this trust and this support, conjoined with the grant of tenure at the University of Michigan in 2011, gave me an opportunity to engage in long-term, open-ended inquiry. This allowed me to follow shifts in the geographic orientation of literary genres through 155 collected works and to postpone writing up my findings until the narrative had become clear. The narrative that emerged as I read through many thousands of poems and through hundreds of prefaces, commemorations, memorials, letters, epitaphs, colophons, and other compositions, was more complex and more interesting than the linear development of antecedents to the *Dream of Splendor* that I had predicted in my early proposals. I found that the urban streetscape began to emerge into writing when literati turned their backs on the Tang capital Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province), after its destruction in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, and that the cityscape became an acceptable topic of literary composition during a period of intellectual optimism, when literati endeavored to distinguish themselves from social competitors by their taste and connoisseurship, and tried to discern in the urban movement of people, goods, and money the enduring, immanent pattern of a moral cosmos. When the failure of economic reforms in the late eleventh century revealed their inability to penetrate this pattern, and the tautologies of factional debate

exposed fissures in the classicist foundation of political argument, literati lost interest in the city as a place for understanding themselves and the world. Although the *Dream of Splendor* and similar texts of subsequent centuries used some of the literary techniques developed by literati during the eleventh century, they belong to a separate ideological and literary tradition: their pseudonymous authors did not inquire into the moral self or a cosmic pattern, but delighted in imperial pomp and conspicuous display.

None of these grants and leaves would have been processed and much of this research could not have been undertaken without the dedicated assistance of the administrative staff and the librarians at the University of Michigan, the National Humanities Center, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden. It is not possible to acknowledge everyone on these sometimes numerous staffs, but I do want to express my gratitude to Shelley Anzalone, Nan Flood, Connie Hamlin, Sandra van der Horst, Karin Weninger, Lois Whittington, and Diane Wyatt for their patience and expedience with paperwork, and to Liangyu Fu for the speed and resourcefulness with which she purchased or borrowed materials I requested.

I am grateful also to the audiences that lent a critical ear at the talks and presentations I gave about this research as it developed, and to the readers who cast a critical eye on the papers I wrote for a number of workshops. Because the faculty and graduate students at the University of Michigan have been my most important intellectual community, it is fitting that about half of my talks and presentations have taken place on its campus, at the Critical Conversations in the Department of English Language and Literature, the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, the Institute for the Humanities, the Kemp Symposium on History and Geography, the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies, the Medieval Lunch Series (and its predecessor, the Monday Medieval Brownbag), the Premodern Colloquium, the Symposium on Anthropology and History, and the conferences Any Way, Shape, or Form, and When Shall West Lake Be Without Song or Dance?

Audience members, fellow panelists, and discussants raised important questions and suggested additional sources at the 14th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia, the 2009 Annual Meeting of the International Conference for Eastern Studies in Tokyo, the 2015 and 2016 Annual Meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, the 2017 Tang–Song Transition Workshop, and the workshop Mapping the Empire’s Watery Ways: The Chinese Grand Canal in History, Literature, and Art at Princeton University. I have vivid, grateful memories also of the discussions and

conversations with the faculty members and graduate students who kindly invited me to join their intellectual community for a day or two, at the China Humanities Seminar at Harvard University, the China Seminar Series at Leiden University, the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, the Department of Philosophy at Central European University, the East Asian Studies Program at Princeton University, the Institute for Chinese Studies at the University of Oxford, the Triangle China Forum at Duke University, and the Workshop on Visual and Material Perspectives on East Asia at the University of Chicago.

The first written iterations of this research, subsequently published as articles, I prepared for conferences and workshops: “Nature’s Capital” for *When Shall West Lake Be Without Song or Dance?* at the University of Michigan and for the 2014 Conference on Middle Period China, 800–1400, at Harvard University; “Urban Acupuncture” for *City and Society: The Care of the Self—A Comparative Examination of Eastern and Western Practices from Confucius to Foucault and Beyond*, at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden; and “Circulation and Flow” for the Department III Colloquium at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. Participants at other conferences and workshops read finished chapters of the book manuscript. The Global City Represented reading group, organized by Dana Sajdi at Boston College, read the introduction and Chapter 1. Reframed sections of Chapter 2 became papers for the conferences *Productivity of the Everyday: Drama, Ritual, and Food in Medieval and Early Modern Sinitic Culture*, at Arizona State University, and *Comparative Approaches to Chinese and Byzantine Imperial Systems: Literati, Courts, Cities, Soldiers*, at the University of Edinburgh. Chapter 3 received extended discussion at the Premodern Healthscaping research group at the University of Amsterdam and at the Economic and Social History Seminar Series at Utrecht University.

If one of the pleasures of giving talks and presentations is briefly to become part of a different intellectual community, it is a particular privilege to become a member of such communities for a longer period. It was a privilege and a pleasure to spend nine months in Department III of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG), and to think with Dagmar Schäfer and the many postdoctoral fellows and visitors about planning and predictions, hydraulics and monetary policy, and many other subjects, in the vibrant, creative, trusting intellectual environment that Dagmar Schäfer has created and encouraged. The environment of Department III shaped the structure, the argument, the substance, and the mood of this book. Following this stay at the MPIWG, through the exchange program

between the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and the University of Michigan, I spent a month at EHESS in Paris, where I gave four lectures about the chapters I had written and planned in Berlin. I feel fortunate and grateful that I was able to spend many hours with Christian Lamouroux, talking about literary genres, economic history, historiography, and many other matters, alone or in the company of his colleagues Alain Arrault, Stéphane Feuillas, and Pénélope Riboud. In Leiden, it was a joy to continue long-standing conversations with Wilt Idema, Maghiel van Crevel, and Harriet Zurndorfer, and to begin new ones with Jeroen Duindam and Claire Weeda.

After I completed the manuscript in December 2019, I sent it to a number of friends. Michael Nylan and Dana Sajdi responded with critical comments and kind encouragement. My graduate students Richard Reid and Jian Zhang added to this encouragement by finding the matter and the manner of the manuscript useful to their dissertations. Sarah Schneewind urged greater clarity in the exposition, in a series of characteristically curt, perceptive comments she sent me before I submitted the manuscript to Amsterdam University Press. I am grateful to Shannon Cunningham, Victoria Blud, and the editorial board of the series *Global Chinese Histories, 250–1650*, for their comments and for selecting Xiaolin Duan and Stephen H. West as reviewers of the manuscript, and to Xiaolin Duan and Steve West themselves for their insightful summaries and detailed comments. I also want to thank Steve West more generally for his support and companionship over the last two decades. His articles on the *Dream of Splendor* and other urban texts set an example by their broad erudition, subtle insight, and elegant prose, and his praise and encouragement of my work provided support and comfort during difficult years in my career. I am grateful to the Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Richard H. Rogel Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan and to the University of Michigan Office of Research for awarding me subvention grants toward the publication of this book in Open Access.

Although the circumstances under which I wrote this second book differed markedly from those under which I wrote the first, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* consciously and deliberately replicates many of the methods and themes of that earlier book. Like *The Writing of Weddings in Middle Period China*, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* inquires into literary genres as a form of mediation between writing and reading, between text and space, and between the present and the past. It uses the “balanced periods” and idioms of eighteenth-century English prose in order to approximate the expositions of the book to its translations and paraphrases, and thereby to give form to a dialectical, self-reflexive hermeneutics and to unrealized

“potentialities of the present.”<sup>1</sup> *The Writing of Weddings* demonstrated that this method and style allowed the recovery of discursive formations and historical meanings that universalist categories from the modern social sciences had distorted and overwritten, and thereby enabled the use of sources that earlier studies of Middle-Period weddings had not been able to accommodate, such as engagement letters and almanacs. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis*, similarly, makes new materials available for urban history and for economic history, notably poems and metaphors, and reveals direct connections between well-known developments of the eleventh century that are rarely discussed together in the scholarship on the period, such as Ancient Prose and civil engineering, or connoisseurship and economic reforms. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* coordinates these themes and brings them together, as once they were coordinated and brought together in the streets and offices of Middle-Period cities.

Like *The Writing of Weddings*, moreover, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* has a strong autobiographical element. When I wrote my dissertation at Columbia University, I discovered that the architecture of Manhattan helped me see the structure and proportions of my chapters, and that I wrote sentences while I walked along the streets, as my thought kept pace with my steps. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* I conceived and wrote on walks through Berlin, Paris, and Leiden, where I also read the work of writers who were walkers, especially Honoré de Balzac, Walter Benjamin, Franz Hessel, and Siegfried Kracauer. The prominent quotations from these authors in the following pages not only announce the method of the book, but connect this book itself to urban pavements and commemorate my gratitude for the opportunities I have received to think, read, write, and walk in some of the great cities of the world: “for that is how you see yourself whenever you stop to think about who you are: a man who walks, a man who has spent his life walking through the streets of cities.”<sup>2</sup>

1 Ricoeur 1981, 295.

2 Auster, *Winter Journal*, 59.

# Introduction: The Emergence of the City into Writing

## Abstract

During the eleventh century, literati of the Song Empire changed the geographic orientation of literary genres to make a place for the city in writing. An approach to urban history through literary geography preserves historical connections between writing and walking and between text and the city, thereby resisting the tautologies of social science and the homologies of modernity. Based on an analysis of 155 collected works (*wenji*) from ca. 800 CE to ca. 1100 CE, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* contributes to a non-linear comparative history of cities. The introduction illustrates this method by demonstrating that the “ward system” of the Tang Empire and its collapse during the Song dynasty, alleged by Katō Shigeshi, are figments of social-science theory.

**Keywords:** Song dynasty; cities; urban history; urban literature; literary geography; Katō Shigeshi

Half-way down the Rue Saint-Denis, almost at the corner of the Rue du Petit-Lion, there stood formerly one of those delightful houses which enable historians to reconstruct old Paris by analogy. The threatening walls of this tumbledown abode seemed to have been decorated with hieroglyphics. For what other name could the passer-by give to the Xs and Vs which the horizontal or diagonal timbers traced on the front, outlined by little parallel cracks in the plaster?

Honoré de Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket* (1829)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Balzac, *La Maison du chat-qui-pelote*, 34, as translated in Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket*, 16.



In the course of the eleventh century, the cities of the Song Empire (960–1279) emerged into writing. Literati in prior centuries had written about streets and markets only in the past tense, in poems about lost youth, in tales about indiscreet students, in memoirs about ruined capitals. Exiled officials in the ninth century gazed from afar toward the capital Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province), longing to return among its towering palaces and erudite officials, but when they lived in the capital they wrote about visits to gardens and excursions into the countryside, about elegant gatherings in imperial parks and leisurely rides under blossoming trees. They represented Chang'an as a cosmic city, a city of perfectly created landscapes, where human civilization and seasonal prospects appeared in their true form. The traffic they sent rushing through the avenues blurred the contours of the capital in a cloud of dust and metaphor. After rebel armies destroyed Chang'an toward the end of the ninth century, however, literati turned their backs on the ravaged capital and paid attention to the provincial cities that became the capitals of a succession of kingdoms and empires. Grown by the increased commerce of the ninth century, these cities during the tenth century acquired political stature and cultural prestige, as ambitious rulers raised powerful armies, built irrigation networks, recruited experienced officials, and erected imposing temples. After the founders of the Song Empire had defeated these rival states, between 960 and 979, the former capitals retained their prestige and prosperity. Whereas the literati of the Tang Empire (618–907) had gazed toward Chang'an as the single center of power and learning, literati of the Song Empire looked outward from their capital, Kaifeng, to see cities large and small, active and wealthy, connected by an efficient network of roads and waterways. And as they looked outward from the capital, they also gazed down into the streets to see myriad rooftops, crowded markets, and the patterns of urban life.

It is not a given that cities must be represented in writing. Chang'an was a splendid metropolis of towering pagodas and seductive entertainments. Its markets attracted traders from Sogdia and Samarkand. Its roads and rivers delivered sufficient produce to feed a population of some 600,000.<sup>2</sup> Yet literati of the ninth century did not deem these markets or these shipments worthy of literary commemoration.<sup>3</sup> Literati in the eleventh century, in contrast, wrote hymns about transport canals and odes to watermills. They found beauty in a view "onto official residences and commoner houses, onto gardens with ponds and trees in temple grounds, onto loud

2 See Thilo 2006, 1.

3 Cf. Thilo 2006, 183.

gatherings in the market, onto oblique wards and crooked alleys,” and in the prospect of “Fujianese merchants and overseas traders, wind-blown sails and ocean-going ships coming and going on the endless waves of the rivers, amid dispersing clouds of smoke and fog.”<sup>4</sup> Although they closely identified with the poets of the ninth century, men of letters in the eleventh century nonetheless changed the geographic orientation of the literary genres they had inherited from the Tang in order to make a place for the city in writing. Poets of the Tang had looked away from urban traffic to the tangled shade of locust trees, and they climbed city walls in order to gaze onto the countryside. When poets of the Song stood on city walls, they looked into the city as well as onto the countryside, and when they rode through the streets they remarked on peddlers and markets as well as on willow catkins drifting on the wind. The emergence of urban streets into writing resulted, therefore, not from a change in the cities themselves, but from a deliberate decision by Song literati to treat the commercial streetscape as matter suitable for literature.<sup>5</sup>

Their purpose in writing the city was ideological. Song literati admitted the commercial streetscape into writing in order to contain it. On the one hand, as accomplished authors, they asserted on paper a distinction that eluded them in the avenues, assuring themselves that they stood apart as individuals in the anonymous crowd, and that their taste and their talent possessed an absolute value, safe from fluctuating prices and changing fashions. On the other hand, as imperial officials, they tried to reduce the confounding movement of people, goods, and money through their jurisdictions to an immanent cosmic pattern, analogous to the flow of water or the circulation of bodily essences, so that they might ensure the health of the body politic by a moral economy of perfect distribution. The literati of the eleventh century differed from the literati of the ninth century, in other words, not because they delighted in achievements of human artifice that their predecessors had disparaged, but because they recognized natural patterns in traffic as well as in gardens, in the daily cycle of commerce as well as in the annual cycle of the seasons.

By the end of the eleventh century, however, literati perceived that they had failed in their purpose. Instead of having set themselves apart

4 Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.737 (靜難軍靈峰寺新閣記); Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 40.585 (有美堂記).

5 On the geographic orientation of genres, see Bakhtin 1981, 84–85; Hanks 2000, 133, 161; Moretti 1998, 5, 35. On the historical significance of changes in genre, see Beebee 1994, 18–19; Dagognet 1973, 167–168; Hanks 2000, 161; Moretti 2005, 35–64; Newman 2007, 8, 11.

by the rarity of their talent and by the refinement of their taste, their taste had drawn them into the competitive consumption they had intended to avoid, and their talent, subject after all to erring judgment and passing fashion, resembled an ordinary commodity rather than priceless jade. The cosmic pattern they had sought in the flow of goods and money, although strongly intuited, proved impossible to know with certainty. This inability to discern an immanent moral pattern in the economy defeated their hopes of restoring the perfect governance of the ancient kings, as debates about economic reform divided officials into bitter factions. Toward the end of the eleventh century, literati withdrew from the streets and markets to search for absolute values within themselves, and to contemplate the moral pattern inherent in the landscape and in the actions of their family and community. The famous urban texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as *A Dream of Splendor in the Eastern Capital* (*Dongjing meng Hua lu*, 1148) and *The Splendid Scenery of the Capital* (*Ducheng jisheng*, 1235), were written by pseudonymous authors who, far from seeking a sustaining moral pattern, delighted in superficial displays of sumptuous wealth.

This central narrative of *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis*, a narrative of hopes raised and defeated in the city, derives in the main from a perusal of the collected works (*wenji* 文集) of 155 authors. The collected works that posterity has preserved from the late Tang and the early Song (from ca. 800 to ca. 1100 CE) are not representative of these two eras, but their selective transmission has paradoxically made these two bodies of collected works eminently comparable. The collected works of Tang authors survive because they were selected and printed (from various and sometimes partial manuscripts) by literati in the eleventh century.<sup>6</sup> Song literati largely neglected

6 See, for example, Bao Rong, *Bao Rong shiji*, preface, 1ab; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, preface, 11, II.1299; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, preface, 19; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, preface, 14–17, 22–23; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, preface, 13–14; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 34.410; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 11.2a–3b; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, preface, 23; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 2.10a–11a, *fu*.1b–2a, *fu*.7a; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, preface, 12; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 98.977–978; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.171–172; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.21.1407; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 84.536; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 12.193–194. On the invention of Tang literature by Song literati, see Nugent 2010, 1–4; Shields 2017b, and in progress. This not to say that Tang authors did not compile their own collected works or the collected works of others. See, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.16.349, I.21.454, I.70.1479, I.70.1499, II.2.1553; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, I.18.349, II.6.519; Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*, 7.426–427, 7.431; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 19.224–225, 19.226–240, 20.251; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 21.581–582; Lu Guimeng, *Fuli xiansheng wenji*, 16.1ab; Sikong Tu, *Sikong Biaosheng wenji*, 887 preface; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 35.405–406, 51.554–555. Cf. Nugent 2010, 236–284; Shields 2015, 10–11. On the preference for manuscript among the Tang elite, see Barrett 2008, 135–137; Chia and De Weerd 2011, 8–10; Drège 1991a, 266–267.

the dense, allusive compositions in parallel prose produced within the great families who dominated court politics during the Tang.<sup>7</sup> Instead, they printed the works of men like themselves, who had attained fame and office by competing in examinations of classical learning and literary skill, and who had endeavored to revive the simpler, irregular style of ancient texts, which they had called Ancient Prose (*guwen* 古文).<sup>8</sup> The generations that, from the twelfth century onward, transmitted the collected works of the eleventh century likewise gave preference to writers of Ancient Prose, not only because they admired their literary talent and respected their canonical learning, but also because they commended their opposition to the economic reforms of Wang Anshi (1021–1086), which reforms these later ages blamed for the decline of the Song and for its defeat in 1127 by the Jin Empire (1115–1234).<sup>9</sup>

Selective transmission has thus preserved for the present the works of writers of Ancient Prose from the ninth century as well as the works of eleventh-century literati who identified with them: some forty-five collected works from the ninth century, some twelve from the tenth century, and

7 The exception is Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*.

8 For examples of Song literati identifying with Tang literati, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 6.34ab; Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.12; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 2.34, 7.143–155; Han Qi, *Han Weigong ji*, 10.153; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 5.11b–12a; Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 21.10b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 12.443–446; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi ji*, 1.2.29, 1.4.35, 1.11.78; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 16.15a; Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 2.18a; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 2.1b–8b; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 7.6b–8a, 17.11a–12a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.287, 1046 preface; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 5.86–87, *fu*.5.2756; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 1.7–10, 2.17; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong ji*, 13.14a, 65.9b–11a; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 84.951–952; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 38.2054; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 17.508–510, 67.2101–2102, 67.2122; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.21.1399; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 15.3b; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 16.282–285; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.3.8a–9a, I.4.3b–6b, I.6.6b–7a, I.9.19b–20b, II.7.12a; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 25.789; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.8b–9a, 7.19ab; Zhao Xiang, *Nanyang ji*, 4.29–30, 1065 colophon; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 3.42–47; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.86–87, 8.105, 24.430–431; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 14.2a–3b; Zu Wuzhe, *Longxue wenji*, 9.5a, 10.8b–9b. For narratives connecting the Ancient Prose of the Song to the Ancient Prose of the Tang, see Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 8.183; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 47.1a–6b, 50.7b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 27.305–306; Liu Kai, *Hedong ji*, 1000 preface, 2.1b–8b; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 2.10a–11a, *fu*.5b–6a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 73.1056–1057; Qisong, *Tanjin wenji*, 1075 preface, 8.1a; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 12.135–139; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 4.39–40, 13.165, 1051 preface, 250; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.23.1432–1433; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, II. preface, 3ab; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 993 preface; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, preface, 1ab; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 3.7a.

9 On the politics of transmission after the eleventh century see, for example, Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, *Siku quanshu* preface, 2ab; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 1214 preface, 1301 preface. See also Hartman 2021, 90–93, 248–273.

some ninety-eight from the eleventh century. How the extant works from the ninth century compare to their manuscript originals must remain largely a matter for speculation. The paltry number of collected works from the tenth century is due in large part to a palace fire in 1015 that destroyed many unique manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> Of the ninety-eight collected works from the eleventh century, more than half survive in an incomplete form, twenty-four having been lost and recompiled (mostly by descendants of the author, after the original works of their ancestor had perished in the wars of the 1120s) and twenty-six having been partly reconstituted during the eighteenth century by the editors of the *Complete Books of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu*, 1782), from entries in the *Yongle Encyclopedia* (*Yongle dadian*, 1408).<sup>11</sup> “Literati,” in this book, refers in the first instance to the authors of these collected works, all of whom were men, almost all of whom had passed the imperial examinations, almost all of whom served as imperial officials, and most of whom had committed themselves to the revival of Ancient Prose.

The collected works extant from the late Tang and the early Song do not offer a representative record of the period, let alone a comprehensive one. They transmit a selection—sometimes a very incomplete selection—of writings by men of exceptional talent and unconventional views.<sup>12</sup> The perceptions of cities and urban economies by these men of learning may or may not have been shared by their contemporaries. But the literati of the eleventh century wrote in the same genres as the literati of the ninth century whom they admired, imitated, and sometimes impersonated: poems and rhapsodies, prefaces and commemorations, letters and memorials, sacrificial prayers and epitaphs. This makes the collected works of the Song comparable to the collected works of the Tang, and it confirms that the innovations by eleventh-century authors were deliberate. Literati in the eleventh century resolved to raise the commercial streetscape to representation in order to think with it. They wrote the city in order to consider the individual

10 See Kurz 2003, 194. Cf. Yong Heng, *Soucai yiwen lu*, 5.2a.

11 On the loss of collected works from the eleventh century and their reconstitution from the *Yongle Encyclopedia*, see the prefaces by the editors of the *Siku quanshu* to, for example, Jiang Tang, *Chunqing yigao*; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*.

12 For examples of rigorous selection, see Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1091 preface (selection of about 10 percent of the author’s writings); Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 34.565 (30–40 percent). The editors of the *Siku quanshu* remark repeatedly on famous compositions that are not included in the collected works of their authors. See, for example, the prefaces to Han Qi, *Anyang ji*; Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*. Some authors did not wish their work to be preserved at all. See Lin Bu, *Lin Hejing xiansheng wenji*, 1053 preface; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 1043 preface; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 48.619–620.

in relation to the crowd, the self in relation to commodities, the workings of money and trade in relation to hydraulics and the human body. Their collected works may not show what the average person in the eleventh century thought about cities, but they show what it was possible to think.<sup>13</sup>

*Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* is therefore an intellectual history of the city, a history of the city as a place for new ways of seeing and thinking. Because the sources of the period, in the words of Étienne Balazs, were written “by scholar-officials for scholar-officials,” and because these scholar-officials knew the major cities either by sight or by reputation, the sources of the late Tang and the early Song do not describe the urban environment in detail.<sup>14</sup> Instead, literati recorded their individual itineraries through these well-known cities, trying to capture in words their intimate impressions of hurtling traffic and soaring towers, of wide avenues and crowded markets. Collected works provide valuable materials for an intellectual history of the city because many of the genres they contain demanded the honest expression of authentic emotions.<sup>15</sup> In poems (*shi* 詩) and commemorations (*ji* 記), especially, literati often attempted to convey to their readers what they saw and what they felt at a particular place at a particular time: at a garden pavilion in spring or on a mountain slope in autumn, by a city gate at dawn or on an urban bridge at dusk.<sup>16</sup> By approaching the cities of the Tang and the Song through such compositions, through the sensations elicited by the urban environment, this intellectual history of the city preserves the

13 Cf. Foucault 1972, 126–165; Kaye 2014, 74.

14 Balazs 1964, 23–24. Cf. Balazs 1964, 135, 142.

15 Even collected works as a whole were read as an expression of the author’s character, both by readers and by authors themselves. See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.71.1504; Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1169 preface, 3–4; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 1135 preface, 3a; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 1212 colophon, 1b, 10.7a–9b; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Wenzheng gongji*, 1089 preface, 1a–2a; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, 847 preface; Liu Tui, *Liu Tui ji*, 3.8a; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 20.250–251, 19.234–235; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 8.7b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 3.43, 3.46–47, *fu*.5.2758–2759; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 20.164a; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 1139 preface, 1–2; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, II.preface.1a–2b; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.4a–5a; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 3.6b–7b. Cf. Owen 1996, 15–33, 55–82; Shields 2015, 86–87, 101–103, 121–131.

16 On poetry as authentic expression see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.7.146; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 276; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 33.497; Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 5.2a, 6.12b; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 18.212–213; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 1065 preface; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 65.15ab; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 16.844; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.165; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 3.3a–4a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 55.840; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, preface. Cf. Nugent 2010, 136–137. On writing as an engagement with the landscape, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.18; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 22.606, 27.738, 42.1165; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 2.1a–9a; Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 2.12; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 96.968; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, *juan* 67–68, *passim*; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 3.1b–2a, 3.3a–4a; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 3.3a, 4.2b.

connection between the text and the city, between writing and walking, between the present and the past.<sup>17</sup>

The preservation of this connection is needful, because only this connection offers resistance to the received notions of the present, whether it be the division of the premodern past by modern disciplines, the rejection of indigenous concepts in favor of foreign ones, or the elevation of the particular development of cities in Europe to a universal, normative model for all cities of every period.<sup>18</sup> Because this book is written in English, for readers who may have a limited knowledge of the Middle-Period past, it cannot avoid the use of foreign terms or implicit (and sometimes explicit) comparisons with the history that attaches to that language. But by mimicking the style and borrowing the metaphors of the sources, by approximating their concepts and following their associations, the book allows their “proposed worlds” to unfold “in front of the text” and thereby to reveal “the buried potentialities of the present.”<sup>19</sup> In those proposed worlds, the same moral pattern inheres in the flow of money as in the flow of water, and a penetrating understanding of that moral pattern gives imperial officials the ability to set monetary policy and to build irrigation networks, to write lucid prose and to solve murder cases. As they walked among the anonymous crowd, moreover, and as they examined antique objects in temple markets, literati in the eleventh century developed notions of the individual and the self that resembled those discovered by the men and women who rode the omnibuses and strolled through the arcades of nineteenth-century Paris.

## Words, Not Wards

Most of the secondary literature about Middle-Period cities has to date taken the opposite approach.<sup>20</sup> Japanese historians since the 1930s, American historians since the 1950s, and Chinese historians since the 1980s have

17 As Karen Newman writes about early modern Paris and London, paraphrasing Theodor Adorno: “through literary representation, sense experience becomes at once knowable and historical,” as “the specificity of aesthetic form preserves sense experience in the past, gives sensory phenomena and their perception a history.” Newman 2007, 83.

18 On the resistance of the text and the connection of the present to the past, cf. Chakrabarty 2008, 237–239; Dane 2003, 7, 112; Newman 2007, 150; Ricoeur 1981, 116.

19 Ricoeur 1981, 143, 295.

20 Exceptions are, for example, Clunas 1996; Duan 2020; Hirata 2006; Ihara 2008, 49–56; Meyer-Fong 2003; X. Wang 2011; and the work of Stephen H. West, such as West 1985, 1997, 1999, 2005.

collected locations of buildings and details of urban practice from a wide range of sources—historical records and notebooks, poems and memoirs, local gazetteers and miracle tales—in order to reconstruct the physical layout and social structure of Middle-Period cities, and in order then to analyze these conjectured cities by the terms and narratives of the modern social sciences.<sup>21</sup> In this approach, the layout and institutions of Middle-Period cities reveal a particular stage of historical, cultural, or economic development, of which they are the “outgrowth” or the “reflection.”<sup>22</sup> This materialist approach to urban history has yielded useful maps as well as plausible estimates of population figures and commercial activity, but its broad aggregation of texts has severed the connection between the present and the past, and between the text and the city. Because the approach does not distinguish between texts written in the past tense and texts written in the present tense, between accounts of personal experience and compilations of reported fact, it cannot preserve individual itineraries through the city or historical perceptions of urban life. These urban histories, in other words, use texts “as a means of deducing circumstances and movements that are not, in themselves, contained within the texts.”<sup>23</sup> They seek the sense of the text *behind* the text instead of in front of it; they presume that this sense is something hidden, something withheld, instead of something disclosed.<sup>24</sup>

By ignoring the resistance of the text, such urban histories become vulnerable to the tautologies of social science and the homologies of modernity.<sup>25</sup> Historians in the United States, for example, have long debated the merit of Max Weber’s argument, in *The City (Die Stadt, 1921)*, that cities in China were not urban communities because they did not have independent civic institutions.<sup>26</sup> Even those who object to Weber’s arguments have accepted his

21 For a brief account of the historiography of Middle-Period cities, see de Pee and Lam 2017, xiv–xviii. For examples of this materialist approach see Chang 1977; Cheng and Li 1993; H. Clark 1991; Dai 1992; Gernet 1962; Han 2011; Kracke 1975; C. Li 1993; G. Liang 1997, 334–480; Lin 1986; F. Liu 2011; Marmé 2005; Quan 1972, 186–199; So 2000, 161–185; Sogabe 1940; Gp Wang 2006, 6–8; T. Wu 1984; Xiong 2000; J. Xu 2008, 2011; Y. Xu 2000; K. Yang 1993; Yi 1986, 2005; B. Zhou 1992, 2001; F. Zhou 1997.

22 See, for example, Cheng and Li 1993, 1992 series preface, 1; Dai 1992, preface, 1, 1–24; Han 2011, 4–5; Hirata 2004, 110; C. Li 1993, 1–3; G. Liang 1997, 591–592; Ye 1986, vol. 1, 5, 14–17.

23 Koselleck 2004, 75. Cf. de Certeau 1984, 137–138; LaCapra 2000, 24–38; Newman 2007, 150–151.

24 See Ricoeur 1976, 87. Cf. Ricoeur 1981, 48–53, 150–152.

25 Cf. Barlow 1993, 225–228; Benjamin 1968, 261–262; Chakrabarty 2008, 27–42; Farquhar and Hevia 1993; Frank 1998, 13–31. Urban histories published in the People’s Republic of China often explicate their presentist agenda. See, for example, Cheng and Li 1993, 1992 series preface, 5; Dai 1992, preface, 4–10; Y. He 2014; Z. He 2010, 1–2; C. Li 1993, 3; Lin and Jin 1984, 142; Lin 1986, 451; Tang 2008, 45; Y. Zhou and Liu 1997.

26 See Weber 1958, 81–85, 119–120. Cf. L. Li 2012, 165; Ma 2006, 367–368.



terms of analysis, endeavoring to prove that independent civic communities did in fact exist in Chinese cities, instead of dismissing Weber's arguments as circular and irrelevant.<sup>27</sup> Although Weber introduced references to Asian cities in order to expand the application of his urban sociology, he effectively pre-empted a sustained, dynamic historical and cultural comparison by defining "the city" as an "urban community" (*Stadtgemeinde*) that he equated with the institutions of medieval European feudalism.<sup>28</sup> As a result, when Chinese cities resemble European cities, they confirm the universality of European urban characteristics, but when Chinese cities differ from European cities, they prove the non-universality of Chinese urban institutions.<sup>29</sup>

What nearly all scholars present as the defining event in the urban history of the late Tang and early Song, namely the destruction of walled residential wards, is a figment of social-scientific theory. In 1931, the Japanese historian Katō Shigeshi (1880–1946) published an article, "On the Development of Cities during the Song Dynasty" ("Sōdai ni okeru toshi no hattatsu ni tsuite"), in which he argued that nearly all cities during the Tang and early Song were laid out on a grid; that the markets and residential wards formed by the perpendicular avenues were surrounded by walls and guarded by a curfew; that only high officials were allowed to pierce these walls with gates to their mansions and thus to have direct access to the avenues; and that in the course of the eleventh century these walls were destroyed and the curfew abolished. As evidence for the universality of these walled wards, Katō cited an 828 edict in the *Digest of Tang Documents* (*Tang huiyao*, 10th century) that prohibits the piercing of neighborhood walls, except by high officials, and an anecdote about an official who in 1018 ordered that the ward gates of Yingtian Prefecture (present-day Shangqiu, Henan province) remain open during the night in order to dispel rumors about man-eating ghosts.<sup>30</sup> In a revised version of the 1931 article, published in 1952, Katō added a law from the *Annotated Tang Code* (*Tanglü shuyi*, 653) that prohibits "climbing over the walls of government offices and the walls or stockades of wards or

27 For confirmations of Weber's arguments see, for example, Elvin 1978; Mote 1977, 101–153; Y. Xu 2000, 77–84. For refutations of Weber's arguments that confirm Weber's terms of analysis see, for example, Fei 2009, 11–13, 247–252; Rowe 1984, 3–14, 327–346.

28 See Weber 1958, 80–81.

29 Cf. Abu-Lughod 1989, 77n19. Andrew Zimmerman (2006, 54) explains that "Weber's later work on the religions of Europe, China, and India elaborated a culturally differentiated world that did not place Europe in the position of conqueror but rather in a position of adjacent superiority," and that Weber's neoracism "operates through differentiation and inclusion, rather than through the binaries, hierarchies, and exclusions of imperialist or colonialist racism."

30 See Katō 1931, 105, citing Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1867–1868; Katō 1931, 105–106, citing Li Tao, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, 92.2118–2119.

markets” and an anecdote about a visit by Emperor Wendi (r. 581–604) of the Sui dynasty (589–618) to Bianzhou (present-day Kaifeng, Henan province), during which shopkeepers and residents along the emperor’s route were ordered to keep their gates shut for the duration of his progress.<sup>31</sup> “Since the middle of the 20th century,” writes Bao Weimin, “the academic world has essentially elaborated the consequences of the ‘Katō model.’ ... As a result, discussions of the ward system are a central subject in present academic debates of historical development during the Tang and the Song.”<sup>32</sup>

Bao Weimin remains nearly alone in perceiving that walled wards existed in the imperial capitals at Chang’an and Luoyang, but not in prefectural capitals or in county seats.<sup>33</sup> He reminds his readers that the many Tang cities that lacked outer walls cannot have had walled neighborhoods, and that many cities were too small to require division into walled wards.<sup>34</sup> Bao Weimin has moreover dissociated the existence of walled markets from the existence of walled residential neighborhoods. He argues that, on the one hand, the institution of supervised, walled markets during the Tang did not preclude the existence of informal, open markets and, on the other hand, that supervised walled markets continued to exist during the Song.<sup>35</sup> The uncritical acceptance of the “Katō model,” according to Bao Weimin, has led historians both to exaggerate the restrictions on commerce during the Tang and to neglect such restrictions during the Song.<sup>36</sup>

31 See Katō 1952, 311–312, citing Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi*, 8.170 and Wei Zheng, *Sui shu*, 56.1386.

32 See, for example, G. Chen 2009, 160; Cheng and Li 1993, 57–58, 102; Dai 1992, 20–21, 203–207; De Weerd 2013, 302–305; C. Heng 1999, xvi, 1–2, 37–50, 70–90, 205–209; Hirata 2004, 114; Ihara 1979, 64–67; Ihara 1983, 108–109; Johnson 1985, 413–414; Kida 1978, 279–284; Kubota 2008, 205; C. Li 1993, 16–17; G. Liang 1997, 481; Jg Liang 2007, 23–24; F. Liu 2011, 30–35; Ma 1971, 74–82; Naba 1938, 170–175, 186–187; Ning 2002, 116; Shiba 2002, 82–86; X. Wang 2011, 51; S. Wu 2005, 22–23; T. Wu 1984, 11–12; Ye 1986, vol. 1, 17, 22–23; Y. Xu 2000, 128, 132; K. Yang 1993, 1–2, 209–210, 264–267, 280–281; Z. Yang 2006, 222; Zhao 1985, 246–247; B. Zhou 1992, 3, 16, 68–69, 232–233; Zhu 1987, 100–104.

33 See Bao 2014, 179; Bao 2018, 29. In his *Researches on Song Cities* (*Songdai chengshi yanjiu*, 2014), Bao Weimin is not consistent in his rejection of the “Katō model,” because he confirms the conventional narrative of the collapse of walled wards and markets several times. See Bao 2014, 1, 86–87, 102.

34 See Bao 2014, 109–110. For examples of cities that lacked outer walls, see Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 43.1214; Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 3.1b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 15.13ab, 15.15a; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang ji*, 2.10a.

35 See Bao 2011, 185–187; Bao 2014, 181–189, 192–199, 202–204. Katō Shigeshi himself wrote two articles about informal markets during the Tang, in 1926 and 1933. See Katō 1952, 380–421. For examples of walled markets in the Song, see Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 4.33; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 8.87.

36 See Bao 2011, 180–181; Bao 2014, 172–175.

To Bao's criticism one might add that Katō's evidence contradicts his arguments instead of supporting them. First, the law against breaking curfew, in the *Annotated Tang Code*, locates ward gates and curfews specifically in the capital, as it specifies that the closing of the gates at night and their reopening at dawn were determined by the drum on top of the Shuntian Gate, the central gate of the palace city in Chang'an.<sup>37</sup> The high-ranking officials whom Tang law permitted to open gates on the avenues lived in the capital too.<sup>38</sup> Second, that the residents of Bianzhou were ordered to lock their gates and shops during Emperor Wendi's visit proves that shops and residences in Bianzhou opened directly onto the thoroughfares. Local officials had to approximate by improvisation the long, continuous walls that lined the avenues in the capital but that did not exist in Bianzhou. The anecdote suggests, moreover, that only the presence of the emperor required closed residential wards and a curfew. Third, the anecdote about the ward gates in Yingtian Prefecture strengthens the likelihood of this latter connection, because Yingtian Prefecture was built as the Southern Capital of the Song Empire.<sup>39</sup> Fourth, among his evidence for the disappearance of walled wards and curfews in the course of the eleventh century, Katō cites an entry from *Notes by a Former Court Official Retired to Chunming* (*Chunming tuichao lu*, 1070s) in which Song Minqiu (1019–1079) remarks that curfew drums in Kaifeng had fallen into disuse. In that same entry, however, Song Minqiu states (on the authority of a certain Ma Zhou of the Tang dynasty) that curfew drums during the Tang were in use only in Chang'an and Luoyang, and later also in the Northern Capital.<sup>40</sup> In sum, Katō offers no evidence that walled wards existed in prefectural cities. His evidence instead proves the opposite: namely, that walled wards (and

37 See Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi*, 26.489–490.

38 Some historians have equated the Tang law against constructing gates on thoroughfares (*xiang jie kai men* 向街開門) with Tang and Song laws against the encroachment on roadways (*qin xiangjie* 侵巷街), and have therefore cited instances of such encroachment as evidence that walls around residential wards still stood during the early decades of the eleventh century. The laws against encroachment, however, applied to streets and alleyways as well as to avenues, and they forbade residents not from opening gates on the thoroughfares, but from building walls and planting trees in the public road, where they obstructed traffic. These laws had nothing to do with walled wards or with the prohibition of shops along thoroughfares. For the text of the laws, see Dou Yi, *Song xingtong*, 26.416; Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1867; Wang Qinruo, *Cefu yuangui*, 14.148; Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi*, 26.488–489. Cf. Bao 2011, 189.

39 Katō in fact explains that Yingtian Prefecture owed its layout, with its straight, wide central axis, to its status as Southern Capital. See Katō 1931, 103. Xia Song's dismay at the derelict state of the Southern Capital in 1014 makes it difficult to imagine that the city did in fact have walled wards in 1016. See Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 16.6b–8a.

40 See Katō 1952, 320, citing Song Minqiu, *Chunming tuichao lu*, 1.11.

curfews) existed only in the imperial capitals, where they facilitated the protection of the palace against nocturnal intruders.<sup>41</sup>

Indirect evidence from primary sources confirms that walled wards existed in the capitals and not in the prefectures. First, the gated wards of the Tang capitals not only facilitated the enforcement of the curfew, but also formed a cosmic grid. During droughts, the southern gate of every ward would be closed and every northern gate would be opened, sometimes with an altar set up in front of it, in order to solicit rain (the north being associated with *yin* and moisture). During heavy rain and floods, conversely, the northern gates would be closed and sacrifices would be brought at the southern gates.<sup>42</sup> But when Bai Juyi (772–846) and Liu Zongyuan (773–819) tried to end prolonged rains and floods in the prefectures where they served, they brought sacrifices at city gates, not at ward gates.<sup>43</sup> Second, records of disasters from the Tang period report that earthquakes and floods brought down the walls of wards in the capitals, but nowhere else. When it rained heavily from July 21 to August 1, 682, for example, “the Luo River swelled greatly, swept away more than two hundred houses in the Establishing Virtue and Profound Reverence Wards on the Henan side [of Luoyang] and the Respectful Admiration Ward on the Luoyang side, and destroyed the Heavenly Ford Bridge and the Middle Bridge.”<sup>44</sup> When the same river flooded at Fuzhou (present-day Fu County, Shaanxi province), on August 15, 727, it “entered the prefectural seat, setting it more than ten feet under water and destroying the dwellings of the residents, drowning an unknown number of people.”<sup>45</sup> Third, archaeologists have found traces of ward walls in Xi’an and Luoyang, but not in prefectural capitals or county seats. The archaeologist Su Bai, though intent on discovering evidence of walled wards throughout the Tang Empire, found only regular grids of streets, not foundations of neighborhood walls or neighborhood gates.<sup>46</sup>

41 Cf. Thilo 2006, 163–175.

42 See Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1354–1355, 37.1358–1360, 37.1363, 37.1365; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, *chanshu*.5.236; Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1875. Cf. Wang Qinro, *Cefu yuangui*, 60.638. Cf. also Thilo 2006, 368–369.

43 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.40.891; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 41.1094. Cf. Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 20.247–248.

44 Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1352. The capital Luoyang was the seat of two counties, Henan County and Luoyang County, each of which administered a number of wards. Cf. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1357 (“Eliciting the Way Ward in the capital was in one night submerged and become a lake”), 37.1358–1359.

45 Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1358. Cf. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1352, 37.1353, 37.1360, 37.1361–1362 (“A flood in Suzhou and Huzhou destroyed six dikes, entered the walls of the prefectural seats, and inundated dwellings and wells”).

46 See Su 1990.

That historians have long accepted Katō Shigeshi's arguments about the collapse of a medieval "ward system" (*hōsei* 坊制) during the transition from the Tang to the Song is surprising, not only because Katō provided very little evidence to prove the universal construction of walled wards, but also because his arguments derived from historiographical and ideological convictions that are now by no means widely shared. As Stefan Tanaka has demonstrated, Japanese historians during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries developed Hegelian schemes of cultural transformation in order to claim for "the Orient" (*tōyō* 東洋) a modernity that developed independently from European modernity but that equaled European modernity in maturity and achievement.<sup>47</sup> In these schemes, civilization and power moved southward from northern China to southern China, and thence eastward to Japan. The historian Naitō Konan (Naitō Torajirō, 1866–1934) during the 1910s and 1920s proposed that this Oriental modernity began in the Song dynasty, which he considered the first modern period in world history. He argued that the military commissioners of the late Tang and the rulers of the tenth-century kingdoms and empires had destroyed an aristocratic order and had caused a series of structural changes—the institutionalization of imperial autocracy, the recruitment of officials through competitive examinations, the prominent role of commoners in politics and culture, the monetization of the economy—that together inaugurated a new stage in the life cycle of Chinese civilization.<sup>48</sup> Katō Shigeshi's articles about the destruction of ward walls and market walls contributed to this narrative of Hegelian transformation and Oriental modernity.<sup>49</sup>

Although these articles argue that the walled markets and gated wards prove the existence of a medieval aristocratic order, it in fact requires the assumption of a medieval aristocratic order to make plausible that the Tang and its predecessors had erected such walls throughout their empires, in order to constrain the movement and commerce of their subjects. Instead of appearing as a physical impossibility, the walled grids of hundreds of prefectural cities became a theoretical necessity, the grim evidence of a medieval age.<sup>50</sup> Subsequent historians have rejected the Hegelian scheme

47 See Tanaka 1993. Cf. Nohara 1946a, 54, 56; Tam 1980.

48 For this general historical narrative see, for example, Naitō 1922, 1–12; Naitō 1938, 8–53, 337–377. For Naitō's subscription to Hegelian ideas and their implications for current political relations between Japan and China, see Naitō 1938, 1–11, 13–14, 54–95, 263–280, 297–304. Cf. Tam 1975, 260, 272–276, 322–323. On the place of the Tang–Song transition in the life cycle of Chinese history, see Naitō 1938, 312–313. Cf. Miyakawa 1955, 535–543; Miyazaki 1967, 96–106; Sogabe 1940, 2; Tam 1980.

49 See Naba 1938. Cf. Ning and Chen 2010, 126–127.

50 Cf. McDermott 1984, 14–33; McDermott and Shiba 2015, 347–367.

behind Katō's (and Naitō's) conception of the transition from the Tang to the Song as well as the imperialist agenda of "Oriental history" (*tōyōshi* 東洋史), but they have shared Katō's conviction that the modern social sciences offer more accurate, more objective terms of analysis than the Middle-Period sources.<sup>51</sup> By mining Middle-Period sources for the data required by the generative machinery of social-scientific theory, historians have broken the resistance of the sources to the homologies of the present and have thereby accepted a broad theory of historical development whose evidence is inadequate and whose premises they reject.<sup>52</sup>

In their contribution to a themed issue of *Past & Present* on "The Global Middle Ages," Conrad Leyser, Naomi Standen, and Stephanie Wynne-Jones argue that "a focus on what towns thought of themselves, together with a consideration of what towns *do*," enables comparative histories that refute linear narratives of urban development.<sup>53</sup> *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* contributes to such non-linear comparative histories by distinguishing between histories of the city and histories of the writing of the city, and by recognizing the writing of the city as a distinct, deliberate, ideological operation. The historians who have undertaken to reconstruct the cities of the Middle Period have done so in hopes of understanding what these cities must have represented to their inhabitants, but what these cities represented

51 Similar to the *Ostforscher* (experts on Eastern Europe) who provided historical arguments in support of the *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East) in Nazi Germany, Japanese historians of China helped justify the Japanese invasion of the Republic of China as a historical mission to save the senescent civilization from Western colonialism. Japanese scholarship of the 1930s and 1940s, again like *Ostforschung*, was misrepresented and protected during the 1950s and 1960s by the anti-Communist politics of the Cold War. In two widely cited articles, for example, Miyakawa Hisayuki (1955) and Miyazaki Ichisada (1967) represented Naitō Konan as a scholar concerned purely with historical interpretation—even though his own sons stated in a 1938 preface that their father's work demonstrated the historical inevitability that vigorous, young Japan would resuscitate the large, old country of China by armed conflict. See Naitō 1938, preface, 15–17. Miyazaki himself had espoused the ideology of "Oriental history" in works such as *Primitivist Peoples and Civilizationist Societies in the Orient* (*Tōyō ni okeru sobokushugi no minzoku to bunmeishugi no shakai*, 1940). Whereas the pernicious politics of *Ostforschung* have been thoroughly exposed, however, first in Poland and the German Democratic Republic, and since the 1970s in the German Federal Republic, the legacy of Japanese imperialist scholarship in the historiography of China—including the so-called Naitō hypothesis, about the Tang–Song transition—remains unexamined. On the career of *Ostforschung* and *Ostforscher*, see Burleigh 1988.

52 Janet L. Abu-Lughod (1987, 155) makes a similar argument about the development of "the idea of the Islamic city" by scholars who "drew upon a small and eccentric sample of pre-modern Arab cities" and "more than that, drew upon one another in an *isnad* [i.e., a chain] of authority." I thank Dana Sajdi for this reference.

53 Leyser, Standen, and Wynne-Jones 2018, 258. Cf. Wooldridge 2015, 10–12.

to their inhabitants—at least to the inhabitants about whom historians can hope to know anything with certainty—the surviving sources state directly. In the much reduced, carefully controlled space of their collected works, the literati of the late Tang and the early Song have placed themselves with deliberation, in delighted admiration of urban beauty, in thoughtful contemplation of urban crowds, in playful ambivalence toward urban commodities, in puzzled scrutiny of urban commerce.

Literati in the eleventh century took up the commercial streetscape as a new but not as a dominant literary subject. The place they created for the city in writing was not extensive, but only in their collected works is writing connected directly to an authentic, historical, individual experience of urban space. The cities of the Tang and the Song were built of wood and tile and tamped earth. They were burnt down and built over. Only a few dozen buildings from the ninth through eleventh centuries are still standing, scattered across the People's Republic of China. Because other remains lie under the apartment blocks and highways of modern metropolises, archaeologists rarely have an opportunity to examine them, much less to reconstitute streetscapes or the experience of urban life.<sup>54</sup> Once, too, genres of writing may have existed that provided greater scope for the material detail of cities. In the thirteenth century, and perhaps earlier, printed guides acquainted traveling merchants with the cities where they lodged on their journeys, and candidates in the imperial examinations may well have written to their families about life in the capital, but no such texts survive today from the late Tang or the early Song.<sup>55</sup> Of eyewitness accounts that

54 In Chang'an and Luoyang, archaeologists have located the city walls, excavated city gates and palaces, and surveyed some roads, government buildings, houses, and a market. Surveys and excavations at Kaifeng, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou likewise have determined the location of the walls, the gates, and the palaces, and excavated a few bridges, government buildings, roads, houses, and shops. See G. He 1983; Henan shifan daxue dilixi 1982; Kaifengshi wenwu gongzuodui 1998; Luoyang shifan xueyuan He Luo wenhua guoji yanjiu zhongxin 2005; Tang 2008; H. Yang 1994; Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Xi'an Tangcheng fajuedui 1961; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo et al. 2010; F. Zhou 1997.

55 A few short, informal letters by Li Zhiyi give brief characterizations of Kaifeng, Luoyang, and Jinling (present Nanjing, Jiangxi province): "The longer I live in the capital, the more places I find that are to my liking. The richness of my experiences in the city I have most certainly not gathered by word of mouth, but by visiting them on foot." Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, I.26.199. Cf. Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, I.30.226, I.33.249. The *Splendid Scenery of the Capital* (*Ducheng jisheng*, 1235) contains passages from a guidebook (or guidebooks) about Hangzhou that give the reader advice about how to avoid being cheated or robbed in the metropolis. See Guanpu naide weng, *Ducheng jisheng*, 92–93, 100–101. The Japanese monk Jōjin mentions in his diary that during his visit to Kaifeng in 1073, he purchased a *Map of the Capital Prefecture* (*Jingzhou tu*), a type of text that has not survived. See Jōjin, *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji*, 6.474.

can animate the ground plans reconstructed by archaeologists or the maps printed in local gazetteers remain, therefore, only the erudite, allusive compositions preserved in the collected works of the foremost statesmen and men of letters.

The compositions of these statesmen and men of letters assume the reader's familiarity with the places of which they write. In their poems, for example, they choose a few vignettes—the fragrance of fallen blossoms crushed by the hoofs and wheels of revelers, a momentary quiet as the slanting sun strikes a famous bridge—in order to give proof simultaneously of their sensibility and their erudition, to preserve their sensory impressions and at the same time to contribute to a store of literature on the same theme and on the same location. Their first readers in fact often stood next to them, crafting their own poems about the same scene. Their precise compositions do not represent the general sentiment of their time, much less transcribe a material reality that “reflects” an objective stage in a universal history of human development. But considered as historical documents, these literary compositions have value precisely because they present individual views and ideological interpretations of the city.

Literati in the eleventh century changed the literary geography of inherited genres, and devised a number of new genres, in order to make a place for the city in writing. In this new literary space, they competed to create novel literary effects, and they showed themselves to advantage, standing out as individuals among the crowd, acquiring valuable antiques by their connoisseurship, and searching for an immanent pattern in the flow of traffic and in the circulation of goods. By opening up their poems and their commemorations to urban roads and transport canals, literati allowed market vendors to set up their stalls in their verses, and cloth merchants from Sichuan to litigate in an inscription for a government office in Hangzhou. Because literati endeavored to replicate the refinement of their taste by the wit of their compositions, their epigrams and catalogs reproduce the competitiveness of connoisseurship and urban consumption.

An intellectual history based on such literary engagements with the city makes nonsense of the common argument that Middle-Period cities differed but little from the countryside, and of the argument that Middle-Period cities were below the medieval cities of Europe because they lacked autonomous civic institutions. Instead of framing its sources within a universal, linear model of development that is based on the particular history of Europe, this intellectual history of the Middle-Period city demonstrates the particularity of that European history by showing that many of its defining elements could occur, and did occur, in an alternative sequence



and in foreign configurations.<sup>56</sup> The rapid development in the eleventh century of the urban genre of landscape painting, for example, from a naturalistic technique in the service of moral metaphor to a technique of visible brushstrokes in the service of individual expression, proves that defining elements of Impressionist painting could exist in a society without photography and without mechanized transport—and that metropolitan painters in nineteenth-century Paris and London did not invent a visual language unique to modern Europe, but rather found themselves in an urban environment that allowed them to understand for the first time the paintings and prints made in metropolitan Kaifeng and Edo.<sup>57</sup>

It is in such an effort at historical back-and-forth that this introduction opens under the sign of the Cat and Racket. In the epigraph, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) muses that perhaps the city writes itself, in letters formed by the beams of half-timbered houses in the medieval streets of Paris, where they are read by the passerby and interpreted by historians. These sentences, however, are the opening lines of Balzac's *Human Comedy* (*La Comédie humaine*, 1829–1847), his ambitious, visionary effort to devise a form and a mode for writing modern life—a “history of society at large,” its customs illustrated by “two or three thousand conspicuous types,” in a manner to “please, at the same time, the poet, the philosopher, and the masses who want both poetry and philosophy under striking imagery.”<sup>58</sup> Subsequent writers of modern life and the industrial city acknowledged the achievement of Balzac and admitted their debt to him. Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), for example, concluded his review of the salon of 1846 with an homage to Balzac, citing the latter's characters and heroic authorship to impress upon his readers that modern life has its own beauty and that “Parisian life abounds with poetic and marvelous subjects.”<sup>59</sup> Imputing his own admiration for Balzac (and his own taste for paradox) to one of his characters, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) wrote that, “The nineteenth century, as we know it, is largely an invention of Balzac.”<sup>60</sup>

56 Cf. Frank 1998, 4–31; Hymes 2015, 664.

57 See Powers 1995; Powers 2013.

58 Balzac, “Avant-propos,” 18, 10, as translated in Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket*, 13, 4. Balzac moreover prided himself on having saved some old houses and architectural details by having described them in his novels. See Balzac, *La Maison du chat-qui-pelote*, 1185n3.

59 Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2, 496.

60 Wilde, *Intentions*, 35. In his own voice, Oscar Wilde called the *Comédie humaine* “the greatest monument that literature has produced in our century.” On Balzac's achievements in writing the city and modern life, see also Brooks 2005, 22–39, 130–140; Harvey 2003, 23–57; Moretti 1998, 106–113.

The sign of the Cat and Racket, therefore, advertises the invention and the labor it requires to find a language and a form for writing urban life. Moreover, because Balzac admired the old-fashioned sign and sympathized with its solid, old-fashioned owner, the sign hangs above this chapter also as a reminder that the industrial city was first written by a conservative who condemned the destabilizing forces of money as a threat to what he deemed to be the natural order of society. In his effort to demonstrate that Catholicism and the monarchy provided the only stable foundation for French society, Balzac presented such a sharp analysis of “men, women, and things, that is to say, persons and the material expression they give to their thought” that, according to Alexandre Péraud, he “invented modern money.”<sup>61</sup> So penetrating, in fact, was Balzac’s analysis of modern society that Karl Marx based much of his understanding of social relations on the work of this reactionary monarchist.<sup>62</sup> (This transmutation of literature into social theory “is somehow more pleasing than the opposite thing,” as Vladimir Nabokov writes *à propos* the misrecognition of Karl Marx’s Russian translator as “a Government Inspector traveling incognito,” in a “vulgar imitation” of Nikolai Gogol’s play.<sup>63</sup>) Literati in the Song Empire wrote the city in hopes of discerning in its threatening profusion an enduring, immanent moral pattern and in hopes of protecting their privileged position within the political and economic order. Under the sign of the Cat and Racket, then, walks the historian as passerby, as *flâneur*, past the written buildings of Balzac and into the poems and commemorations of eleventh-century literati.<sup>64</sup>

61 Balzac, “Avant-propos,” 12–14, 9, as translated in Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket*, 3 (with modifications); Péraud 2019, 8. Cf. Harvey 2003, 23–35.

62 See Harvey 2003, 13–17; Péraud 2019, 11.

63 Nabokov 1944, 40–41.

64 On the figure of the *flâneur*, see Benjamin 1983a, 36–37, 66; Benjamin 1983b, 524–569 (section M); Ferguson 1994a, 82–99; Ferguson 1994b; Gleber 1999. On the *flâneur* as reader and historian, see Ferguson 1994a, 80–81; Frisby 2001, 28–29, 35–51; Gelley 1993, 249–251; Gleber 1999, 43–83; Opitz 1992, 176–181.



# 1 The City at the Center of the World

## Chang'an as Center and as Ruin in the Ninth Century

### Abstract

During the ninth century, the capital Chang'an stood at the center of literary production and at the center of literary geography. Both to those who gazed at it from afar and to those who saw it from nearby, Chang'an appeared as a cosmic center of charismatic power where the seasons were manifested in their proper form, in the perfectly created nature of parks and gardens. The urban life of streets and markets was written only in the past tense, in poems about youth and in memoirs composed after the destruction of Chang'an. The destruction of Chang'an changed the literary geography of the Tang, as literati turned their back on the former center and turned their attention to provincial cities.

**Keywords:** Tang dynasty; Five Dynasties; Chang'an; urban history; literary geography; exile

During the ninth century, the capitals at Chang'an and Luoyang lay at the center of literary production. Here the emperor and his court wrote the laws and edicts that laid out a universal order for the realm.<sup>1</sup> Here the great clans kept their libraries and taught their sons in order to maintain their unbroken record of high office.<sup>2</sup> Here stood the stone steles with the authoritative text of the classical canon, and here stonemasons carved the deeds of ministers into dark slabs of funerary rock.<sup>3</sup> In the splendid monasteries, Buddhist monks and Daoist priests copied out the sacred

1 See, for example, Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 17.478–480, 26.703–704. See also Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2074–2075; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, I.8.131–137.

2 See, for example, Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.1.81; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 30.781; Sun Qiao, *Sun Kezhi wenji*, 884 preface. Cf. Barrett 2008, 135–136; Tackett 2014, 12, 59–60, 137–140; Thilo 1997, 125–126, 243–244, 274–275; Thilo 2006, 376–382.

3 See McMullen 1988, 97–100; Tackett 2014, 82–87; Thilo 2006, 387–388.

texts of their traditions.<sup>4</sup> Government agencies and commercial houses printed calendars, religious pamphlets, astrological manuals, medical guides, and dictionaries.<sup>5</sup> In hostels and in rented houses lived students who hoped to achieve a reputation for erudition and wit, and who submitted portfolios of their compositions to potential patrons.<sup>6</sup> The graduates of the annual examinations inscribed their names, glorious and immortal, in the Great Goose Pagoda of Ci'en Monastery and wrote poems at the celebratory banquets in Serpentine Park.<sup>7</sup> From the halls of the palace and the offices of government, from imperial parks and noble mansions, from wine houses and brothels issued sonorous edicts and intricate verses, moral tales and humorous anecdotes that were recited, repeated, and retold along the postal roads and in the prefectures and counties.<sup>8</sup> In his preface to the collected works of Bai Juyi (772–846), Yuan Zhen (779–831) describes how the fame of his friend followed this trajectory, spreading outward from the capital, along with his own:

At the age of five or six, he understood measure and rhyme. At fifteen, he set his mind upon poetry and rhapsodies. At twenty-seven, he took the examination for the Advanced Scholar degree. At the end of the Zhenyuan reign period [785–805], the examinations for the Advanced Scholar degree valued ambition, not literature, and the Six Classics were especially neglected. But the Vice Minister of Rites, Gao Ying [740–811], became the first to pass and fail candidates based on their scholarship in

4 See Duan Chengshi, *Youyang zazhu*, 245–263. Cf. Thilo 2006, 305–351.

5 On the history of books and printing in the Tang dynasty, see Barrett 2008, ix–x, 42–85 and *passim*; Brokaw 2005, 23; Brokaw 2007, 254–255; Carter 1955, 38–59; Chia and De Weerd 2011, 1–9; Drège 1991a, 265; Drège 1991b, 90–91; Drège 1994, 414–415; Edgren 1989, 5; Inoue 2002, 95–97; McDermott 2006, 9–13; Nugent 2010, 39–47; Teiser 1994, 87–162; Tsien 1985, 132–154; Twitchett 1983, 13–26; X. Zhang 2006, 16–28.

6 See, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.62.1287; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.16.998–999, I.16.1002; Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 2.11b; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 917–918, 1608–1609, 2044; Huangfu Shi, *Huangfu chizheng wenji*, 2.6a; Li Ao, *Li Wengong ji*, 1.1ab; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 34b; Li Chuo, *Qinzhong suishi ji*, 1b; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 12.313; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 1.21, 1.22, 9.144, 9.150, *chanshu*.197; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 8.80b–82a; Sun Qiao, *Sun Kezhi wenji*, 3.5b–6a, 7.2ab; Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhiyan*, *passim*; Wang Qi, *Linjiao ji*, *passim*. Cf. L. Feng 2015, 88–97; Moore 2004, 139–180.

7 See, for example, Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 2.15b; Huang Tao, *Puyang Huang yushi ji*, 1.117–119; Li Chuo, *Qinzhong suishi ji*, 1a; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 5.170; Sun Qi, *Beili zhi*, 252; Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhiyan*, 3.24–25; Wang Qi, *Linjiao ji*, *fu*.2b; Xu Yin, *Xu gong diaoji wenji*, 8.6b, 8.10ab. See also Zhang Li, *You chengnan ji*, 23. Cf. L. Feng 2010, 49–59; L. Feng 2015, 97–102; Moore 2004, 233–254, 263–269; Shields 2015, 82–132.

8 On story-telling and other forms of oral literature during the late Tang, see Allen 2014a; L. Feng 2015; Luo 2015; Nugent 2010; Sanders 2014.

the Classics, and Letian [i.e., Bai Juyi] took the highest degree at his first try. The following year, he placed in the first rank of the Special Selection degree. *From that moment on, new candidates for the Advanced Scholar degree vied with one another to pass along in the capital his "Rhapsody on the Divide between Human Nature and Custom," "Rhapsody on Searching for a Black Pearl," and "Rhapsody on the Beheading of the White Snake," as well as his hundred legal verdicts.* Just at this time Emperor Xianzong [r. 806–820] summoned by edict the scholars of the realm. Letian submitted edicts and wrote decrees, and again rose to the first rank. Not long thereafter, he entered the Hanlin Academy, where he was responsible for drafting edicts and where he repeatedly offered up memorials to address the achievements and omissions of the court. There he also wrote his "Congratulations on the Rainfall," "Laments of Qin," and a dozen other compositions that exhibited the conditions of the realm. His contemporaries compared them to the "Airs of the State" [in the *Book of Songs*] and to the "Lamentations" [in the *Songs of the South*].

When Letian and I shared the title of Editor at the Imperial Library, we often composed poems for each other and responded to the ones we received. It happened that I was exiled to Jiangling [now Jiangling, Hubei province] while Letian remained at the Hanlin Academy. During that time he sent me a regulated verse in one hundred rhymes as well as compositions in a number of other genres, several dozen pieces in all. Subsequently, when we held lowly posts in Jiangzhou [present-day Jiujiang city, Jiangxi province] and Tongzhou [present-day Daxian city, Sichuan province], we again sent each other tributes. From the Southwest and the South to the youths of Chang'an, everybody imitated each other and competed in writing original verses, which they called "Yuanhe poetry" [after the Yuanhe reign period, 806–821], while few people could understand Letian's "Laments of Qin," "Congratulations on the Rainfall," or his other satires. *And yet in the course of twenty years, these poems were written on the walls of palaces and departments, of temples and monasteries, of hostels and relay stations, and they were recited by princes and dukes, by concubines and gentlewomen, by cowherds and grooms. It even happened that people collected and printed them to peddle them on the market, or bartered them for wine or tea. This took place everywhere.*<sup>9</sup>

9 Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 51.554–555 (白氏長慶集序), emphasis added. Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.45.963; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 19.224–240, 20.250–251; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 20.224, 30.352–353. Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, preface.1a. Cf. also Shields 2015, 70–74; A. Wang 2018, 290–298. On the continued contest about the designation "Yuanhe poetry," see Shields 2014.

Chang'an and Luoyang, however, were not merely the pre-eminent sites of literary production: the two capitals also stood at the center of the literary geography. The *Annotated Tang Code* (*Tang lü shuyi*, 653), for example, represents the empire as a series of physical enclosures centered on the person of the emperor, defining crimes against the imperial order as the transgression of physical boundaries and ranking such crimes by the proximity of the violated boundary to the imperial person, from destruction of the imperial altars, desecration of the imperial cemetery, and intrusion into the imperial palace to illegal entry into prefectural offices, climbing over market walls, and crossing the border.<sup>10</sup> Court records, edicts, and memorials similarly placed the emperor, the imperial palace, and the imperial altars at the center of the realm and, indeed, at the center of the world. Ritual codes, gazetteers, and maps gave form to this imperial center by locating and naming the concentric boundaries of this ritual, political, and geographic space, designating them with auspicious names. The *Register of Sacrifices* (*Sidian*) set the deities of mountains and rivers and of walls and moats under the imperial cult of Heaven. Liu Zongyuan (773–819) laid out this sacred geography in a stele inscription for the shrine to the Zhongnan Mountains (or Southern Mountains, Nanshan), composed after Han Gao, the prefect of Chang'an, rebuilt the temple in 796 to accord with protocol and obtained an efficacious response to his prayer for rain:

Thereupon the magistrates and the clerks, down to the runners, the aged and the elderly, the farmers and the mountain leaders all said: "We have learnt that among the famous mountains that are arrayed under the heavens, those that bring peace to the realm, or yield things of use or value, or produce clouds and rain, receive offerings in accordance with the *Rules for Offerings* and find their place in the *Register of Sacrifices*. The Zhongnan Mountains stand at the center of the world, south of the capital. In the west they extend to the Bao and Ye valleys, and even farther west to the Longshou Mountains, where they look down upon the Rong people; in the east they extend to the cliff face of Mount Shang, and even farther east to the great Mount Hua, where they stand guard over the Pass. Surely they provide protection, forming a screen for the imperial house. The bounty that they yield, the products that they give forth, are jade and pearl-like stone. ..." The hymn reads:

10 See Zhangsun Wuji, *Tang lü shuyi*. Cf. de Pee 2007, 179–182.

The Emperor extends his virtue,  
 His institutions complete and perfect,  
 The godly way broad and even.

Renovations for licit sacrifice,  
 Sacrificial prayers for rain and clear weather,  
 Each have their standard and procedure.<sup>11</sup>

In poetry, too, Chang'an and Luoyang occupied the center of time and space. In the created nature of the palace grounds and the imperial parks, trees blossomed in the proper season, celebrated with timely festivals and appropriate compositions. From remote places of exile, poets gazed toward Chang'an, longing to return to the center of power and erudition, and to leave behind the alien landscape and bewildering customs of the violent periphery.

The geographic centrality of Chang'an and Luoyang did not, however, prompt Tang literati to commemorate the metropolitan cityscape in detailed descriptions. When exiles were summoned back from the wastes to the capital, they did not write about the metropolitan markets or the entertainment quarters, or even about the libraries and bookstalls. Instead, they wrote about the fading stars above the palace, the willows along the imperial canal, the pear blossoms during the Qingming festival, the elegant gardens of their friends, and leisurely excursions into the suburbs and into the Southern Mountains. The streets and avenues of the capital they hid in dust and behind a blur of traffic; the shops and markets they did not mention at all.<sup>12</sup> Only when they looked back to Chang'an in their old age did they sometimes find a place in their poems and prefaces for the games they played in their childhood or for the courtesans they visited in their youth. And only after Chang'an and Luoyang were burnt down by rebel armies, first in 756–757, then in the 880s, did literati make detailed records of commercial life in the capitals—of the fraught negotiation of sentiment and money in the pleasure quarters, of the wares offered for sale during seasonal celebrations, of the role of merchants in organizing festivities for examination graduates.<sup>13</sup> Although Chang'an and Luoyang stood at

11 Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 5.127 (終南山祠堂碑).

12 Cf. Thilo 2006, 439–457.

13 These same commercial activities drive the plot of tales that established officials told and wrote about their earlier, uncertain years as examination candidates. Because such tales were written about composite or fictive persons and were based on hearsay and imagination, I shall not use them as records of urban experience. For discussions of such tales, see Allen 2014a; Dudbridge 1983; L. Feng 2015; Luo 2015.



the center of the literary imagination, in other words, literati represented the metropolitan avenues and the residential neighborhoods as a bucolic landscape, the noise of traffic and the press of people noted mostly in their absence:

There is no dust in the snow on the pines; the small courtyard is cold;  
When one closes the gate, it is as though one doesn't live in Chang'an.<sup>14</sup>

### Chang'an Written from Afar

When banished officials crossed the Yangzi River, they entered an alien landscape. At their departure from Chang'an, their companions had already warned them of what they would find “on the other side of the River” and “south of the mountain range”: “At these gay affairs, often held at a wine shop in the suburb, looking off in the direction the traveler was about to take,” Edward Schafer explains, “it was the usual thing to relate facts and fancies of every kind about his route and destination and to write poems on the themes of the physical and moral perils to be encountered there.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, Jia Dao (788–843) told a departing friend:

On the way from the capital to Rongzhou,  
Your horse will spend much of the time aboard.  
Rongzhou is several thousand miles away,  
Right there by the edge of the blue sky.

...

The southern land differs from the northern clime;  
When the wind rises, it carries no dust.  
The laments of Qin slumber in the marshes of Chu;  
In the maritime wine drops a cinnamon flower.

Briefly drunk, then quickly sober again:  
That land grows cinnamon tea.<sup>16</sup>

14 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.14.276 (酬錢員外雪中見寄).

15 Schafer 1967, 20–21. On the foreignness of the South during the Tang, see also H. Clark 2015, 28–32, 173–176.

16 Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiang ji*, 2.4ab (送張校書季霞).

Other poets told departing friends of steep cliffs and fast rivers, of perennial blossoms and foreign songs, of tigers and dragons, of a mermaid in the market of Fuzhou.<sup>17</sup>

And thus the travelers found the southern landscape, “prisoners of their own lexicons,” unable to recognize the birds or to name the flowers, incapable perhaps even of seeing the dense, green, dripping rainforests with their profusion of animals and insects, and at a loss to comprehend the vast, luminescent ocean:<sup>18</sup>

“In the South,” by Wang Jian (fl. 795–828)

In the deep South, bird calls are numerous;  
Half of the administrative seats lack walls.  
Rural markets are known by barbarian surnames;  
Mountain villages are named for local streams.

A miasmic fog rises above the sands;  
A dim light spreads in the rain.  
Only those in search of pearls  
Set out to sea, year after year.<sup>19</sup>

From the towering mountains ran violent rivers through thundering rapids, below floating gossamer and the cries of monkeys.<sup>20</sup> Tortuous roads increased the distance between the towns and villages, which the traveler traversed in perpetual fear of snakes and tigers.<sup>21</sup> The climate, moreover, was “disjoined from the North.”<sup>22</sup> Exiles expressed bewilderment at seeing plum blossoms in drenching rain and pear blossoms during the first month, and unknown fruits and flowers in winter.<sup>23</sup> Even those who found beauty

17 See, for example, Bao Rong, *Bao Rong shiji*, 1.7b; Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 2.10b; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 1656; Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiangji*, 7.4b; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 13a, 14b; Xu Hun, *Xu Yonghui wenji*, 1.14b, 2.22b; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchangji*, 1.7b, 2.1b, 2.7b, 4.7b.

18 Schafer 1967, 42. Cf. Marks 1998, 35–42; Schafer 1967, 37–44.

19 Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 3.1b (南中). On the association of pearls with the southern ocean and foreign merchants, see Schafer 1963, 242–245; Schafer 1967, 160–162; Schafer 1970, 8–9.

20 See, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 135, 136–137, 205, 762, 1656, 1663; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, II.4.483, II.4.499, II.8.564; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 15a; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, 1.49.

21 See, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 886; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, 2.439; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 39–41; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 4.38–44, 13.145–146.

22 Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 1532 (與崔羣書).

23 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.16.340; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 169, 274–275; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 35.515; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 43.1237. Cf. Schafer 1967, 125–134.

in the southern landscape had difficulty describing it, due to its foreignness and profusion:

“Impromptu on the Road to Daozhou,” by Lü Wen (772–811)

Lingling and Guiyang have excellent scenery,  
 And Yingyang’s landscape is like theirs.  
 As I travel the road, I cannot stop looking;  
 When I enter this county, I could go on describing.

The layered peaks merge as they turn blue;  
 The clear Xiang River vanishes when it slows down.  
 My boat sails inside a luminous mirror;  
 The road enters into a painted screen.<sup>24</sup>

This wondrous, frightening land was inhabited by people who spoke incomprehensible languages and practiced foreign rites. “The Yi language I am not yet used to hearing, / The Viet customs I am still uneasy to follow,” wrote Han Yu (768–824) in Lianzhou (now Lian County, Guangdong).<sup>25</sup> When he first arrived there in 804, he found that “There were a dozen little clerks, all of whom spoke like birds and had Yi faces. In the beginning, we could not understand each other. Only by drawing characters on the ground could I tell them to collect rent and taxes.”<sup>26</sup> Bai Juyi succeeded in collecting the fall taxes in Zhongzhou (now Zhong County, Sichuan province) in 819, but he still worried that he would not be able to instill proper governance:

Looking straight down from the high city wall,  
 I see a wriggling mass of southwestern Man.

24 Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhouji*, 2.12 (道州途中即事). Daozhou Prefecture (west of present-day Dao County, Hunan province), the seat of Lü Wen’s appointment, lay between Yongzhou Prefecture to the northwest and Lianzhou to the southeast; Lingling (now Lingling, Hunan province) and Guiyang (present-day Lian County, Guangxi province) were the prefectural capitals of Yongzhou and Lianzhou, respectively. Yingyang is an old name for Daozhou. For other poems praising the beauty of the southern landscape, see Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuanji*, 29.759–760; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 3.33b (but Ouyang Zhan was a native of Quanzhou, Fujian). Cf. Schafer 1967, 45–47, 149–151; Shang 2007, 493–295.

25 Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 175 (縣齋有懷).

26 Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 1656 (送區冊序). Cf. Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 222 (赴江陵途中: “The clerks and people resemble monkeys”).

How can I govern and instruct them,  
If we cannot even understand each other?<sup>27</sup>

Yuan Zhen thought that the mountain dwellings in the Southwest resembled nests. Other officials in the South complained that towns consisted of a few thatched huts, scattered at random and poorly constructed. The local food did not agree with the exiles, either because they found it strange, such as rice and seafood, or because they thought it disgusting, such as frogs and insects. And although many sensed the presence of deities and dragons in the shrouded mountains and roiling waters, they were appalled by the shamanic rites and exorcist bonfires, by the awful shrines and the dragon-boat races.<sup>28</sup>

In this foreign land, exiles sought to establish a familiar order by language and by violence. As Han Yu and Bai Juyi remarked in the paragraph above, disgraced officials were sent to the remote territories to impose governance and to collect taxes. They also gathered strategic information and submitted maps and gazetteers in order to aid in the conquest and continued occupation of peripheral regions: “The Man and Yi from along the seacoast exhibit their dances / The administrative regions south of the mountains submit new gazetteers.”<sup>29</sup> Funerary monuments bestowed high praise on men who had succeeded in civilizing the landscape and customs of remote areas. Such testimony records that Wei Dan (753–810) built a four-mile city wall around Rongzhou (now Rong County, Guangxi province) and taught the population to open up agricultural land and to grow tea, and that he later replaced the thatched huts of Hongzhou (present-day Nanchang City, Jiangxi province) with fourteen thousand tiled-roof houses and a walled market, and secured the area with dikes, drains,

27 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.11.219 (徵秋稅畢題郡南亭). Cf. Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 42.1170.

28 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.16.323–325; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 788–789, 793–794, 2377–2379; Li Qunyu, *Li Qunyu shiji*, I.1.2ab; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, 1.12–13, 1.49, 3.497; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 23.290, 25.321, 25.324, 26.341, 26.343, 38.573; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 42.1180; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 3.29–30, 15.173; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 1.7a. Cf. Schafer 1967, 9–17, 48–59, 249–252.

29 Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 4.5a (送鄭尚書赴廣州). Cf. Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 14.179; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 23.618–619, 42.1146. For the availability of detailed gazetteers, maps, and atlases of strategic regions in the South and Southeast see, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 818; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, 1.18.351; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 8.102–103, 9.107–108; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 42.1146; Sun Qiao, *Sun Kezhi wenji*, 7.1ab. Cf. Schafer 1967, 147–149; A. Wang 2019, 129–184. For references to violent conquest and pacification of southern peoples and territories see, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2105–2107, 2377–2379; Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 10.112–113; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 5.50b–51b; Pi Rixiu, *Pizi wensou*, 10.109; Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 5.10a. Cf. H. Clark 2015, 16–39; Schafer 1967, 1–2, 18–20, 33–49.

and irrigation canals.<sup>30</sup> In Qianzhou (present-day Ganzhou City, southern Jiangxi), Zhang Shu (736–795) restricted fishing and catching birds to precise seasons and enforced the Tang law that prohibited the slaughter of oxen.<sup>31</sup> Liu Zongyuan reportedly transformed the population of Liuzhou (now Liuzhou City, Guangxi province) by means of ritual and law so that they accepted the equation of proper humanity with submission to Tang civilization (“Although this land is remote from the capital, we too are people of Heaven. ... If we do not transform and submit, we are not human”), and they gave built form to their newly acquired civilization by constructing a temple to Kongzi (“Confucius”) and by laying out their streets and alleys on a grid.<sup>32</sup> Other exiles built schools to teach the canonical texts, determined the true names and proper sacrifices for local deities, and destroyed shrines that violated the imperial norm.<sup>33</sup>

In many compositions, however, colonial violence operates within a narrower compass, as exiles create scenic spots, name the land and the waters, and make gardens for themselves in the alien surroundings. When officials raise pavilions to commemorate military victories or lay out parks to ease the burdens of government, the connection between the alteration of the local landscape and the imposition of a foreign administration become explicit. Liu Zongyuan, for example, sets the pavilion on Zi Family Island within a political context of imperial pacification, both in the southern periphery and in the empire as a whole:

Guizhou [present-day Guilin City, Guangxi province] has many numinous mountains that spring steep and straight from the earth, ringed by forested

30 See Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.7.694–696; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 3.30. Cf. Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.7.702; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2596–2597; Huangfu Shi, *Huangfu chizheng wenji*, 5.1ab; Li Ao, *Li Wengong ji*, 11.10ab; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 3.31–32. Cf. Schafer 1967, 59–61.

31 See Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2207. Cf. Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2392. The slaughter of oxen was prohibited because “oxen are essential to tilling and planting.” Zhangsun Wuji, *Tang liu shuyi*, 15.1107.

32 See Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2596 (柳州羅池廟碑); Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 5.124–125, 20.554–555. Cf. Huangfu Shi, *Huangfu chizheng wenji*, 5.2b–3b, 5.3b–4b; Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 3.30; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 3.27b, 5.51b–52b, 5.53a–55b.

33 See, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2312, 2318–2319, 2323–2325, 2383–2384, 2407–2410; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, III.4.694–695; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 26.706–709, 28.743–744, 28.752–753; Huang Tao, *Puyang Huang yushi ji*, 2.280–288. Cf. H. Clark 2015, 152–155; Hansen 1993, 101; Johnson 1985, 403–407. Whether officials perceived the South to have been transformed by the civilizing virtue of the Tang appears to have depended on the occasion or the genre. See, for example, Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.15.931–932 (廣州刺史謝上表: “Of old they had the manners of the Yi; at present they embrace the customs of the Hua”) and I.18.1071 (吳從除蓬州賈師由除瓊州蕭蕃除羅州刺史等制: “This region lies far from the capital city; its customs blend elements from the Man and the Yi. They are ignorant of civilization and law; they are vulnerable to deception and pillage”); Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 1473, 2318.

flatlands. The water to the left of the government compound is called the Li River; the island in the middle of the river is called the Island of the Zi Family. The landscape of mountains and rivers that lies between the mountain range and the seacoast is here manifest in its full perfection, yet nobody in the past or in the present has had the means to know it. In the twelfth year of the Yuanhe reign [817 CE], Vice Censor-in-Chief Lord Pei [i.e., Pei Xingli, fl. 800–820] came to oversee this region and to survey as Supervisor-in-Chief all affairs in the twenty-seven civil and military prefectures. As robbers fled and evildoers reformed, he applied virtue and kindness. After a year his governance was complete: prosperous it was, and blessed. At this time, the Son of Heaven subjected the Yi of the Huai region [at Caizhou, present-day Runan, Henan province] and brought order to the land north of the Yellow River, and His Majesty announced this to the upper ranks.<sup>34</sup> *My Lord forthwith remitted this happy news to the lower ranks and then gathered officials and clerks to climb this spot and celebrate. As he took in the distant views, he regretted that this site had hitherto been neglected.* Thereupon, he generously rewarded the local population and moved them to overgrown lands where they felled mean trees and cut dense weeds. He gave directions in one place while making designs for another, his mind active and his eye alert. Suddenly it was as though the landscape floated upward and rose to the surface, to look down upon the mists and vapors. The myriad mountains stood within view, the twinned rivers were clearly outlined, the winding mist had an inner brightness. Wherever he looked, all was right. What nobody had ever seen before was now suddenly visible. He felt as though he was swept away and dancing on air as he fetched others to come roam with him. Then he oversaw carpenters in the preparation of timbers, determined the north and prospected the directions, and built a pavilion for leisurely withdrawal.<sup>35</sup>

The universal beauty that Pei Xingli reveals in the exotic surroundings of Guizhou manifests and confirms the universal political order that he represents. The pavilion he erects at the center of the cleared landscape not only commemorates the order that he has established south of the mountains, but honors the surrender that Emperor Xianzong has won north

34 On these military campaigns, see Peterson 1979, 531–533.

35 Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 27.726–727 (桂州裴中丞作訾家洲亭記). Cf. Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 27.729–730; Xu Hun, *Xu Yonghui wenji*, 1.14b. For examples of the creation of parks and pavilions for the benefit of officials see, for example, Huangfu Shi, *Huangfu chizheng wenji*, 5.2ab; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 27.738; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, 5.89. Cf. Hargett 2018, 76–86.

of the Huai and Yellow Rivers, and marks Guizhou as a true province of the empire. In other commemorations of southern parks and pavilions, the violence visited upon the landscape replaces rather than accompanies the violence of government. Sometimes the view of a cleared hill or a planted pond brings the local population to moral understanding; sometimes it merely consoles the isolated official who created it. Especially the private gardens of exiled officials, like the poems they wrote about them for their distant friends, comforted them with the certainty that the political and aesthetic order they represented was indeed universal, and that they had mastery of that order, even if their uncivilized surroundings ignored it and their corrupt superiors in the capital resented it.<sup>36</sup>

From these small enclaves of civilized beauty, and from the teeming, threatening world that lay outside them, the capital at Chang'an appeared to banished officials as the center of the cosmic order—a center that was as much outraged and subverted by the periphery as it was created and confirmed by it. That Chang'an lay at the center of the exile's literary geography is to be expected. Not only did exiles spend their days waiting for news that the imperial court had reversed their punishment, but they wrote in order to place themselves in relationship to the capital, as they had gained office through the mastery of classical composition and hoped that the letters and poems they sent from their state of disgrace to friends and patrons would demonstrate their continued worth.<sup>37</sup> More particular is that the capital that the exiles remembered and gazed toward and saw in their dreams was not a city of urban entertainment or cultural sophistication. Instead, it was a numinous center of charismatic power where the hours of the day and the seasons of the year were manifested in their proper form, in the perfectly created nature of imperial parks and noble

36 For examples of the creation of private gardens in exile, see Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 616, 1632–1633; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 24.642–643, 27.732–733, 27.735–736, 28.749–751, 29.762–766, 29.769–774; Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 1.8, 2.16. Cf. Owen 1996, 28–33; A. Wang 2018, 209–246. By imposing classical diction on the southern landscape, exiled officials dignified their appointments, placing their jurisdictions as well as themselves within the civilized and civilizing empire. See, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 138; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 22.277–278, 23.288, 24.302, 25.321, 25.324, 26.342, 27.358–362; 38.577–9; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji, juan* 18, *juan* 27–29; Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 2.13, 3.30.

37 The great majority of the officials sent into exile during the ninth century had won office through the examinations rather than by connection to the great clans. See Shang 2007, 447–457. On the instrumental use of writing and friendship by exiled officials, see Shields 2015, 143–148, 175–198. For examples of exiles receiving news from the capital and keeping up correspondence see, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.16.333–340; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 32.440. Liu Zongyuan sought to win the approval of the court by composing hymns that celebrated the victories and virtue of the Tang dynasty. See Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 1.24–25, 1.29–36, 1.39–40. On the attractions of the capital, see also L. Feng 2015, 44–67; Thilo 1997, xi–xii, 315–329, 604–606.

gardens.<sup>38</sup> During the first full moon of 844, in Yongle (present-day Mancheng, Hebei province), Li Shangyin (813–858) imagines the lanterns strung up in the capital and the “scented coaches and precious carriages” that throng past them in the avenues, while he joins the local population in paying homage to their goddess Zigu.<sup>39</sup> The spring weather in Xunyang (present-day Jiujiang city, Jiangxi province) reminds the exiled Bai Juyi of the parks in Luoyang and Chang’an, where the blossoms receive a fuller, more joyous celebration:

“Spring Arrives (Second of Three Poems about Spring in Xunyang)”

Spring arrives to stir up thoughts of my hometown;  
Suddenly the scenery reminds me of the capitals.  
On Golden Valley’s trampled blossoms enter scented hoofs;  
Over Serpentine Park’s flattened grass ride slender wheels.

With whose good wine can I pass successive nights of joy?  
In whose red towers can I sleep through the light of day?  
There is only this sleepless, sober stranger,  
Passing the spring on a cold floor in old Pencheng city.<sup>40</sup>

One branch of red apricot blossoms that reaches over a wall reminds the traveling Wu Rong (889 *jinshi*, d. 903) of the “thousand myriad” of apricot trees that cast their shade on the imperial capital.<sup>41</sup> In the compositions preserved in the collected works of the Tang, in other words, literati cherish their memories of Chang’an, not because the capital had unrivaled markets

38 For examples of exiled officials gazing toward Chang’an, see Cao Ye, *Cao cibujì*, 1.7b; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, II.4.500; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxiji*, 25.325, 30.408; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuanji*, 42.1166; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhenji*, 17.202. For examples of exiled officials dreaming of Chang’an see Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 15b; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiaojì*, 6.213; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuangji*, 5.231.

39 Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, 3.497 (正月十五夜聞京有燈恨不得觀). On the date and place of this poem, see Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shige jijie*, 538.

40 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyiji*, I.17.355 (灞陽春三首：春來). Pencheng is an older name for Xunyang.

41 Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 3.11b (途中見杏花). For other examples of the capital as the center of time and nature, see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyiji*, I.16.340, I.18.380, I.18.387; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, II.3.474; Li Qunyu, *Li Qunyu shiji*, I.2.5a, II.2.1a; Li Shen, *Li Shenji*, 104–107; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxiji*, 25.325; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuanji*, 42.1148; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiaojì*, 3.120, 6.214; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuangji*, 5.232; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 2.6b, 2.17b. Cf. also Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 862; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxiji*, 1.6–8. There are examples of travelers who remember urban entertainments or street scenes in Chang’an, but they are rare, and they tend to be particular. Bai Juyi, for example, shares memories of the capital with a merchant’s wife who was trained as a courtesan in the Instructional Ward in Chang’an. See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyiji*, I.12.241–243. See also Cao Ye, *Cao cibujì*, 2.10a; Liu Tui, *Liu Tuiji*, 5.3a; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhenji*, 14.162.



or surpassing architecture, but because it possessed to a superior degree and in a superior combination the things that could be found elsewhere in the realm, and that one day the transformative virtue of the ruling house might spread to the furthest reaches of the world. If, in fact, the officials banished to “the edge of the sky” had wanted rare merchandise and exotic music, they could have found them in the metropolitan port of Guangzhou, a city of some two hundred thousand inhabitants, supplied with foreign luxuries by merchants from India and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>42</sup> But the commercial streetscape of Guangzhou has left as few marks in the collected works of the Tang as have the shops and markets of Chang’an.<sup>43</sup>

### Chang’an Written from Nearby

When Bai Juyi returned from Suzhou to Chang’an in 827, he stopped at the Cuiwei Monastery in the Southern Mountains and wrote two poems about the city that lay below in the distance:

“Climbing Guanyin Terrace and Looking Upon the City,” by Bai Juyi

A hundred thousand households arrayed as the grid on a *go* board;  
The twelve avenues aligned like the furrows in a vegetable garden.  
In the distance I make out, very small, the torches entering the palace:  
A threading constellation, west of the fivefold gate.

“Climbing Efficacious Response Terrace and Looking North,” by Bai Juyi

Looking from this height I finally see that the world of man is small;  
Faced with this distance I first realize that the realm of form is empty.  
Yet I turn away to go back into the metropolis;  
A tiny grain of rice dropped into a giant storehouse.<sup>44</sup>

The first poem has often been cited as a comprehensive description of the layout of Chang’an, but the four lines in fact trace a distinct trajectory, across

42 See Sirāfi, *Accounts of India and China*, 29–31, 45–49, 67–69, 77–79. See also Schafer 1967, 27–29; Schottenhammer 2015, 440–449, 460–461; Z. Wang 1991.

43 Cf. Schafer 1967, 27–29.

44 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.25.560–561 (登觀音臺望城; 登靈應臺北望). “The realm of form” is the second of the Buddhist “three realms” of mortality (*sanjie* 三界, Sanskrit *trailokya*): the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of non-form.

an undifferentiated mass of residences, along the wide avenues, to a procession of officials entering the palace for the morning audience. Bai Juyi's gaze does not distinguish between humble dwellings and noble mansions or seek out the markets and pagodas. Instead, his eye is drawn toward the palace, in the center north of the city, where Bai hopes to join again the elect officials who attend the imperial audience at dawn. Moreover, as he guides the reader's imagination northward through the city, he leads it upward through a hierarchy of images: from the human artifice of a *go* board, to the created nature of a vegetable plot, and finally to a constellation of stars, reminding the reader that the palace occupies the position of the Pole Star in the cosmographic layout of the capital. The second poem perceives Chang'an through the Buddhist vocabulary of Bai Juyi's monastic surroundings, but its comparison of the capital to a giant granary again subordinates the wide discrepancies between the residents of Chang'an to the unifying, life-giving power of the imperial center.

Other returning officials perceived Chang'an in much the same way, as a center of virtuous power continuous with nature and the cosmos, and as the heir to the historical monuments in the surrounding plain. To Du Mu (803–852), for example, the imperial city appears in a numinous landscape, under a shimmering sky:

“Looking upon Chang'an on a Clear Day,” by Du Mu

The azure screen of mountains opens on the Phoenix City;  
 A shimmering light in the heavens appears after the rain.  
 I recall that here the chariot with the dragon-couriers roams;  
 Rising smoke curls up leisurely from Spring Prospect Terrace.<sup>45</sup>

Climbing up the rising plain in the heat of summer, Jia Dao (788–843) perceives Chang'an as a monument to perennial ambition:

“Written on the Plain North of the Capital,” by Jia Dao

Climbing up the plain I see the city gates;  
 Leaning on my stick I mind the burning sky:

45 Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, II.1265 (長安晴望). “Phoenix City” is Chang'an and “Spring Prospect Terrace” is presumably located in Spring Prospect Palace, east of the city. The “chariot with the [six] dragon-couriers” belongs to the emperor and is a synecdoche for his person. Fang Gan notices the smoke above an imperial park before entering the city to visit relatives who live close to the palace. See Fang Gan, *Xuanying ji*, 3.2a.

Below the midday sun, a traveler on the road;  
Under the locust blossoms, cicadas in the wind.

The distant mountains stand above the trees of Qin;  
The clear Wei River flows before the tombs of Han.  
Why do we dwell in this world of man?  
We are all pulled forward by fame and fortune.<sup>46</sup>

In their distant views of Chang'an, the above poems lay out the literary as well as the physical geography of the city. For within the walls of the capital, too, Tang literati foreground the palace, the avenues, the imperial parks, and the suburbs in order to confirm that Chang'an is indeed the center of power and the center of time and of nature: "Truly, the capital is the center of the four directions; Xianqin [i.e., Chang'an] is the pivot of the subcelestial realm."<sup>47</sup>

At the center of this cosmic city of created nature and charismatic power stood the palace. Here the emperor followed the movement of the sun, appearing in front of his officials at dawn and retiring at night.<sup>48</sup> Here the court officials gathered before the first light to see the moon and the stars fade in the western sky as the palace gates opened to the new day. Here, within a labyrinth of walls and gates, lay the most exquisite gardens, and here sounded the water clock that set the time for the city and for the realm:<sup>49</sup>

"Prospect on the Avenue of Heaven at Dawn," by Xu Hun

Bright stars hang low by Infinity Palace;  
The lotus gates swing open in lofty height.  
Layered drumbeats urge the waning moon;  
A faint bell welcomes the early frost.

46 Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiang ji*, 8.2a. "Qin" in the fifth line refers to the region of Chang'an rather than to the Qin dynasty. In his "Rhapsody on the Prospect" (*Wangfu* 望賦), Liu Yuxi perceives the same historic landscape as evidence of great achievements and cosmic legitimacy. See Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 1.14.

47 Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*, 2.111 (為尚書渤海公舉人自代狀).

48 See Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, 1.17.319.

49 On the palace gardens and the water clock see, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.19.414; Han Wo, *Han neihan bieji*, 1.1a; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 22.272; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 26.317, 33.385; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 3.14b. For an attempt to create copies of the palace water clock in Jiangxi and Chizhou, see Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, 1.10.798–799.

In the guarded enclosure drifts an auspicious air;  
 From the palace halls blazes a divine luster.  
 Again I bow to wish my lord longevity,  
 Like the Southern Mountains lofty and eternal.<sup>50</sup>

Bai Juyi, who sought out the palace in his view from the Southern Mountains before proceeding into Chang'an, reports to a friend about his movements at court before he describes his own house in Renewing Prosperity Ward:

The palace gates open at dawn to summon the court officials;  
 The beaded strings [of the emperor's cap] hang still, azure the incense smoke.  
 Walking up the Dragon's Tail staircase one ascends into the void,  
 To stand before the heavenly visage less than a foot away.

The palace blossoms resemble snowflakes as I follow the emperor's carriage;  
 The forbidden moon appears frost-covered when I sit in the palace guesthouse.  
 My status low, I am startled each time I enter a palace banquet;  
 My talent small, I feel ashamed whenever I draft an imperial edict.<sup>51</sup>

If the imperial city occupied the central position in the ritual geography of the capital—a series of walled enclosures placed on the central axis of the metropolis, containing palaces, temples, and government offices—it constituted only part of the cosmic urban scheme. In an inscription on the office wall of the Right Vice Commissioner for the Avenues, Ouyang Zhan (757–802) compares the city of Chang'an to a hall that dominates the walled courtyard of the empire. By maintaining order in this cosmopolitan

50 Xu Hun, *Xu Yonghui wenji*, 2.27b (天街曉望). Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.9.175, I.25.572–573; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, 3.639; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 3.5ab, 4.3ab, 9.6b; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 3.1b, 3.4b, 3.8b; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 2.4b–5a.

51 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.12.229–230 (醉後走筆酬劉五主簿). The moon is “forbidden” because it is seen from within the Forbidden City. The prominence of the palace in the literary imagination is evident also in Du Mu's memory of serving in the palace, in Li Deyu's composition of a poem about the imperial city in a dream, and in Chen Jing's choice to begin his “Rhapsody on the Northern Capital” (*Beidu fu* 北都賦) with a description of the palace. See Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.2.303; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, II.3.461–462; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 8.192. For descriptions of the Tang imperial city and its palaces, see Thilo 1997, 41–106; Xiong 2000, 57–128.

temple, the Commissioner assists the emperor in promoting moral harmony throughout the realm:

The assistant to the Commissioner for the Imperial Avenues has a weighty task. The Son of Heaven beyond the capital has the responsibility for the six directions. Therefore he has within the capital laid out the six avenues to reach them. *Yonder is the courtyard; here are the hall and the rooms.* To secure calm outside, one must first establish it inside. The Commissioner was thus created to keep the avenues clear—an addition made by our Tang Dynasty to the administrative structure. His duty is to impose order on the imperial avenues, and to prevent plots by royal enemies. ... Truly, the capital is an assemblage of the imposing and the brave, the elegant and the erudite; it is a gathering of the Man and the Yi, the Rong and the Di. A succession of wheels, a trample of feet; a mass of movement, a welter of chaos. But if I block the entrance of thieves, their movements will become lawful; if I study the eyes of thieves, their weaknesses will become visible. Then, within the ninefold enclosure, crooks will shun the wealthy; the lowly will respect their betters. ... One will step out of one's gate as though to meet a guest; one will yield in the road as though to welcome a deity.<sup>52</sup>

Through the splendid central avenue proceeded at the spring and autumn equinoxes the imperial carriage and its awful train—"rattling and rumbling the carriage wheels grinding the frozen jade"—on the way to the Altar of Heaven for the suburban sacrifice, to represent mankind in front of Heaven and to inaugurate the seasons.<sup>53</sup> Robed officials across the empire amplified this sacrifice at the Altar of Soil and Grain in every prefecture and every county. Along the avenues rose the lofty halls and ancient trees, the towers and pagodas of the Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples that offered prayers for the longevity of the empire, and whose art and learning increased the prestige of their imperial patrons.<sup>54</sup> Past these monasteries and temples filed foreign ambassadors, who by their gifts and by their submission to imperial ritual confirmed that the capital stood at the center of the world,

52 Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 5.49b (右街副使廳壁記), emphasis added.

53 Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 7.272 (寄張籍). See also Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, 1.14.95; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 895; Sun Qiao, *Sun Kezhi wenji*, 6.1a–2a. On the emperor's ability to change the climate of the realm, see Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 408–411, 1473. Cf. Wechsler 1985.

54 According to Thomas Thilo (2006, 308), the most important Buddhist and Daoist temples had been built in the center of the southern part of Chang'an, on either side of the central avenue, to constitute "a kind of magical center, by which the city and the government residing in it would be guaranteed protection by the deities of both religions."

at the innermost and highest circle of civilization.<sup>55</sup> The Imperial Academy, in the Dedication to Foundations Ward, paid homage to Kongzi as the King Who Propagates Culture and coordinated the sacrifices that officials brought to that last living sage at schools and temples across the empire, at the identical hour and with identical rites.<sup>56</sup> And the city itself was a giant cosmic field, oriented on the cardinal points, set before the eternal Southern Mountains, and divided by perpendicular avenues into gated wards with propitious names that conducted the numina of imperial power and of geomantic forces. During droughts, the southern gates of all 110 residential wards were closed and altars were set up at their northern entrances, to block the fiery flow of *yang* and to solicit the moist relief of *yin*.<sup>57</sup> In 845, Li Deyu (787–850) protested that high officials should be allowed to build ancestral temples within this cosmic grid, against an edict that had banished them to the suburbs, but he agreed that such temples should be constructed only “outside the enclosures,” away from the imperial city and the central thoroughfare, and at a distance from Serpentine Park.<sup>58</sup>

In the poems and prose of the ninth century, this city is set in motion by human ambition:

When the sun appears, the dust and grime fly up;  
 Masses of people move with frantic speed.  
 With frantic speed, what do they seek?  
 Every single one of them: wealth and fame.<sup>59</sup>

This ambition drives the inhabitants of the capital so generally that “In Chang’an no one walks slowly.”<sup>60</sup> The dust thrown up by the traffic becomes

55 On the significance of tribute missions see, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2183; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, I.2.20–22, I.5.62–65, I.18.347, I.19.371; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 26.703–704; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, 1.17, 4.69–70; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 24.283, 24.285–290. On the centrality of the capital to the order of the empire, see also Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 31, 1611; Li Guan, *Li Yuanbin wenji*, 5.53; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 46.494.

56 See Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 5.121. On the location of the Imperial Academy, see Thilo 1997, 210.

57 See Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji, chanshu*.5.236. During excessive rain, the northern gates were closed and altars set up at the southern entrances. Cf. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1354–1355, 37.1358–1360, 37.1363, 37.1365; Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1875; Wang Qinro, *Cefu yuangui*, 60.638. Cf. also Thilo 1997, 109; Thilo 2006, 368–369.

58 Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, I.10.183–184 (奉宣今日以後百官不得於京城置廟狀). On the place of Serpentine Park in the geomantic scheme of Chang’an, see Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 5.46b. On the ritual geography of Chang’an, cf. Thilo 1997, 320–329; Xiong 2000, 129–164, 235–276.

59 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.5.93 (早送舉人入試).

60 Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 1.2 (灞上輕薄行). Cf. Li He, *Li Changji wenji*, 4.11b.

a metaphor for the relentless ambition that has stirred it, for like the ambition the dust is pervasive, inescapable, oppressive, and blinding.<sup>61</sup> The capital is “the field of fame and fortune” and “the site of fame and fortune,” and “Whoever knows that fame and fortune end, / Has lost the Chang’an state of mind.”<sup>62</sup> Every day at dawn, a flood of traffic rushes to the palace to attend the morning audience. A deafening roar fills the avenues on the morning when the results of the annual examinations are posted: “A thousand hooves, ten thousand wheels, for one fragrant branch.”<sup>63</sup> The lure of winning this immortal fame in the imperial examinations draws an unending train of travelers into Chang’an and Luoyang, despite the likelihood of failure:

Back and forth the carriages and horses travel,  
 Vying to tread in Chang’an’s dust.  
 Myriad eyes are fixed on heaven high;  
 Those who make the ascent will suffer.<sup>64</sup>

In the secondary capital Luoyang, “this agitated realm of fame and fortune, / residents are fewer than travelers,” according to Bao Rong (809 *jinshi*).<sup>65</sup> Meng Jiao (751–814) finds that the streetscape of Chang’an matches the ambition of an examination candidate:

Along the thoroughfares of Chang’an,  
 Reaching locust branches cast a tangled shade.  
 Beneath them is a man in search of fame—  
 One man with the determination of a million.<sup>66</sup>

Rather than uniting the capital by a single purpose, however, ambition divided the city between the strivers and the successful, between those

61 See, for example, Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 2.12b.

62 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.8.159 (食飽). For the generic phrases see, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.5.91, I.5.93, I.8.156, I.12.228; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 2.77. Luoyang is characterized the same way. See, for example, Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.3.327; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 3.4b. Bai Juyi, however, thinks that there is much less ambition in Luoyang. See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.29.665.

63 Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 1.7 (下第題青龍寺僧房). The “fragrant branch” is the cinnamon branch, a reference to successful examination candidates. Cf. Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 1.40, 8.290; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 3.9b–10a.

64 Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 1.13b (送薛蔓應舉). Cf. Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 8.330.

65 Bao Rong, *Bao Rong shiji*, 4.2a (途中旅思二首, 其一). According to Han Yu, examination candidates and their servants amounted to only a small percentage of the population of Chang’an. See Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 1608–1609.

66 Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 8.309 (感別送從叔校書簡再登科東歸).

who sought fame and those who had the power to grant it, between the rich and the poor. To examination candidates in search of a patron, the capital could appear as a forbidding array of gated compounds, the vermilion gates of noble mansions both barriers to entry and metaphors of exclusion:

“Feelings while Traveling outside Chang’an,” by Meng Jiao

Everyone says that the road into the clouds  
Can be walked by all who have feet.  
My horse too has four hooves,  
But outside my gate there seems to be no ground.

In the jade capital the twelve towers  
Rise up and up to lean against the blue.  
*Below them are a thousand vermilion gates;  
Which gate will recommend an independent man?*<sup>67</sup>

Han Yu perceived that scholars dedicated to moral learning, such as himself, did not trace the same paths through the city as the patrons they courted, and that the men who judged the moral worth of examination candidates knew only material value:

“Companions in Chang’an, a Poem for Meng Jiao,” by Han Yu

Among the companions in Chang’an,  
Poor and rich each find their followers.  
And when close friends come to visit,  
*They also have distinct amusements.*

In humble houses there is literature and history;  
Behind lofty gates there are reeds and pipes.

67 Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 3.124 (長安旅情), emphasis added. Elsewhere, Meng Jiao notes that the gates of wealthy mansions appeared no less forbidding when they were open: “House after house has opened its vermilion gates / One can see inside but one cannot enter.” Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 1.4 (長安道). On Meng Jiao’s sense of exclusion, cf. Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 7. For similar sentiments about the gates of the powerful see, for example, Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 85; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 2a; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 1.22, 9.150. According to *Record of the Seasons in Qin* (*Qinzhong suishi ji*, 908 CE), the first day of the tenth month, on which examination candidates submitted their portfolio to a potential patron, was called “choosing a gate.” See Li Chuo, *Qinzhong suishi ji*, 1b.



How can one tell success from failure?  
Still I will distinguish the wise from the dull.<sup>68</sup>

When the rich and the poor and the powerful and the dependent encountered one another, in parks or during festivals, their differences appeared more acute rather than less. In his “Rhapsody on the Ponds of Serpentine Park,” Wang Qi (fl. 862–892) presents the waters of the famous park as a metaphor for the refinement of the capital and the florescence of the empire, because all residents come to admire them.<sup>69</sup> But to Luo Yin (833–909), the revelers and the view of the Southern Mountains represent the power and the false values that continue to exclude him, just as his residence among the noble and the powerful reminds him daily that his chances of passing the examinations depend on their erring judgment.<sup>70</sup>

In order to escape the exhausting grind of this grey ambition, literati visited imperial parks, made excursions into the suburbs, and created gardens, so that they might trace individual, sensory pathways through restorative greenery. Away from the deafening noise and the blinding dust, literati recovered their sense of purpose and worth, affirmed their friendship with peers and patrons, and experienced for themselves the perfect succession of seasons in the landscape of Chang’an.<sup>71</sup> If the visitors and the cultural associations of Serpentine Park intimidated examination candidates such as Luo Yin, serving officials praised the park for its beauty and for the respite it offered from the noise and obligations of the capital:

“In Reply to Yuan Zongjian’s [d. 822] Poem ‘Sent the Day after We Roamed Together in Serpentine Park,’” by Bai Juyi

The million people of Chang’an  
All go out to go to work.  
Only you and I, dear sir,  
Ride leisurely on horseback.

We ride to the head of Serpentine Park,  
Into the reflected light of herbs and trees.

68 Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 5 (長安交遊者贈孟郊), emphasis added. Cf. Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 917–918; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 1.28, 6.103.

69 See Wang Qi, *Linjiao ji*, 26a–27b. Cf. Li Chuo, *Qinzhong suishi ji*, 1a.

70 See Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 1.19, 1.21. Cf. Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 1.28, 3.50, 4.76, 6.97.

71 Cf. Owen 1996, 82, 87–89, 94–105; X. Yang 2003, 51–90.

The Southern Mountains with their bracing colors  
 Console the visitors in their worries.

Waterfowl expose their down;  
 Wind-stirred lotuses sway their roots.  
*Why need we travel to Canglang River?  
 We can rinse our cap strings here.*<sup>72</sup>

The park will never look like this again;  
 Our joy may not match as closely in the future.  
*Sunk in sorrow we enter the world of dust,  
 Where the evening bell tolls with gravity.*

After I return and spend the night,  
 Worldly thoughts emerge again.  
 But hearing now your precious song,  
 My worldly thoughts are rinsed once more.<sup>73</sup>

The suburbs and the nearby mountains afforded a similar escape from the noise, the dust, and the obligations of the capital, but the extent of the landscape outside the city walls offered a greater variety of itineraries and perspectives than did the parks, and thereby provided more materials for the expression of an individual vision.<sup>74</sup> In the Southern Mountains especially, the poet could become aware that his sensory perception alone brought together the ever-shifting views, sounds, and smells encountered on the winding mountain paths, but the suburbs could provoke the same realization:

“After Returning from the Court, I Roam South of the City”, by Bai Juyi

After I return from court, my horse is not yet tired;  
 At the beginning of the fall, the days are still long.  
 I turn the reins to go southward of the city:  
 The suburban fields are just now clear and fresh.

72 Reference to *Mengzi*, 7A.12a.

73 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.5.92 (答元八宗簡同遊曲江後明日見贈), emphasis added. Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.5.93, I.14.271; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 561; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 8.5b; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 1.5a.

74 See, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.15.300; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 3.6a.

Bamboo and water hem a narrow path,  
 Zigzagging between the river and the hills.  
 Looking up I see the light on the evening mountains;  
 Bending down I stir the glimmer in an autumn spring.

To the blue pines I tether my horse;  
 On the white stones I make my bed.  
 Always I weary of the cap and robe,  
 But today I feel rested and strong.

*This morning I lined up like a goose or an egret;  
 This evening I roam with the gulls and the cranes.  
 Once the scheming heart is thus exhausted,  
 These two places will not be confused.*<sup>75</sup>

Who would distinguish his heart from his steps?  
 Only he who roams can store impressions.<sup>76</sup>

The gardens of Chang'an and Luoyang were laid out so as to become continuous with the parks and the suburbs, the mountains to the south made part of the design and the crowded intervening streets moved out of sight, out of hearing, and out of mind:

“Passing by the Residence of Cultivated Talent Yong,” by Jia Dao

*By the birds' nests in the summer trees,  
 The Southern Mountains' peaks look fresh.*

75 This stanza extends the natural observation of the previous lines by an intricate ornithological metaphor. Court officials in Chang'an entered the court at dawn in goose file (or “goose-and-egret file” *yuānlù háng* 鵞鷺行), here a metaphor for the homogenizing strictures of protocol. Gulls and cranes, by contrast, fly at will and can therefore be followed only by someone who is spontaneous and without “a scheming heart”—a reference to *Liezi*, 2.21. Instead of entering the natural surroundings of the suburbs with the mindset of the court, Bai Juyi turns to the river and the trees to regain his freedom of mind.

76 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.6.127 (朝迴遊城南), emphasis added. Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.13.252, I.14.278, I.14.288; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 365, 845–846. The landscape outside the capital at Luoyang was configured in a similar way, with a river plain that gave way to scenic mountains, and it provided similar relief from court life and urban stress. See, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.8.153, I.22.497, I.22.497–498, I.23.526, I.29.660, I.29.668, I.29.672, I.33.744, I.33.754, I.34.783; Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiangji*, 3.6a.

To find coolness we sit quietly on rocks;  
To boil tea we draw water from a neighbor's well.

A bell tolls in the distance while half the sky clears up;  
Ants become scarce as the summer rain approaches.  
This secluded studio looks as though it is unfinished;  
Please invite me to sleep here for a night.<sup>77</sup>

Powerful officials who resided in large mansions on the thoroughfares might draw a continuous stream of illustrious visitors, but literati of lesser standing and lesser wealth prized their secluded gardens in hidden wards, “in a quiet alley where no one visits,” “where the dust of streets and markets doesn’t reach,” and “where the guest is always easy as in a hermitage,” so that “the house appears to stand in a mountain forest” and “one doesn’t realize it is the East Side.”<sup>78</sup> This language of obscurity and simplicity amplified rather than diminished the importance of these gardens as a means of self-expression. In these lasting compositions of water and bamboo, plants and trees, buildings and ornamental rocks, literati objectified the individual vision and moral ethos they expressed in their poems about the suburbs and the mountains. By following the paths and taking in the views, visitors to these gardens could experience the owner’s vision for themselves and confirm his good taste and moral worth. The poems and inscriptions that the owner and his visitors composed explicated the essentially literary aesthetic of the garden (with flowers that alluded to well-known poems and water that overflowed

77 Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiang ji*, 5.1b (過雍秀才居), emphasis added. Cf. Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 2.19; Wen Tingyun, *Wen Tingyun shiji*, 8.287; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 4.3a, 5.9b, 5.10ab, 7.8a.

78 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.19.414–416 (新昌新居書事四十韻); Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 9.3a (和李紳助教不赴看花), 5.11a (閑居遣興); Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 1.10a (晚春過崔駙馬東園). Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.14.276, 1.25.573, 1.26.589; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 669–670; Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiang ji*, 1.6a; Li He, *Li Changji wenji*, 4.5b; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 4.141; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 1.30; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 6.1ab, 7.9b, 9.7a; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 1.9a, 1.9b, 2.12b, 3.9a, 3.11a, 4.1ab; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 1.11ab, 2.12b, 3.13b. Of course, not all poets are able to shut out the noise of the city. See, for example, Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 1.16a; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 4.1b. For examples of noble houses on the thoroughfares see Xu Hun, *Xu Yonghui wenji*, 2.23a; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 17.193. On residential wards and desirable neighborhoods, see Xiong 2000, 195–234. For secluded residences in Luoyang see, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.5.91, 1.5.97–98, 1.8.162, 1.22.490, 1.23.519, 1.23.520, 1.23.522, 1.27.610, 1.27.615, 1.29.655, 1.30.676, 1.33.761, 1.35.808, 1.36.813, 1.36.822, 1.36.831; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 540–541; Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiang ji*, 9.3b; Li He, *Li Changji wenji*, 2.5b–6a; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 24.319; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 5.203, 5.207; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 7.10a (題崔駙馬宅: “My mind is by a forest spring, my body in the city”).

with metaphor), thus re-translating the garden into its literary sources and spreading the fame of its material expression in written compositions.<sup>79</sup>

When the streetscape between the garden gate and the city wall is raised to representation in the collected works of the ninth century, it appears as an extension of the parks and the suburbs. The traffic in the avenues remains a generic blur of speed and dust, and shops and markets never merit the poet's attention, but the shifting reflections in the imperial canal and the locust blossoms overhanging the avenues achieve exact expression.<sup>80</sup> When Wang Jian describes an outing to the pleasure quarters in the spring, for example, he focuses the reader's attention on the trees and flowers he encounters on his path and omits the pleasure quarters themselves:

“Spring Roaming in Chang’an,” by Wang Jian

I ride my horse toward the pleasure quarters,  
My new clothes wearing the scent of rain.  
The peach blossoms—red blush—look drunk;  
The willow trees—white clouds—go wild.

Suddenly I mourn the end of spring;  
Did the days ever begin to lengthen?  
As the peonies blossom in succession,  
City residents must again be busy.<sup>81</sup>

Liu Yuxi (772–842) notices “a red blaze bursting out above a wall” during the blossom season.<sup>82</sup> Han Yu hears “cicadas sing in the autumnal trees on the dike” of the imperial canal and sees “mushrooms growing all over the walls” on his return from court after heavy rain.<sup>83</sup> Wei Zhuang (ca. 836–910) is startled by the autumn wind in “Chang’an’s twelve locust blossom avenues.”<sup>84</sup>

79 See, for example, the compositions about Bai Juyi's garden in Pacing the Way Ward in Luoyang, notably Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.69.1450–1451, 1.70.1485–1486; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 34.496; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 2.3b. Cf. Owen 1996, 94–96; X. Yang 2003, 21–50. On gardens as discursive constructs located at an intersection of dialogic representations, see Clunas 1996, 15, 205–207; Harrist 1998, 46–66; Owen 1996, 82.

80 See, for example, Li He, *Li Changji wenji*, 1.2b–3a; Li Guan, *Li Yuanbin wenji*, 5.57; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 2.25b; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 1.23b–24a.

81 Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 3.4ab (長安春遊).

82 Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 27.356 (百花行).

83 Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 717 (早赴街西行香贈盧李二中舍人), 843 (雨中寄張博士籍侯主簿喜).

84 Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 1.65 (驚秋). Cf. Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 851. For other seasonal vignettes in the streets and avenues of Chang’an and Luoyang see, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi*

When snow covers the city in winter, the earth merges with the sky, and human dwellings become part of a uniform, continuous landscape: “Myriad houses blend together in a muffled mass; / A thousand trees catch the light with brilliant brightness.”<sup>85</sup> At such moments, the capital manifests itself as the center of nature and of time, as it provides each seasonal festival with its most distinct, most appropriate scenery. “Where is spring at its brilliant best?” asks Shen Yazhi (fl. 780–831), and answers: “Everything converges in Yongzhou,” in the imperial province.<sup>86</sup> Liu Yuxi calls Serpentine Park in the spring “the most luxuriously blossoming grounds of this age.”<sup>87</sup> Bai Juyi finds that the autumnal scenery of Serpentine Park provides a lasting point of reference in the changeable uncertainty of his existence: “Only in the fall of Serpentine Park, / Does all appear as in former days.”<sup>88</sup>

Thus are urban itineraries and urban views circumscribed in the collected works of the ninth century, in the writing of Chang’an and Luoyang as in the writing of other cities. Literati recovered their individual vision by roaming in the parks and in the suburban countryside (“Who would distinguish his heart from his steps?”), and they established their individual character by creating original prospects and singular paths in their gardens, but collected works give no evidence that the varied sights of the city contributed to a sense of self, or that markets and urban crowds provided materials for self-expression. Although ninth-century literati at times write of “roaming” (*you* 遊) in Chang’an or Luoyang, they do not attempt to replicate this urban roaming in writing, and it is possible that this roaming in the capitals referred narrowly to excursions in the parks and the suburbs, or to taking in the sights at seasonal festivals.<sup>89</sup> The space that literati traversed on

*ji*, I.28.644, I.35.807, I.37.849; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 864, 885; Li He, *Li Changji wenji*, 1.6a–7a, 1.8b–9b; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 82; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 25.325; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 5.18b.

85 Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 952 (詠雪贈張籍). Cf. Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 625, 627; Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 9.7b. For the importance of snow to Han Yu’s experience of proper seasons, see Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 267–268, 272.

86 Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, 1.11 (春色滿皇州).

87 Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 31.431 (曲江春望). Cf. Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 32.435.

88 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.11.224 (曲江感秋二首并序). Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.9.175, I.18.387.

89 For generic urban roaming that turns out to refer to roaming in Serpentine Park, see Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 561. For roaming as the manner for taking in seasonal sights, see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.13.263; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 2a; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 34.486. For general references to roaming in Chang’an and Luoyang, see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.8.162, I.13.263, I.70.1485; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.9.767–768; Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiang ji*, 8.6a; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 10b; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 25.325; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 6.214. Many of these references occur in poems written outside Chang’an, by literati hoping to return to the capital. Because the references to roaming are general rather than specific, it is difficult to discern whether the poets wish to take in the sights of streets and markets or whether they intend to ride through the parks and the countryside.

the way to the palace, to the suburbs, or to the house of a friend remains general or abstract, a mere distance (“In a light robe, on a steady horse, in the shade of locust trees, / It will be a short and easy ride, of a ward or two”), sometimes enlivened by a rustling tree that tells the season or by a fall of light that reveals the time of day.<sup>90</sup> Of poems about other cities, those composed in Suzhou and Yangzhou most resemble those about Chang’an and Luoyang, their bridges and towers and human activity set into their pleasing landscapes of mountains and waterways:

“Passing Suzhou, in Twenty-Four Rhymes,” by Li Shen (772–846)

Fog over water by the wall of Wu’s capital;  
Chang Gate frames the blue-green stream.  
Green willows by waterways deep and shallow;  
Painted prows on boats coming and going.

Vermilion doorways: thousands of dwellings;  
Cinnabar pillars: hundreds of towers.  
The glimmer of water ripples the endless bank;  
The colors of herbs betray Changzhou Park.<sup>91</sup>

“Staying Overnight in Yangzhou,” by Li Shen

The river is even, the ford is wide, the rolling fog is late;  
We sail past Jinling in an autumn of falling leaves.  
Frontier geese, honking faintly, pass the southern marshes;  
Red trees, thinning and thickening, reveal Yangzhou.

The lanterns on the nocturnal bridges form a Milky Way;  
The sails by the riverside wall reach to the starry sky.  
These days in the markets the customs have changed;  
One need not open one’s mouth to ask for Labyrinth Tower.<sup>92</sup>

90 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.28.635 (晚出尋人不遇).

91 Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 151 (過吳門二十四韻). Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.21.454–457, I.21.466, I.24.533, I.23.540, I.24.544; Li Ao, *Li Wengong ji*, 18.2a, 18.5a; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 196.

92 Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 138 (宿揚州). Jinling is the present-day city of Nanjing, Jiangsu province. Labyrinth Tower (*Milou* 迷樓) was a pleasure ground built under Emperor Yangdi (r. 604–618) of the Sui dynasty (589–618) and destroyed by the Tang. The final couplet is ambiguous: on the one hand, customs have changed because the Tang obliterated the decadent Sui and destroyed its Labyrinth Tower; on the other hand, the visitor need not ask directions to Labyrinth Tower

Bai Juyi explicitly compares Suzhou to Chang'an and Luoyang (concluding that Suzhou has more willows), and Du Mu finds that Yangzhou possesses the powerful splendor worthy of a capital.<sup>93</sup> Poems about Hangzhou celebrate the scenery at West Lake or marvel at the tidal bore, but mention its busy port and dense commerce only in relation to administrative responsibilities.<sup>94</sup>

Foreign merchants traveled through the Gobi Desert to trade at the Western Market of Chang'an, the fabled terminus of the Silk Road. The collected works extant from the ninth century, however, contain no descriptions of this market or of its wares.<sup>95</sup> Instead, the capital emerges from their pages as a cosmic plan, a numinous grid whose towering buildings and created nature identify it as the center of virtuous power, the precinct of the Son of Heaven who regulates the seasons and orders the world. The parks, the suburbs, and the gardens offer respite to examination candidates and officials, allowing them to escape the conforming forces of power and ambition by tracing individual itineraries and collecting their thoughts. But once they return to the rushing thoroughfares, they are once again assimilated into the anonymous traffic that courses through this throbbing heart of the civilized order:

“Rhyming with ‘Morning Prospect,’” by Bai Juyi

Cease your song of dusk on Kuaiji Mountain,  
And hear me praise the dawn in the Qin city.  
When the crowing roosters first give voice,  
The other birds have not yet left their nests.

because the entire city has become a pleasure ground. For similar poems about Yangzhou, see Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.3:337–339; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 217, 219; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 4.164, 4.175.

93 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.24.543; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.3:339. Cf. Fang Gan, *Xuanying ji*, 4.10b.

94 For poems about West Lake and the tidal bore, see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.23:507, I.23:513–514, I.36:833, I.43:944–945; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.10:794; Fang Gan, *Xuanying ji*, 6.3a; Li Ao, *Li Wengong ji*, 18.2a; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 45–78; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 4.65; Yao He, *Yao Shaojian shiji*, 7.7a, 7.9a. For mentions of the port, sailors, and tax revenue, see Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.16:1019; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, *zazhu*.306–307; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, 6.118–119.

95 The one possible exception is Luo Yin's “Rhapsody on the Market” (*Shi fu* 市賦), but if the detail of that composition may be drawn from the Western or Eastern Market of Chang'an, it is set in the ancient past, in a dialogue between Yan Ying (d. 500 BCE) and the Marquis of Qi. See Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, *chanshu*.4.219–220. Han Yu mentions in a memorial that in 815 the imperial government exhibited ten thousand strings of cash in the Eastern and Western Markets of Chang'an—the reward for information about the assassins of Chief Councilor Wu Yuanheng (758–815)—and that these piles of money every day drew tens of thousands of viewers. See Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2067–2068. On the layout and archaeological remains of the two markets, see Thilo 1997, 291–303; Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Xi'an Tangcheng fajuedui 1961.



Ding, ding—the water clock is almost empty;  
 Dong, dong—the watch drum is half past.  
 The Southern Mountains are a deep, deep blue;  
 The eastern sky grows slowly, slowly white.

*The middle of the road resembles a flowing stream;  
 The sides of the walls are like steep banks.*  
 Just when the Milky Way looks slightly tilted,  
 So the palace gates emerge fully resplendent.

Court carriages roll like thunder from the four directions;  
 Mounted torches shine like stars strung on a single wire.  
 Illustrious the abundant caps and canopies!  
 Luminescent the blazing vermilion and purple!

The elevated speedway runs to the Frog Pond;  
 The city streets curve around the Dragon Hills.  
 The white sun shines with sudden effulgence;  
 The red dust scatters in whirling clouds.

The noble clerics the passersby avoid;  
 The prestigious officials the pedestrians watch.  
 Auspicious smoke fills the empty sky;  
 Spring scenery spreads without bounds.

The goose file awaits the appointed hour;  
 The Dragon Tail reaches to high heaven.  
 The terraced halls are warm: one should climb them;  
 The bright prospect is clear: one must relish it.<sup>96</sup>

### Chang'an Written in the Past Tense

When literati of the ninth century wrote poems about earlier years they had spent in the capital, they sometimes introduced details of urban life that they omitted from the poems they composed in the city itself. Cao Ye (fl. 847), for

96 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.22.484 (和望曉), emphasis added. I am grateful to Michael Fuller for catching a mistake in my earlier translation of the third stanza.

example, remembered tall roofs and strong horses.<sup>97</sup> Others remembered prestigious banquets and crowded festivals.<sup>98</sup> An encounter with a fellow graduate in Jiangnan prompted Bai Juyi to write a long poem about his “former roaming” in Chang’an, recollecting places and activities that the polite conventions of graduation poetry prohibited, such as his visits to courtesans in Peaceful Comfort Ward and the fashionable hairstyles of that time.<sup>99</sup> In exile on the Yangzi River, Yuan Zhen recalled the nights he spent in a small pavilion under the blossoms with a “crazy companion.”<sup>100</sup> When Bai Juyi sent him a poem about his walled garden in Chang’an, the capital appeared to Yuan Zhen as a labyrinth of narrow alleyways, crammed with traffic, dust, and strangers:

In Chang’an one is beset by the court and by markets;  
 In a hundred streets one walks in dust and grime.  
 Covered wagons are lined up in both directions;  
 One’s flesh and blood is not one’s kin.<sup>101</sup>

In another poem, Yuan Zhen remembered the capital as a city of death:

In Chang’an, in one day and night,  
 The dead drop like stars from the sky,  
 Hearses stream from all four gates;  
 Why should I worry about miasmatic fevers?<sup>102</sup>

When Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen returned to Chang’an from exile, they sought not only to resume their earlier careers but also to recover their former selves, whose traces they found in a cityscape simultaneously present and past, vanished yet visible behind the new houses and the old trees.<sup>103</sup> Those who had spent their youth in other cities also offered vivid images of the

97 See Cao Ye, *Cao cibuj*, 2.10a.

98 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.16.340, I.17.355, I.17.361, I.18.380; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, 3.497; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 92–94, 105; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, 4.65–66; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 2.6b, 3.11b.

99 Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, II.1.1508 (江南喜逢蕭九徹因話長安舊遊戲贈五十韻). Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.12.241–243. Cf. also Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 2a; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 1.14a.

100 Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 14.162 (寄胡靈之).

101 Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 6.64 (酬樂天登樂遊園見憶).

102 Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 1.1 (思歸樂). Yuan Zhen also commented on the frequency of deaths and funerals while he resided in Chang’an and Luoyang. See Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 3.33, 7.81. Cf. also Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.33.741; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 395; Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 2.2b–3a; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 4.11a.

103 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.11.224, I.13.245–247; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 5.59–60. Cf. Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*, 4.216; Li Pin, *Liyue shiji*, 4b; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 22.283, 24.308.

streets when they recalled those times. The monk Qiji (864–after 924), for example, remembered looking for fellow poets in the old alleyways of cities on the Huai River, and sitting on bridges in the sunset with his back to the wine houses.<sup>104</sup> Luo Yin remembered singing and drumming during drunken revels in Runzhou, by “the stone sheep in Miaoshan Street, / the sweet dew at the Pingquan stele.”<sup>105</sup> Meng Jiao recalled for the benefit of Li Ao (774–837) the thousand alleyways of his native Suzhou, divided by waterways and rippling with the sensuous flutter of local speech.<sup>106</sup>

The spreading warfare that began with the Huang Chao rebellion (875–884) cast the entirety of the Tang Empire into the past tense.<sup>107</sup> Chang’an was conquered and burnt to the ground.<sup>108</sup> Luoyang was turned into a wasteland, its noble mansions destroyed and its rivers filled with corpses.<sup>109</sup> The imperial family fled, now to Chengdu, now to Fengxiang, now to Mount Hua.<sup>110</sup> Officials remained in the provincial posts where they had last been appointed, some consenting to serve in governments set up by new rulers.<sup>111</sup> Literati who had managed to escape the violence settled in remote corners of the fallen empire, cut off by war and by poverty from the former capitals and from their hometowns.<sup>112</sup> To these men, Chang’an

104 See Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 8.7b.

105 Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 178 (錢塘過默師憶潤州舊遊).

106 See Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, 8.317. Cf. Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.22.481–482; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.4.476; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 2.24b.

107 On the warfare and destruction during the final decades of the Tang see, for example, Fang Gan, *Xuanying ji*, 7.8a; Guanxiu, *Chanyue ji*, 8.4a; Han Wo, *Han neihan wenji*, 1.31b; Huang Tao, *Puyang Huang yushi ji*, 1.95, 1.106–107, 1.115, 1.146; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, 2.43, 245–251, 308–309; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 2.105, 3.113, 5.209–212; Xu Yin, *Xu gong diaoji wenji*, 8.3b, 9.8b–9a. Cf. Tackett 2014, 209–230; Gw Wang 1973, 221, 233–235.

108 For eyewitness accounts of the destruction of Chang’an, see Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 2.83, 2.87, 2.101, 2.104, 4.149, 6.258, 10.310, *bu*.315, *bu*.317; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 3.3b, 3.7a, 3.11a. For reactions to the news of the destruction, see Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 1.4a, 9.1a; Han Wo, *Han neihan bieji*, 1.14b, 1.17a, 1.31b; Xu Yin, *Xu gong diaoji wenji*, 1.5b, 8.3b, 9.8b–9a. See also Schafer 1963, 167–170; Tackett 2014, 192–204; Thilo 2006, 25–28; Xiong 2000, 277–285.

109 On the destruction of Luoyang, see Guanxiu, *Chanyue ji*, 1.2b–3a; Han Wo, *Han neihan bieji*, 1.19a; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 3.115, 3.117, *bu*.315–316; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 1.3b–4a; Xu Yin, *Xu gong diaoji wenji*, 8.4b. See also Tackett 2014, 207–209; T. Wu 1988, 87.

110 See, for example, Han Wo, *Han neihan bieji*, 1.3a; Huang Tao, *Puyang Huang yushi ji*, 1.97, 1.99; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 2.83, 2.87, 2.101, 3.109, 4.152; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 2.13a–14b, 3.9b, 3.14ab; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, preface, 2.6b, 2.7ab, 2.12b, 12.13ab, 3.12ab.

111 See, for example, Han Wo, *Han neihan bieji*, 1.10a–13a, 1.13b, 1.17a, 1.19a–20b, 1.56a; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 4.149, 5.208. Cf. Mostern 2011, 129–132; Tackett 2014, 167–168.

112 See, for example, Guanxiu, *Chanyue ji*, 26.4a; Sikong Tu, *Sikong Biaosheng wenji*, 10.3a; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 5.209–212, 7.272, 7.279, *bu*.315–319; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 1.5b, 2.17b; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, 2.8b.

and Luoyang became mere memories, incapable of renewal—the ruins of a fallen empire, an aborted career, a former life. In the embers of the smoldering roofbeams glowed a few final, vivid recollections. Wei Zhuang remembered how, as a child, he rode his bamboo hobbyhorse by the imperial canal, how he hid in a tower to escape his lessons, and how he tore his clothes chasing butterflies and climbing rooftops.<sup>113</sup> Xu Yin (894 *jinshi*), embittered that the war had deprived him of the illustrious career that his literary accomplishments had brought within his reach, recalled how at his first arrival in the capital he rode past ward after ward, and how he had once submitted a letter to a Grand Councilor, and a rhapsody to the Director of the Court of the Imperial Clan.<sup>114</sup> The very moment of the destruction of Chang'an, in fact, yielded the most detailed account of the physical and social geography of the city to be found in all the collected works of the ninth century. In a biography of the independent carriage driver Jia Zhang, Sikong Tu (837–908) recounts how Yang Qiong, the ward leader of Venerating Duty Ward, ordered the residents of the ward to hide under the granary. When the rebels nonetheless captured them, one of the armed men took Sikong Tu by the hand and introduced himself as Jia Zhang, the carriage driver whom Sikong had hired for a few months a dozen years earlier. Jia then led Sikong to an intersection, and Sikong made his escape through the Kaiyuan Gate (the northernmost gate in the eastern city wall) and across the Xianyang Bridge.<sup>115</sup> The destruction of the city thus preserved for the present the granary of Venerating Duty Ward, the names of a ward leader and a carriage driver, and a dated, individual itinerary through the city.

The ravage of Chang'an and Luoyang not only changed perceptions of time—foreshortening personal memories and moving the end of the Tang within view—but reoriented literary genres in space. If all prestigious genres of writing had previously been oriented on Chang'an—the center of cosmic order and power and wealth—literati now turned their backs on the former capital to consider a life in the provinces. In the Northwest, Huang Tao (840–after 901) avoided looking back toward Chang'an as he advanced against invading forces: “The geese of Long County fly south, the Yellow River flows; / The city of Qin a thousand miles away, *I cannot bear to turn my head.*”<sup>116</sup> In the southeast, the monk Qiji was reluctant to climb a

113 See Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuangji*, 6.258, *bu*.378, *bu*.379.

114 See Xu Yin, *Xu gong diaoji wenji*, 8.3b–4a.

115 See Sikong Tu, *Sikong Biaosheng wenji*, 4.3ab.

116 Huang Tao, *Puyang Huang yushi ji*, 1.132–133 (夏州道中), emphasis added.

tower, as the view would remind him of the destruction of the capital and the devastation of the empire:

“Looking at the Waters,” by Qiji

Fan Li in the east sailed far and wide;  
 Qu Yuan to the north drifted for many years.  
 Who knows whether distant misty waves  
 Will offer a return to cheerful thoughts?

In the old heartland, incessant traffic passed my gate;  
 At the edge of the sky, I find myself busy in a boat.  
*It is difficult to gather an urge to ascend the tower;*  
 The vast landscape lies under the slanting sun.<sup>117</sup>

Han Wo (844–ca. 923) found that, after the rebels had taken Chang’an and he had fled to the countryside, he could no longer chant the poems he had composed during the twenty years he had resided in the capital, except in the company of a few close friends. He nonetheless decided to preserve a few dozen of these poems as the remnants of a lavish, vanished age, in the manner of *Songs of the Jade Terrace* (*Yutai xinyong*, 6th century).<sup>118</sup> In his perception, the destruction of Chang’an had relegated the Tang Empire to the past, and the literature of the capital had lost legitimacy along with its imperial court. Others still held out hopes for a restoration and compared the violent chaos of the 880s to the rebellion of Military Commissioner An Lushan (703–757), who had sacked the capital in 755 as the imperial court fled to Chengdu. Both these historical comparisons offered literary models for a changed topography: a critique of courtly decadence during a period of political division, or a reflection on corrupt government in a time of political crisis. In a poem addressed to a fellow graduate named Li, Du Xunhe (846–904) expresses hopes that, unlike their namesakes Li Bai (701–762) and Du Fu (712–770), they might yet find employment for their talents under a restored dynasty before they are too old:

“Meeting My Fellow Graduate Li in Jiangnan,” by Du Xunhe

117 Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 6.8b (看水), emphasis added. Fan Li (5th century BCE) famously sailed the Five Lakes of the Southeast with the devastating beauty Xi Shi. Qu Yuan (ca. 340–278 BCE) was exiled to Jiangnan and eventually drowned himself in a river.

118 Han Wo, *Xianglian ji*, preface.

Li and Du, and once again Li and Du:  
 The former age meets the present age.  
 As soldiers enter the imperial domain,  
 We stumble toward the edge of the sky.

Months and years dissolved in wine,  
 Daily life measured by rhymes,  
 Possessing talent but missing the reward,  
 Fearing only a head completely grey.<sup>119</sup>

In the absence of a unifying center of power and prestige, literati turned to the commercial cities that had emerged in the northeast, the south, the southeast, and the southwest in the course of the ninth century.<sup>120</sup> Although conventions of form and diction made the tropes of the older literary geography difficult to abandon (as Du Xunhe's poem, above, demonstrates by its continued assumption of a single political and cultural center), literati began to orient themselves in a territory with multiple centers of power and patronage. As Chang'an lay charred and neglected beyond the horizon, the cities of the southeast and the south emerged more fully into writing. Wei Zhuang, who in 880 had witnessed the devastation of Chang'an, a few years later celebrated the oblivious pleasures of the brothels and the pretty scenery in the city of Yangzhou.<sup>121</sup> Du Xunhe, also writing in the 880s, described to a departing friend the urban scenes he would encounter in nearby Suzhou:

"Sending Off Someone to Roam in Wu," by Du Xunhe

When you arrive in Gusu and look around,  
 People's houses all back onto a river.  
 Amid the ancient palaces open land is scarce;  
 On the river branches small bridges are numerous.

The night markets sell water caltrop and lotus root;  
 The spring boats carry silk twill and gauze.

119 Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 3.6a (江南逢先輩). Cf. Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 10.15a; Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 3.109; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 1.14ab, 2.7a.

120 See, for example, Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 2.6ab; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 2.17b.

121 See Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji*, 4.175. Cf. Wei Zhuang, *Wei Zhuang ji, bu.373* (about the city of Hanzhou, in Sichuan). For Wei Zhuang's accounts of the destruction of Chang'an and Luoyang, see *Wei Zhuang ji*, 2.83, *buyi*.315–319; Nugent 2010, 27–71.

I know from afar that under the sleepless moon,  
Your thoughts of home are in the fishermen's songs.<sup>122</sup>

Han Wo, like Wei Zhuang a native of Chang'an, acknowledged in 906 the beauty and the pleasant climate of Fuzhou in autumn.<sup>123</sup> Literati who resolved to serve at the newly established courts repaid the patronage of their ruler with literary compositions that celebrated his political achievements and augmented his cultural prestige.<sup>124</sup>

In this reconfigured literary landscape, elements of urban life in Chang'an and Luoyang were also belatedly set down in writing. If classical composition lacked a precedent for writing the cityscape in the present tense, it did have a convention of commemorating in the past tense the architecture and the institutions of cities after they had been destroyed. In the third or fourth century, for example, anonymous compilers created a comprehensive record of the layout of Chang'an as it had been under the Qin and Han dynasties.<sup>125</sup> In 547 CE, Yang Xuanzhi (fl. 547) recreated in prose the pagodas and temples of Luoyang that a few decades before had towered over the imperial avenues but that now lay in ruins along overgrown streets.<sup>126</sup> Cui Lingqin (fl. 730s–760s) recorded his memories of the music and dance in Chang'an after the rebel armies of An Lushan had laid waste to the city.<sup>127</sup> Duan Chengshi (d. 863) commemorated his visit to the imposing monasteries of Chang'an only after those monasteries had been closed or destroyed by imperial decree.<sup>128</sup>

In this vein, then, refugees from Chang'an and Luoyang published memories of life in the capitals that they might have kept in draft or that they might not have written down at all, had those cities still been standing. The emotion of loss and the uneasy relationship of classical composition to urban life combined to give these unconventional memoirs an improvised form. In the preface to his *Record of the Northern Ward* (*Beili zhi*, ca. 884), Sun Qi (fl.

122 Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 1.1b (送人遊吳). I thank Michael Fuller for correcting my understanding of the final couplet. Cf. Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 1.3b. Cf. also Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 8.7b; Wu Rong, *Tangying geshi*, 3.25a–26a. During the 880s, Du Xunhe lived on Mount Jiuhua, whither he had fled during the rebellions and unrest. See Du Xunhe, *Du Xunhe wenji*, 1.15a, 2.13b, 3.6a.

123 See Han Wo, *Han neihan bieji*, 1.14b. In general, Han Wo complains of the discomforts of life as a refugee and a recluse, not about the southern climate or landscape. On the resignation to exile under the weakened court of the late Tang, cf. Shang 2007, 440–496.

124 See, for example, Guanxiu, *Chanyue ji*, 16.1a–2b, 18.1a–2b, 19.1a–2b, 20.1a–3b; Xu Yin, *Xu gong diaoji wenji*, 8.6a, 8.7b.

125 See *Sanfu huangtu*.

126 See Yang Xuanzhi, *Luoyang qiellan ji*, 2.

127 See Cui Lingqin, *Jiaofang ji*, 243.

128 See Duan Chengshi, *Youyang zazu*, 245–263. On this text, see also Ditter 2011.

880s) explains how he came to write an account of the fraught relationships between courtesans and examination candidates, and of the central place of the pleasure quarters in the literary culture of the imperial examinations:

Because I repeatedly heeded the imperial summons to the examinations, I resided in the capital for a long time. On occasion I, too, roamed unobtrusively in those quarters, though certainly not driven by compulsion. Every time I reflected that when a thing reaches its climax, it will thereafter go into decline, and I suspected that it would not last. *I had an enduring desire to make a record of events in those quarters, to provide later generations with matter for conversation.* Finding that I did not have the leisure, however, I patiently waited for a humble opportunity. Before I had good and well emerged into the world [by passing the examinations], loss and war suddenly befell us. The imperial carriage departed on a tour of inspection, and a redoubtable enemy entered the Han Valley Pass at Mount Xiao. I fled into the forested mountains, my prior ambitions swept cleanly away. I quietly reflected on things past and pursued random memories, but because I suffered enduring fear and danger, my mental powers diminished, and I could no longer remember everything that I had heard and seen in past years. *I therefore arranged my memories in a desultory order, as the recollections of an era of great peace.*<sup>129</sup>

The warfare following upon the rebellion of Huang Chao thus transformed Sun Qi's intended collection of moral tales, conceived as a warning against decadent dissipation, into a wistful record of "an era of great peace." Although his apology for the random form of his recollections is in part strategic, a tacit admission that anecdotes about the pleasure quarters lie outside the realm of polite literature, the "desultory order" of his memoir also stands in implicit contrast to the abandoned collection of cautionary tales, for which the literary tradition would have provided a conventional form.<sup>130</sup>

Of Li Chuo's (fl. 880–908) *Record of the Seasons in the Imperial Capital* (*Nianxia suishi ji*, 880) only a few fragments survive, about imperial customs at the beginning of the year and about vernacular customs at various other times (a ghost market held at the western gate of Dedication to Foundations Ward, ceremonies performed to send off the Stove God at the end of the year), but Chao Gongwu (fl. 1132–1165) notes in his *Records on Reading Books in the Prefectural Study* (*Junzhai dushu zhi*, 1162) that, much like Sun

129 Sun Qi, *Beili zhi*, 252–253, emphasis added. Cf. L. Feng 2015, 113; Saitō 1992, 116.

130 On apologetic prefaces to marginal genres, see de Pee 2017b.



Qi, “Chuo experienced the chaos of the Huang Chao rebellion and fled the territory to some barbarian corner where he haphazardly recorded the refined accomplishments of the Qin region, in order to transmit them to later scholars.”<sup>131</sup> After the final defeat of the Tang, Li Chuo produced a fuller record under the title *Record of the Seasons in Qin* (*Qinzhong suishi ji*, 908). The few remaining fragments of that work explain festivals and customs observed by commoners in Chang’an as well as ceremonies and celebrations performed by examination candidates. It thus appears that Li Chuo intended his incremental record of the customs of Chang’an as a summary account of the capital in its capacity as the center of time and space, where imperial rites gave evidence of beneficent prosperity and where seasonal festivals achieved their most appropriate celebration. Only the devastation of the city and the demise of the empire, however, afforded the detail of these urban customs, as it would have been unnecessary, and perhaps inauspicious, to record them while they continued in living practice. Upon the completion of his *Record of the Seasons in Qin*, therefore, Li Chuo “fastened the flap of his robe and cried.”<sup>132</sup>

Wang Dingbao (870–ca. 941), finally, made detailed inquiries about the “beauty of the examinations” as he was growing up during the wars of the 870s and 880s, and after the final demise of the Tang organized his notes and his own recollections into his *Gleaned Accounts of the Tang* (*Tang zhiyan*, ca. 940).<sup>133</sup> His entries reveal not only an ambition to preserve the deeds of famous scholars and the details of examination practices from before his own lapsed times, but also an urge to discover what kind of prodigious institution the Tang examinations had been, with their ponderous procedures and their decadent celebrations, their assurances of impartial assessment and their instances of erratic judgment, their stories of candidates rewarded for talent and virtue and their anecdotes of men favored by predestination and providence. Whereas the *Record of the Northern Ward* and the *Record of the Seasons in Qin* preserve painful memories of living customs, the *Gleaned Accounts of the Tang* presents a clinical inquiry into a dead past, already moribund when Wang Dingbao himself obtained his degree in 900 CE and defunct when he reconstructed the era from written sources.<sup>134</sup> But in all three texts, the detail of urban life required its obsolescence. Vernacular practices lacked a place in classical composition and could be written only in the past tense.

131 See Li Chuo, *Nianxia suishi ji*. Quotation from Chao Gongwu, *Junzhai dushu zhi*, II.2.9b.

132 Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 6.191, quoting Li Chuo’s preface to the *Seasons in Qin*.

133 Wang Dingbao, *Tang zhiyan*, 3.24–25. On this text, see Moore 2004; Shields 2014.

134 Cf. Shields 2014, 111.

## Conclusion

During the ninth century, Chang'an and Luoyang stood at the center of literary production and at the center of literary geography. From the dense rainforests and the moldy offices of the deep south, exiled officials gazed toward the capital in hopes of returning to its cultivated parks and its lofty ministries, where the political hierarchy and the cosmic order coincided in a perfect alignment of power and landscape, of the ritual cycle and the seasons. When they returned to the capital, they represented the city in accordance with this vision, as a cosmic grid set at the center of space and time, concentrated on the imperial palace and surrounded by perfectly created nature. Although they admitted that the residents of the capital pursued fortune as well as fame, they paid little attention to status acquired by possessions, much less to the places where such possessions might be bought.<sup>135</sup> In their poems, the city is therefore set in motion not by conspicuous consumption, but by political ambition. The clouds of dust raised by the rushing traffic cover everyone in the streets and avenues with the same red grime, just as the preparation for the examinations and the routine of government administration threaten to obliterate individual characteristics by their wearying, uniform requirements. To recover their humanity, literati occasionally shake the dust off their robes to visit imperial parks and the suburban countryside, and to create gardens that remind themselves and others of their individual proclivities. The poems they exchange with their friends about these excursions preserve their shared experience of the landscape and their shared emotions. Although they wish to protect these emotions from the realm of political ambition, they nonetheless record them as public evidence of their capacity for friendship and their aptitude for self-expression—the evidence of self-expression in their gardens also discouraging the recognition of gardens as expensive property and of plants and rocks as rare commodities.<sup>136</sup>

A similar paradox orients the literary representation of the urban streetscape. Drawn to the capital by political ambition and eager to reside “below the wheels of the emperor’s chariot,” literati of the ninth century nonetheless seek in their writings, and in their gardens, to exclude the noise

<sup>135</sup> Note, for example, that BuYun Chen’s (2019) arguments about fashion during the Tang are based on the material characteristics of Tang clothing and on a negative reading of prohibitions and condemnations, not on confessions by the fashionable.

<sup>136</sup> On the import of exotic plants and trees for the parks and gardens of Chang’an, see Schafer 1963, 117–132.

and the traffic of the metropolis, so that “one doesn’t seem to be in the capital.”<sup>137</sup> Yao He (781–846) is thus elated to abandon his rural existence as Magistrate of Wugong County (west of present-day Wugong, Shaanxi) and to return to Chang’an, but once he lives again in the densely populated capital he congratulates himself on having a garden that gives him the illusion of being in the hills, and he spends his days gazing at the Southern Mountains, “rarely turning my head to the east or the west.”<sup>138</sup> The streetscape of Chang’an becomes visible in the compositions of these literati where the gardens and suburbs extend into the streets and avenues: when a flowering branch bends over a wall, when willow catkins blow through the avenues, when the water in the imperial canal catches the light of the setting sun. The shops and the markets and all the many professions that supplied the half a million residents of the metropolis remain out of sight, unworthy of attention or unsuitable for literary treatment. Only in recollection do some areas of urban commerce become fit for commemoration, in the past tense of poems and urban memoirs. The pleasure quarters that Wang Jian placed outside the reader’s view, for example, beyond the blushing peach blossoms and the cloudlike willow trees, appear in retrospect in the recollections of Bai Juyi and in the records of Sun Qi. The past tense of such vignettes is not incidental, because the irrecoverable loss of these experiences was the condition for their being written.

The destruction of Chang’an and Luoyang at the end of the ninth century not only obliterated the political structure of the Tang Empire but also changed the geography of its literature. Officials and examination candidates, their careers cut short, turned away from the capital to make a life in the provinces. There, in the northwest, in the southeast, in the south, in the southwest, they found cities that in the course of the ninth century had grown in size and gained in wealth. With Chang’an in ruins and the Tang imperial house deposed, these cities became the capitals of a succession of empires and kingdoms, acquiring a political infrastructure and cultural prominence to match their commercial importance. The courts in Hangzhou, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and elsewhere recruited able officials, renowned builders, and holy monks to draft edicts and to build palaces, to plan irrigation networks and to devise monetary systems, to offer prayers and to compose panegyrics.<sup>139</sup> Although few texts survive

137 Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 9.7a (和友人新居園上).

138 See Yao He, *Yao shaojian shiji*, 5.9a–10b (quotation from 街西居三首, 其一).

139 See, for example, Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 22.73b. Cf. Brose 2015; H. Clark 1991, 52–70; H. Clark 2009, 160–163, 171–205; H. Clark 2015, 65–69; Dudbridge 2013, 14–32; Kurz 2011, 27–39,

from the tenth century, it appears that literati during this period began to change the geographic orientation of inherited genres, so that they might give scope to a realm that contained perhaps not multiple centers of political legitimacy, but many cities of economic importance and cultural prestige. As authors placed these cities in relation to one another on a level plane, instead of submitting them indiscriminately and indistinctly to a single unifying center of power and learning, they also opened up the streets and canals to reveal the traffic of people and goods that sustained these cities. Thus, Xu Xuan (917–992) in the empire of the Southern Tang (939–975) maintained the trope of a single political center, bewailing his banishment “at the edge of the sky” (while residing a mere fifty kilometers outside the Eastern Capital), but in 970 he composed an inscription for the Long Bridge in Yixing County, Changzhou (now Yixing, Jiangsu), that set the structure within a busy urban center, in the present tense:<sup>140</sup>

It is fifty paces long and seven paces wide. It issues straight from the county tower; it stands athwart above the Jing River. Cinnabar and vermilion its adornment, imposing and solid it stands, extending like a rainbow; high and lofty its position, prominent and towering it soars, rising like a mountain. Red-wheeled chariots pass side by side; four-horse carriages follow one after another. The markets are bustling; the traffic is incessant.<sup>141</sup>

Inscriptions in the collected works of the ninth century place buildings in their historical context and identify their institutional function, but they do not present them within the built environment of the city. Xu Xuan’s inscription for the Long Bridge, although old-fashioned in form and diction, points toward a new interest among literati of the tenth and eleventh centuries in understanding commerce and infrastructure, and in representing these phenomena in writing.

69–70; Lamouroux 1995, 146–153, 172–174; Lorge 2011, 223–242; Mostern 2011, 125–166; Schafer 1954, 71–74, 80–101; Schafer 1967, 45; Schottenhammer 2015, 439–449, 460–464; Shields 2006, 69–91, 100–106, 147–193; So 2000, 25–42; Gw Wang 1963; H. Wang 2011.

140 See, for example, Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 3.1a, 3.2a, 3.2b, 3.2b–3b, 3.7b (quotation from 王三十七自京垂訪作此送之).

141 Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 13.6a (常州義興縣重建長橋).



## 2 Finding Oneself in the City

### Crowds, Commodities, and Subjectivity in the Eleventh Century

#### Abstract

In the eleventh century, literati changed the geographic orientation of literary genres in order to make a place for the city in writing. Their main purpose in writing the urban streetscape was ideological. On the written page, literati could set themselves apart from competition and chaos, distinct as individuals in the anonymous crowd, infallible as judges of urban crime, and discerning as connoisseurs of desirable goods. By defining themselves in relationship to crowds and commodities, however, they placed themselves within regimes of relative values that conflicted with the absolute values of their moral learning. Toward the end of the eleventh century, therefore, they withdrew from the streets to reflect on individuality and the self in retirement.

**Keywords:** Song dynasty; urban history; urban literature; literary geography; connoisseurship; detective stories

By the eleventh century, Chang'an was a city of overgrown palaces, ruined mansions, neglected gardens, and fallen steles. Literati of the Song visited the former capital of the Tang to take warning at the broken splendor of the vanished empire, and to seek tokens of the men and the sites they knew from their studies. They described the city as quiet, empty, and deserted, and found that farmers had put the remains of palaces to the plough.<sup>1</sup> Fan Zuyu (1041–1098) insisted that Chang'an retained its cosmological

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.486–487; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 3.5a; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 11.4b–5a, 12.4ab; Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 2.59b–60a, 2.63b; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 3.10b–11a, 3.12b, 9.14b–15a; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 15.197, 15.204; Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 3.36–37; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 6.1a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 4.167–168; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 1.4–6; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.3.58–59; Wei Ye, *Julu Dongguan ji*, 4.4a,

force, even if the Southern Mountains no longer protected an imperial city, but he admitted that others appeared oblivious to the historic power of this sacred place as they passed by the city on their way elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Cai Xiang (1012–1067) observed that Seven Mile Bridge, one of the few imperial structures still in use, had become a thoroughfare on the route between the new capital at Kaifeng in the east and Shaanxi and Sichuan in the west.<sup>3</sup> Although the Song dynasty maintained Luoyang as its second capital, and although Song literati continued to praise Luoyang for its beauty, that city, too, was much diminished from its former state. Fan Zhongyan (989–1052) reckoned that the population of the prefecture had declined from 194,700 households in the 840s to some 75,900 in the 1040s.<sup>4</sup> The palace grounds, unvisited by the Song emperors, became a wilderness, and hazelnut trees grew in the central avenue.<sup>5</sup> After the wealthy families left for Kaifeng, their residences stood empty and the monasteries they had patronized fell into disrepair.<sup>6</sup> Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072) dismissed the theory that the tree peonies of Luoyang owed their extraordinary beauty to the central location of its harmonious landscape, objecting that Luoyang was not central and that extreme beauty, like extreme ugliness, grows from extremity and aberration.<sup>7</sup>

The lapsed state of the Tang capitals extended to the surrounding regions. Wang Yucheng (954–1001) noted that Lantian (now Lantian, Shaanxi province) and Wuguan (now Wuguan, Shaanxi province), once famous prefectures, had not been favored with the appointment of a prominent official for a century.<sup>8</sup> Shangzhou (present-day Shangluo City, Shaanxi province), southeast of Chang'an, had become a place of exile, and the postal relay station at Shangwu (present-day Shangnan county, Shaanxi province), formerly a hub of the empire, stood empty and dilapidated near a neglected

9.6a; Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 1.7ab; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 23.414–415; Zhang Li, *You chengnan ji*. Cf. Schafer 1963, 133, 169–170, and Xin Wen's work in progress.

2 See Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 1.10ab, 1.13a.

3 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.486–487. Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.489.

4 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Wenzheng gongji, zouyi*.1.12a. Cf. Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Wenzheng gongji*, 19.7b–8a, *yishi*.3.3a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64.935.

5 See Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 3.11b–12a; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 3.2ab. For archaeological evidence of the disuse of the central avenue during the Song, see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Luoyang Tangcheng dui and Luoyangshi wenwu gongzuodui 2004. Cf. de Pee 2009, 111.

6 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64.925. Cf. Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 4.51b; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 23.414.

7 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 75.1096.

8 See Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.8.20a.

stele that testified to its former prestige.<sup>9</sup> Chen Shidao (1052–1101) described Jinzhou (present-day Ankang county, Shaanxi province), 175 kilometers south of Chang’an, as Tang officials had described the alien South: as a collection of abject hovels with a desolate market, surrounded by forested mountains and treacherous waterways, and afflicted by dangerous animals, intemperate weather, inedible food, and rampant illness.<sup>10</sup>

The center of cosmic power lay now at Kaifeng, the Eastern Capital of the Song imperial house of Zhao. Here rose the towering palace halls and the imposing offices of government, and here the court built its Imperial Temple and its Luminous Hall. Here “Heaven stood over its Altar like a canopy,” and here the most splendid temples and the most solemn monasteries offered continuous prayer in support of the dynasty.<sup>11</sup> The founding emperors widened streets into broad thoroughfares to accommodate ritual processions, and they created large imperial parks for official banquets and public displays.<sup>12</sup> Through its majestic gates this cosmic city received talented students and foreign ambassadors, tax grain and tribute goods, rare foods and foreign luxuries. Like Chang’an and Luoyang before it, Kaifeng stood at the center of the realm, at the center of civilization, at the center of time, with the imperial throne in the position of the Pole Star:

“Learning about the Great Gathering at Court on New Year’s Day,” by Liu Chang (1019–1068)

With jade and silk and solemn bearing come the myriad countries;  
*The imperial capital resembles the Big Dipper, pulling spring to return.*  
 The imperial standard casts a fluttering shadow, with its sun, moon, and stars;  
 The bells and drums resound like pealing thunder, across a hundred miles.

*The North Star stands right above the screen with the vermilion phoenix;*  
 The Southern Mountains enter from afar into the cup of eternal life.  
 All the deities give act of presence, the Luminous Hall is set;  
 But I am detained on the banks of the Yangzi, my ambition defeated.<sup>13</sup>

9 See Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.8.1a–9.17b, I.20.6b–7b. The text of the stele was composed by Wei Cong (d. ca. 848) and calligraphed by Liu Gongquan (778–865), with a caption by Li Shangyin (813–858).

10 See Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 14.1a–2b. Wei Ye (960–1019) credits Drafter Sun with making the climate of Chang’an itself more moderate. See Wei Ye, *Julu Dongguan ji*, 3.1a.

11 Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.9.406 (次韻侍祠南郊).

12 See, for example, Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 27.6ab.

13 Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 23.278 (開元旦大朝會), emphasis added.



As the allusion to the Southern Mountains in the sixth line indicates, Song literati merged the sacred geography of Kaifeng with that of Chang'an, and they often called their capital by that prestigious old name, honoring by the comparison both the city and themselves.

Yet the comparison of Kaifeng to Chang'an extended only to the political legitimacy of the new capital and its institutions, as Kaifeng did not resemble Chang'an either in its layout or in its physical situation. Whereas earlier capitals had been protected by natural defenses, the Song capital stood exposed in a plain, a situation that was both the reason for its selection and the cause of a profound transformation of the character and function of the imperial center. As Qin Guan (1049–1100) explains:

I have heard that those who debate the matter in our age all agree that Yong [i.e., Chang'an] has the most strategic location, that Zhou [i.e., Luoyang] has the second most strategic setting, and that Liang [i.e., Kaifeng] is merely the crossroads of the empire, not a site with strategic advantage. ... But I do not agree with this opinion. Why? Because the capitals of the Tang and the Han had to be located at Zhou and Yong, *whereas the capital of the present dynasty cannot be located anywhere but at Liang.* ... The land of Kaifeng is flat, and all the roads from the four directions converge here. To the south it neighbors Chu; to the west it adjoins Han; to the north it abuts Zhao; to the east it borders Qi. There are no famous mountains or great rivers to interpose barriers. Instead, the Bian Canal, the Cai River, and other waters run through this land, carts merge axle to axle, travelers follow heel to toe, boats sail stem to stern, continuing uninterrupted for three hundred miles: this province connects the four cardinal points and gives access to the five directions. Therefore this region is advantageous to warfare, and has been known since antiquity as a battleground. ... After the present dynasty avenged the lapses of the Five Dynasties, it stationed all the troops of the realm at the capital. The number of names entered into the registers reportedly reached more than one million. ... *If it had not located the capital in a province that connects the four cardinal points and gives access to the five directions, it could not have fed the empire's troops. This one might call "using soldiers as one's insurmountable barrier."*<sup>14</sup> An empire that uses soldiers as its insurmountable barrier cannot choose Zhou or Yong as its capital, just as an empire that uses [the mountains, rivers, and hills of] the earth

14 Reference to the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*), which calls heaven insurmountable, and identifies mountains, rivers, and hills as the insurmountable barriers of the earth. See *Zhouyi*, 3.33b–34a.

as its insurmountable barrier cannot choose Liang as its capital. And yet the obtuse deem Liang inferior to Zhou, and Zhou inferior to Yong. Alas, such men do not understand that the times have changed! ... Now, Liang occupies the crossroads of the realm. Every year the government ships six million *hu* [i.e., over two billion liters] of grain from the Southeast to feed the armies and still fears that it will fall short. How much worse it would be if the government insisted on following in the footsteps of the Han and the Tang and build its capital in the region of Zhou or Yong. *How would this differ from mastering the techniques of a great merchant and then determining to apply these to the lands of a great farmer?*<sup>25</sup>

Its situation in the plain, in other words, distinguished the capital at Kaifeng from earlier capitals because it required a standing army of a million troops for its defense, and because this standing army in turn demanded the routine shipment of voluminous provisions for its maintenance.

Its situation in the plain diminished the elevation of Kaifeng above other cities, as the government transferred a substantial part of its budget (and abandoned much of its potential revenue) to the merchants who supplied the capital. Qin Guan's comparison of the situation of Kaifeng to the urban residence preferred by a great merchant is all the more apt because that great merchant represents at once the trade that provisioned the capital, the prominence that merchants acquired in Kaifeng, and the liberal movement of merchants across the empire and into the ranks of the elite. Some literati proposed that, instead of "a field of fame and fortune," the capital had become "a field of commodities and wealth," where virtue was subject to fortune:

"Miscellaneous poems (First of Twenty-Two Poems)," by Liu Chang

*The Five Capitals are a field of commodities and wealth;*

Carriages and horses speed to the market gates.

At sunrise they enter, rubbing shoulders;

At sunset they leave, jabbing elbows.

By this impetuous ambition what do they expect?

Wealth becomes poverty in the blink of an eye.

15 Qin Guan, *Huaihai jijianzhu*, I.13.522–524 (安都), emphasis added. Cf. Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 3.16b–17a, 3.29ab; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.20.453, I.20.458–459, I.20.462–463; Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 1.13b–14a; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 10.9a–10b; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.38.839–840; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 14.178–180, 24.353–355, fu.798.

Thus one learns that power and profit are the same,  
That the source of wealth and poverty cannot be sought.

The fathers and sons of the Zhangs and the Chens get along,  
Then one day they try to harm each other.  
If one tallies the relationships broken since remote antiquity,  
Why should this even deserve a mention?<sup>16</sup>

Although the capital at Kaifeng remained the largest, the most imposing, the most powerful, and the most prestigious city in the realm, its integration into an empire-wide infrastructure of transport and production made its distinction a matter of degree, not of kind, and prevented the metropolis in the plain from attaining the absolute cultural hegemony that Chang'an and Luoyang had possessed during the Tang. The former capitals of the tenth century—in the east and the southeast, in the south and the southwest—maintained their schools and printing houses, their roads and irrigation networks, their wealth and prestige, and thus competed with the capital in a manner that the provincial cities of the ninth century had not. Wang Anshi (1021–1086), for example, deemed Hangzhou the equal of Kaifeng in the diversity of its population: “Sightseers must know that this place is exquisite; / In the variety of its personages it rivals the capital.”<sup>17</sup> Song Qi (998–1061) found that the young women who roamed the streets of Changsha “resemble those in the capital.”<sup>18</sup> As literati learnt to judge the worth of cities by the relative standards of luxury and fashion, rather than by a fixed hierarchy of power and rank, they discovered that distant towns and even places of exile offered pleasures they could barely afford in Kaifeng. On his journey into exile at Yiling (present-day Yichang County, Hubei province), for example, Ouyang Xiu looked forward to the delicacies that awaited him there: “I have also heard that Yiling not only has rice, noodles, and fish of the same quality as the capital and Luoyang, but that it also has pears, chestnuts, tangerines, large bamboo shoots, and regular as well as late-harvest tea.”<sup>19</sup> If literati of the ninth century occasionally acknowledged that the climate of the southeast was pleasant, literati of

16 Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 4.33 (雜詩二十二首, 其一), emphasis added.

17 Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 37.940 (杭州呈勝之). Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 3.53; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.19.120; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji, yiwén*.5.2556; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.4.88.

18 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 12.135 (渡湘江).

19 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 69.998 (與尹師魯第一書). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 149.2446–2447, 152.2503, 153.2531.

the eleventh century openly preferred it to the intemperate weather in Kaifeng. The capital no longer set a universal standard for the pace or the countenance of the seasons: “The things of spring in the capital come late,” complained an exhausted Song Qi, and Liu Chang was appalled that “In the third month in the capital the sand is wrapped in snow.”<sup>20</sup>

As a result, although Song officials still yearned for appointments in the central government, they did not gaze as intently toward the capital as their Tang predecessors had done. When Su Shi (1037–1101) was demoted in 1089 from Hanlin Academician to a second tenure as prefect of Hangzhou, Zhang Fangping (1007–1091) comforted him that:

Of the dust clouds of carriages and horses you have long tired;  
To the scenic spots of lakes and mountains you will now return.  
Under the frosty sky of Lake Dongting the oranges are ripe;  
In the autumn waters of the River Song the bass is plump.<sup>21</sup>

According to Yu Jing (1000–1064), gazing toward the capital was the custom of a former age, even in the remote prefecture of Shaozhou (present-day Shaoguan City, Guangdong province): “In the past, those who lived on the Yangzi or by the ocean left their hearts below the palace gates. Therefore they looked out from this western tower and called it the Tower for Gazing upon the Capital.”<sup>22</sup>

In this flattened, integrated empire of long-distance trade and routine travel, the literati of the eleventh century reoriented the literary genres they had inherited from the Tang in order to make a place for the city in writing. They composed rhapsodies about canals and odes about locks. They wrote commemorations for bridges and pavilions in which they not only placed these buildings within a history of administration and patronage but set them along the roads and waterways of the far-flung empire, within extensive networks of transport and commerce.<sup>23</sup> Whereas the poets of the ninth century had looked away from busy avenues and crowded alleys and focused their attention on gardens and parks, poets in the eleventh century took notice of markets and wine houses, merchants and acrobats, the poor and the dead. After climbing a city wall or a pagoda, they might still look outward to the forests and villages of the countryside, but some also cast

20 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 10.118 (閏月晦日); Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 29.346 (和聖俞逢賣梅花五首, 其三).

21 Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 1.6 (送蘇學士錢塘監郡). Cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 4.59, 4.61, 8.124; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.4.9b–10a.

22 Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.13b (韶州新修望京樓記).

23 On the historical development of the commemoration as a genre, see Hargett 2018, 59.

their eye on the numerous houses below and delighted in observing the pattern of urban life. They came to regard the cityscape as a suitable subject for literary composition, with a beauty of its own:

Among the most beautiful things in this world and their attendant pleasures, there are many that cannot be combined. Thus, if one wishes to exhaust the beauty of looking out over mountains and rivers, one must travel to a spreading wilderness or a desolate countryside in order to find it. *If one hopes to see the abundant elegance of personages and to luxuriate in the magnificent wealth of capitals, one must stand at a crossroads of the four directions or a convergence of ships and carriages in order to be satisfied.* I suppose that the one finds repose away from human affairs, while the other seeks distraction in dazzling splendor, and both can find what suits their disposition. Yet what gives them pleasure cannot be combined. ... As for places where the four directions gather and where the hundred commodities converge, where abundant goods and numerous people form a metropolis, and where one may yet add the beauty of mountains and rivers to the distractions of wealth and prestige, there are only Jinling [present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu province] and Qiantang [present-day Hangzhou, Zhejiang province]. ... The customs [of Qiantang] are subtle, the residences splendid, and it presumably numbers over a hundred thousand households. Ringed by lakes and mountains, it displays continuous scenic beauty on all sides. *And at the same time Fujianese merchants and overseas traders, wind-blown sails and ocean-going ships come and go on the endless waves of its rivers, amid dispersing clouds of smoke and fog: this is certainly splendid.*<sup>24</sup>

Zeng Gong (1019–1083) praised Cheng Shimeng (1009–1086), then prefect of Fuzhou (now Fuzhou, Fujian province), for having “purchased a vertiginous ledge on Min Mountain and built a pavilion on that site. The scenic beauty of mountains and rivers, the spreading expanse of the city, and the splendid abundance of palaces and residences that its views afford, one can take in all around without leaving one’s seat.”<sup>25</sup> Wen Tong (1018–1079) commended the view from a pavilion erected by a

24 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 40.585 (有美堂記), emphasis added. Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.499–500; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.9.54; Wu Chuhou, *Qingxiang zaji*, 5.46–47. Cf. also Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 6.5b; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 26.5b; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 4.7ab.

25 Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 19.315 (道山亭記).

monastery on a mountain in Binzhou (now Bin County, Shaanxi province) from which one “looks down on the city, on official residences and commoner houses, on gardens with ponds and trees in temple grounds, on loud gatherings in the market, on oblique wards and crooked alleys. Just by sitting in the pavilion and looking over the railing one obtains a complete view of everything.”<sup>26</sup> Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) reported seeing two commoners in Kaifeng spread a mat along a thoroughfare to watch the traffic.<sup>27</sup>

The purpose of literati in writing the city, however, was not so much to celebrate the spreading metropolis as to contain it and to make it available as an object for reflection. On the written page, literati could award themselves a privileged position—as discerning individuals in the crowd, as discriminating customers in the marketplace—that eluded them in the streets and shops, and they could conform the urban economy to an immanent pattern of perfect circulation and equitable distribution (see Chapter 3). They wrote the city as literati, in order to grasp the city for themselves, as a site of competition, and they wrote the city as imperial officials, in order to grasp the city as a whole, as a living organism. Looking down onto the markets and wandering in the streets, literati reflected on their relationship to the crowds and to the commodities they encountered there. The diverse, numerous masses they confronted in the busy thoroughfares caused them to consider the lives of those strangers and made them wonder whether their own individual character was to others as manifest or as distinct as it was to themselves:

“Climbing the Jingde Pagoda,” by Wang Anshi

I seclude myself at seven thousand feet,  
Face north toward the Taihang Mountains.  
The houses in town look like an anthill,  
Hidden and diminished by dust and fog.

*Thinking about the people in those houses,*  
I wonder how many of them are at leisure.  
At cock’s crow they rise and go on their way,  
To return one after another at dusk or at night.

26 Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.737 (靜難軍靈峰寺新閣記).

27 Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, II.15.1303.

Every living being has an individual self:  
 Who is wise and who is foolish?  
 It is easy to sink into poverty;  
 It is difficult to rise to prominence.

I am embarrassed that I cannot be like them;  
 I bend my head and crack a smile.<sup>28</sup>

The writing implements they bought, the antiques they collected, the food they ate in restaurants and at home, and the wine and tea they drank inspired similar reflections, as their attempts to distinguish themselves by their taste invested their claim to particularity in commodities that were available to many others, and thus placed them in a competition that made their individual difference relative rather than absolute. As they mingled with urban crowds and sought out rare bargains, therefore, literati of the eleventh century learnt to see themselves as others and others as themselves, and to perceive themselves and their skills as commodities with a relative value, determined by a competitive market: “The gentlemen of antiquity were refined and rare; the gentlemen of today are various and many. Because they are various and many, they are cheap; when they were refined and rare they were precious.”<sup>29</sup>

Just as literati reoriented literary genres inherited from the Tang to make a place for the city in writing, they extended the conventions of existing genres and invented new genres to accommodate their ambivalent sentiments about commodities. Tang literati had used the notebook (*biji* 筆記), a genre characterized by the enduring marginality of its subject matter, to collect unofficial history, political gossip, and literary anecdotes from the capital as well as tales about anomalous events from the provinces.<sup>30</sup> Song literati expanded the scope of this semiotic marginality to include a variety of knowledge they gathered on their travels through their multi-centered empire, including comments on local products and assessments of commodities such as tea and musical instruments. Such records of connoisseurship in time also became a genre onto itself, known as the catalogue (*pu* 譜): treatises on lichees and oranges, paintings and calligraphy, tea and

28 Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shijianzhu*, 10.256 (登景德塔), emphasis added.

29 Qiang Zhi, *Cibuji*, 25.361 (上提刑司封書).

30 See de Pee 2017b. See also Allen 2014a, 2014b; Dudbridge 1995; Dudbridge 2005, 97–213; Dudbridge 2013; L. Feng 2010, 2015; Halperin 2009; Y. Liu 1980, 37–75; Luo 2012, 2015; Moore 2004; Reed 2001, 2003; Sanders 2014; Shields 2014, 2017a; Trauzettel 2004, 221–228.

flowers that collected the author's knowledge of a particular commodity, under an ironic apology for the frivolity of his pursuit of that knowledge.<sup>31</sup> The anonymity of the metropolis likewise occasioned the creation of new literary genres, such as the casebooks and forensic manuals published to help officials improve their skills in detection and in proving the identity of criminals, in a time when the size of urban populations and the use of standard currencies offered new opportunities for crime and raised new obstacles to apprehension.<sup>32</sup> Feats of detection also became part of epitaphs:

In administration and the conduct of office, [Ouyang Ye (d. 1037)] excelled at deciding legal cases. ... In Guiyang [present-day Chenzhou, Hunan province] a commoner had been killed during a fistfight after a boat race, but the case had remained unsolved for a long time. As soon as my lord took over the case, he had the prisoners led into the courtyard, sat them down, had their shackles removed, and gave them food and drink. After the meal, all of them returned to the prison with a heavy heart, but Ouyang retained one man alone. The face of the retained man changed color as he looked around in fear. My lord said, "You are the killer!" The prisoner could not understand how my lord had found out. My lord said, "I noticed that during the meal everyone was holding his spoon with his right hand. Only you held your spoon with your left hand. The victim was wounded on the right-hand side of his ribcage, so it is clear that you killed him." The prisoner burst out in tears: "I killed him! I should not implicate others in this!"<sup>33</sup>

In the course of the eleventh century, however, unease with urban crowds and conspicuous consumption increased rather than diminished. A few men

31 See, for example, Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 35.638–652; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 73.1060, 75.1094–1095, 152.2514; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.11.7b–8a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 48.750. Beverly Bossler (2012, 81–84) remarks that concubines also became objects of connoisseurship.

32 See, for example He Ning and He Meng, *Yiyu ji*; Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 8.24a (cf. 8.19a–20a); Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 12.11b. *A Magical Mirror for Solving Cases* (*Zheyu guijian*, 1154), *Parallel Cases from Under the Pear Tree* (*Tangyin bishi*, 121), and *The Washing Away of Wrongs* (*Xiyuan jilu*, 1247), although published during the Southern Song, all contain materials from eleventh-century manuals. See Zheng Ke, *Zheyu guijian*; Gui Wanrong, *Tangyin bishi*. On this literature, see also de Pee 1997, 44–49; McKnight 1981; Van Gulik 1956; Waltner 1990.

33 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 27.421–422 (尚書都官員外郎歐陽公墓誌銘). The guilty man has "implicated others in this" by causing innocent men to be kept in jail for the duration of the investigation. See also Gui Wanrong, *Tangyin bishi*, 1.5a. For another instance of violence after a boat race, see McKnight 1995.



were able to assert a distinctive identity even in the densest population and the most competitive markets, immersing themselves in the crowd while remaining aloof and focused:

Shi Kangbo [b. 1020] ... reads widely and writes poetry, but only to amuse himself, not to seek recognition from others. Calligraphy, famous paintings, ancient vessels, and unusual objects are his only passion. When an object strikes him, he will pawn his clothes and stop eating in order to obtain it, regardless of whether he already owns something similar. *During the forty years he has spent in the capital, he has walked in and out of its alleyways, never riding a horse. In the dense crowd, his ears and eyes are alert, focused entirely on the search for things he likes.* He is seven feet tall, with black whiskers—like the holy men and knights-errant in today's paintings—walking in the dust, as though he is on a mission. ... Now, You'an [i.e., Shi Kangbo] likes paintings. It is his only affliction, not worth writing about. I therefore have only given the outline of who he is as a person.<sup>34</sup>

More commonly, however, literati withdrew from the noise and confusion of the city to find a stable knowledge of their individual self by dedicated study and quiet contemplation. Having developed a notion of an individual self by confronting the anonymous crowds and prolific commodities of the city, they retired to examine this self in isolation, in terms they expected to last, in defiance of the changing tastes of the fashionable and the capricious preferences of the powerful.

The literati of the Northern Song identified with the men who had attained office through the examinations during the ninth century. They edited and printed their works, alluded to their compositions and circumstances, imitated their literary styles, and sometimes even took their names.<sup>35</sup> Yet the cities and the empire within which they set their imitations and tributes bore little resemblance to those of their admired predecessors. Whereas the literati of the ninth century had regarded Chang'an as the singular center of cosmic power and civilization, had feared the cumbersome and dangerous journey to the alien South, and had defined their individuality in relation to their peers, in the natural surroundings of suburban excursions

34 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.364 (《石氏畫苑》記), emphasis added.

35 For examples of the editing and printing of Tang collected works by Song literati, see Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 11.2a–3b; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 2.10a–11a, *fu*.1b–2a, *fu*.7a; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 12.193–194; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 84.536. Liu Kai named himself for Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, his new first name (*kai*, “to open”) committing him to “opening the Way of the ancient sages and worthies.” See Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 2.1b–8b.

and gardens, literati of the eleventh century perceived the singularity of Kaifeng as a matter of degree, accepted postings to the southern regions as routine appointments (and often with gratitude, as an increasing number of officials had themselves grown up in the South), and considered their individuality not only in elegant seclusion among their peers but also in the pressing concourse of urban traffic. The literati of the ninth century had distinguished themselves from the heirs to the great surnames by attaining office through literary achievement rather than through privileged connections, yet they shared with the great clans their evident difference from the metropolitan crowds. Thus, whereas literati of the eleventh century in the avenues of Kaifeng could sometimes barely recognize their own friends, Luo Yin (833–909) was able distinguish the faces even of men he didn't know and had seen only once:

It has been two or three years since I was cast into this life of poverty in Chang'an. From time to time while galloping through the city I encounter a man with whom I have never shared affairs of the heart but who I tell myself immediately is untrustworthy, even though I never see him again.<sup>36</sup>

Historians have long explained the new attention to urban streetscapes in eleventh-century texts by a morphological change in the cities themselves, arguing that during the Tang residential wards and urban markets had been enclosed by walls whereas during the Song residences and shops stood side by side along open streets. Because walled markets persisted in the Song, however, and because during the Tang walled neighborhoods existed only in Chang'an and Luoyang (see Introduction), morphological change cannot explain why Song literati found beauty in the streets of the same cities where Tang literati wrote only of gardens, parks, and the countryside. Rather, the streets of Kaifeng and Hangzhou, of Fuzhou and Binzhou emerged into writing because Song literati deliberately created a place for the city within the inherited literary landscape. Their reorientation of the literary geography enabled them to treat the city as a place for new ways of seeing and thinking, to assert in writing an individual prominence that they may not have possessed in the street, and to distinguish themselves from their peers by exploring the productive tensions and unexpected convergences between the rural geography of their predecessors and the commercial streetscape of their own compositions. The city emerged into writing in the

<sup>36</sup> Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji, chanshu*.5.234 (序陸生東游). Huang Tingjian once met an old friend in Kaifeng without recognizing him. See Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, buyi.2.1626.

eleventh century not because social and economic forces broke down urban walls, but because literati moved the generic boundaries of the Tang and reconfigured the literary geography, in the context of a newly integrated, newly mobile empire.

## A Diminished Center

Literati of the Northern Song commonly paid tribute to the court and to themselves by equating the new capital at Kaifeng with illustrious Chang'an. Tian Xi (940–1003), for example, “resided at the edge of the sky, still not permitted to return,” writing a thousand poems in tortured longing for “Chang’an.”<sup>37</sup> In Wanling (present-day Xuancheng, Anhui province), Hu Su (996–1067) “raised his head, trying to perform a gaze toward Chang’an” (*ju tou shi zuo Chang’an wang* 舉頭試作長安望) only to find that the blue mountains around the city blocked his view.<sup>38</sup> Su Shunqin (1008–1048) “refused to look toward Chang’an” while living in exile in Suzhou.<sup>39</sup> Zhang Lei (1054–1114) sent a colleague back across the Yangzi River, to

Chang’an with its million households,  
Where carriages and horses rush without cease.  
Into high heaven soar the towers and gates;  
From the four seas gather the robed and capped.<sup>40</sup>

Others furnished Kaifeng with elegant residents from the former capital, such as noble families celebrating spring at Serpentine Park, young men riding their proud horses toward the imperial hunt, exotic courtesans serving wine, and noble youths carousing with dogs and falcons.<sup>41</sup> In a poem written for the examinations, Wang Yucheng sends blossoms “fluttering over the three markets and nine avenues” of the capital.<sup>42</sup> Song literati even revived

37 Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 15.6ab (冬夕書事).

38 Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 3.34 (宛陵秋晚). Cf. Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 25.298; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quan ji*, 55.784; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 18.217–218, 18.219, 18.220; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.7a. Liu Chang also gazed toward the actual Chang’an, as an archaic gesture. See Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 26.313–314.

39 Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 8.92 (某為世所棄 ...).

40 Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.89 (贈楊念三道孚).

41 See Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 1.8b; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 7.81; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 10.5a.

42 Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.19.2a (中書試詔臣僚和御製《雪詩》序).

the long, descriptive rhapsody to pay homage to their capital in the stately form and luxurious language of the Han dynasty.<sup>43</sup>

But Kaifeng was also an imposing capital in its own right. Although Tian Xi complained in 981 that several branches of government still lacked proper offices, he acknowledged that the capital already projected an imposing imperial grandeur:

Now, everything under the sky is united into one household; all within the seas is unified into a ten-thousand-mile territory. The four directions converge within the grid of the imperial city; the myriad goods contribute to the wealth of the metropolitan capital. The army camps and the Directorate of Horses are without exception lofty and solemn; the Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples are one and all impressive and beautiful. Your Majesty has moreover renovated the Western Park; and has also enlarged the imperial lake. The lake equals Kunming Lake of the Han; the park matches Lingyu Park of the Zhou. It is fit to provide the setting for Your Majesty's banquets and processions; it is fit to set the standard of the court's splendor and grandeur.<sup>44</sup>

Later authors, too, placed the capital at the convergence of the empire's roads and waterways, at the high center of political power and human civilization, at the axis of the moral cosmos.<sup>45</sup> The verticality of the city attested to its location at the center of power and wealth: "Gradually I confront the heavenly gates, / Towering like the markers of central heaven," wrote Ouyang Xiu at his return to Kaifeng in 1033.<sup>46</sup> Inside the walls, noble and powerful families

43 On the revival of the rhapsody during the Song dynasty, see Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, 6.62. For Song rhapsodies on the imperial capitals, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 34.16a–17b; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 1.1–3; Lü Zuqian, *Huangchao wenjian*, 1.1–2, 2.19–25, 7.91–102, 10.122–127, 11.135; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 3.34–35; Wang Mingqing, *Yuzhao xinshi*, 2.25–39; Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao, fulu*.3ab. On these rhapsodies and on the Song-dynasty revival of the rhapsody, see also Ridgway 2017.

44 Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 1.19b (上太宗論軍國要機朝廷大體). Cf. Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 21.12a.

45 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.20.453, I.20.458–459; Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 9.9b; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 7.79–80, 7.83–84; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 14.5a; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 23.278; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 10.8a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 13.229, 48.675, 51.727; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.9.406, I.13.522–524; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 4.67ab; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.11b, 3.17a; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 3.24; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 21.12a; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 38.5b; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, II.11–12.6b–7a; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 10.1b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 14.178–180; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 1.1–3; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 5.2ab.

46 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 51.727 (代書寄尹十一兄楊十六王三). Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.8, 1.15; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 6.4a.

competed in putting up tall mansions, soaring wine houses and brothels lined the roads and alleys, Daoist temples rose up along the thoroughfares like the cliffs of immortal mountains, pagodas advertised the holiness and the means of Buddhist monasteries, lofty pavilions reached toward the moon, and imposing halls and towers stood over the Avenue of Heaven.<sup>47</sup> At the center of these crowding towers and proud mansions loomed the imperial city with its forbidding walls and awful gates, its elegant palaces and solemn government offices.<sup>48</sup> This was the city that Su Zhe (1039–1112), in a letter to Han Qi (1008–1075), remembered from his first visit at the age of nineteen—a city whose lofty buildings answered the noble ambitions and eminent talent of its officials, and that taught him how to write:

By the time I had reached the age of nineteen, my family did not fraternize with anyone beyond the neighbors and the local community, and I had not seen anything beyond an area of two hundred miles, therefore lacking the vistas of tall mountains and wide plains that would have enabled me to expand myself. Although I had read all the books by the hundred masters, these were only the remnant traces of the ancients, inadequate to drive my ambition. ... *When I arrived in the capital and gazed up at the magnificence of the palaces and gates of the Son of Heaven, and at the wealth and scale of the granaries and the prefectural storehouses, of the walls and lakes, the parks and gardens, only then did I understand the overpowering beauty of the empire.* And when I met my lord Ouyang [Xiu] of the Hanlin Academy, and heard the erudite discriminations of his discourses, saw the elegant eminence of his features, and fraternized with the worthy gentlemen he patronizes, *only then did I understand that it is here that the writing of the empire is gathered.*<sup>49</sup>

Although built on a less regular plan than Chang'an and Luoyang, Kaifeng functioned, like those earlier cities, as a cosmic grid that aligned human

47 See Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 10.5a; Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 7.32a; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 5.6a, 5.17b; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 1.1–3; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 7.91, 8.102–103; Lu Dian, *Taoshan ji*, 3.7b; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 28.1061; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 126.1909; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 6.70; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 27.281; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 5.13b; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 34.4b; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.89; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 5.78; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 25.2b. On verticality in Kaifeng, cf. Soper 1948, 28–29, 32.

48 See Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 9.9b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 35.405; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 13.161; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 4.66; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 1.18b; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 27.6ab.

49 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.22.477–478 (上樞密韓太尉書), emphasis added.

action and human time with the movements of Heaven and Earth. Through the night the water clock in the imperial city reminded the wakeful and the sleepless of the progression of the hours.<sup>50</sup> At the beginning of the fifth watch, drums across the capital announced the opening of the city gates and summoned officials to court.<sup>51</sup> As these eminent men rode up the Avenue of Heaven toward the palace, they saw the stars fade above the gates and towers of the imperial city, reminding them that they approached the center of cosmic rulership.<sup>52</sup>

“Song of the Imperial Capital, as Farewell to Zhang Boyu,” by Fan Zhongyan

In the imperial capital lives a sage [i.e., the Emperor],  
*Who renews himself with the sun and the moon.*  
 Bright and brilliant is the talent of the realm,  
 Traveling west to become the guest of Yao and Shun.

The hundred valleys face the eastern ocean;  
 The myriad stars attend the North Star.  
 The straight he fashions into his shafts;  
 The bent he fashions into his wheels.<sup>53</sup>

On the first day of the New Year, officials and foreign ambassadors gathered at the palace to offer to the Son of Heaven their congratulations with this auspicious proof of cosmic order and imperial efficacy.<sup>54</sup> On the fifteenth day of the first month, in the light of the first full moon, the emperor appeared at the top of the southern palace gate, attended by kin and by trusted officials, to oversee the artificial mountain erected in front of the gate and to contemplate the capital lit up by millions of lanterns and alive with

50 See Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.6a; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.5.4a, 1.7.15b.

51 See Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 2.10.

52 See Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 9.4a; Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 9.9b; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 9.3b; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.937; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 12.200; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.7.266; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 3.28, 13.128–129; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.90. On the Avenue of Heaven as a ceremonial, hierarchical site, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 8.12ab; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 43.540.

53 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.2.30 (上都行送張伯玉), emphasis added. Cf. Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 35.422.

54 See Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 23.278. Foreign ambassadors also attended the festivities during Prime Eve, or the Lantern Festival. See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 16.28b; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 36.1959; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.8.192.

music and crowds.<sup>55</sup> When the emperor traveled to offer sacrifice at altars outside the imperial city, the imperial procession transformed the capital into a ceremonial ground, with patterned robes and emblazoned banners, fine horses and grand vehicles, soldiers and dancers, music and incense:

“On the Eighteenth Day of the Second Month in the Sixth Year of the Xianping Reign [March 23, 1003] I Served in the Imperial Procession, Then Composed a Record of It in Twenty-Two Couplets,” by Yang Yi (974–1020)

The imperial palanquin descends from Bright Luster Hall;  
The military escort departs from Infinity Palace.  
Of the train of carriages many are transporting wine;  
Along the edge of the avenue all vie in burning incense.

The cloud-patterned pipes blow under the swirling plum blossoms;  
The rainbow-bearing banners rise among the martial bird emblems.  
The column of officials rides horses from the Desert Park garrison;  
The phalanx of guards carries spears from the Feather Forest barracks.

The emperor's jade carriage: the movement of the heavens is vigorous;  
The court's golden receptacle: the clepsydra in the morning is longlasting.  
A bright wind spreads the fragrance of orchids;  
An immortal mist touches the flags and standards.<sup>56</sup>

55 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 6.100; Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 10.135; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 8.5b, 21.6b; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 13.151; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 8.78–79; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 8.23a. It was also customary for the emperor to process through the streets during the Lantern Festival. See Huihong, *Shimen wenzi chan*, 11.1b; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 37.7a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.267, 22.592; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 1.4, 11.134; Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 1.9b; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 28.687; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 24.434. See also West 2017. Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang argued that this imperial procession was a custom, not a ritual, and could therefore be canceled if circumstances required it. See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 111.1690–1691; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 21.3b–4a.

56 Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 3.18a–19a (咸平六年二月十八日扈從宸遊因成紀事二十二韻). This poem honors the imperial court not only by placing it in connection with the heavens, but also by equipping it with the palaces and ritual implements of the Han and Tang empires. For other renditions of imperial processions, see Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 2.3b–4a, 24.7b; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 10.1a–2a; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 16.220–221; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 19.425; Lu Dian, *Taoshan ji*, 3.11b–12a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 14.234; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 2.13ab; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 7.4b–5a; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 11.106, 11.111; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 28.1488–1493; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.7.174; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 3.7ab. Cf. also Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 7.82.

The emperor celebrated the Cold Food festival with staged naval battles in the artificial Lake of Metal's Luster, he directed the opening of the rivers and canals in the third month, and he honored graduates of the examinations with a banquet in Gem Forest Park.<sup>57</sup> When officials thought of the capital in their distant posts, it often appeared to them as this city of cosmic ritual and imperial splendor.<sup>58</sup> The first day of the New Year, the local celebrations of Prime Eve, the spring equinox and the winter solstice, and the changes of the seasons established an immediate connection between the center and the periphery that voided the physical distance between them and gave access to strong sensory memories.<sup>59</sup> And although Yu Jing held that officials in the flattened empire of the Song no longer gazed toward the capital, a few of his peers still climbed a wall or a tower "toward the imperial precinct all day to stare from the railing" and to imagine the Avenue of Heaven, "sprinkled and swept."<sup>60</sup>

The frequent anachronisms, however, and the self-conscious use of archaic tropes in these representations of Kaifeng as cosmic center indicate that literary geographies had shifted by the end of the tenth century, and that the imperial capital did not lay hold of the official's ambition or the poet's imagination to the same extent as Chang'an and Luoyang had done during the Tang. Literati of the Song indeed admitted the excellences of other cities, sometimes to the disadvantage of Kaifeng. In an edict of appointment, Wang Gui (1019–1085) accorded to the city of Guangzhou (now Guangzhou, Guangdong province) the prominence that Tang officials had withheld from it, allowing that "during the flourishing Tang it was the most prominent among the five commanderies; under the Southern Yue it collected the entire region in a single metropolis," and that at present "its soil is fertile, its

57 For Cold Food, naval battles, and the opening of the imperial parks, see Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 4.4ab, 10.2ab; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 7.8ab, 7.17b–18a; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 10.11b; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 37.5b–6a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.657; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 8.76; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 30.8b–9a, 36.1b; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 27.9b. See also West 2005. For the opening of the rivers, see Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 15.2a, 16.2b–3a, 17.3b. For imperial banquets, see Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 18.16b–17a; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 8.79–80.

58 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.8, 1.15; Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 2.47b; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.13b; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.4a; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.8.13b; Wu Zeli, *Beihu ji*, 3.1ab.

59 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 8.141, 8.143; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 6.75; Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 3.16a; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 23.278; Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 2.10ab; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 25.781; Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 10.142; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.6b; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shijianzhu*, 28.686; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.6.1b–2b, 1.8.10b, 1.8.11a, 1.9.4a–6a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 22.399; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 13.10b. Cf. West 2017.

60 Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.4b (郡樓書懷); Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 3.30 (登雄州視遠亭). Cf. Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 2.60b; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 6.63; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 5.45; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.10b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 3.47; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 3.1b–5a.



customs joyous; its barbarians are diverse, its goods copious.”<sup>61</sup> Zhao Bian (1008–1084) represented the same city as a busy center of transshipment, money circulation, and warehouses, and Yu Jing described it as a “large city” with an old foreign community.<sup>62</sup> Song Qi acknowledged that the famous sites in Chengdu (now Chengdu, Sichuan province) all dated to the past, yet deemed that the present city surpassed even its glorious eminence during the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE).<sup>63</sup> Hangzhou posed the most forceful challenge to the supremacy of Kaifeng. It was not only “the most beautiful city in the Southeast,” but it also served “as the metropolitan center of the Wu region,” with “roads connecting to the four directions and to all the countries overseas: goods arrive and are stored, merchants come and go, and customs are various.”<sup>64</sup> This prominence in the Southeast elevated Hangzhou to a rare distinction, for Ouyang Xiu assured a departing friend that “in the southeastern region of Wu and Yue there are a hundred wealthy cities,” and Su Song (1020–1101) informed a colleague that in Jiangxi, “within a circumference of three hundred miles there are ten large cities, / Each with ten thousand households built face to face.”<sup>65</sup> But Song literati discovered metropolitan concourses of traffic and commerce even in lesser cities such as Zhengzhou (“a bottleneck to half the empire”) and Changsha, and in towns such as Xingyuan Prefecture (present-day Hanzhong City, Shaanxi province), a city on a crossroads to Sichuan with several tens of thousands of houses and with markets that sold goods from all over the empire to a diverse population, and Jiangling Prefecture (present-day Jingzhou City, Hubei province), a port on the Yangzi River that was promoted to civilization and wealth by Tang refugees and then favored as a residence by official families from Sichuan during the Song.<sup>66</sup>

61 Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 36.3b (天章閣待制知江寧軍府事劉湜知廣州制).

62 Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 8.2b (送昭文劉少卿移知南海); Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 15.13ab (免轉尚書左丞知廣州狀), 15.15a (再免知廣州表).

63 See Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 15.175. On the florescence of Sichuan in the late tenth century, cf. Zhang Yong, *Zhang Guaiya ji*, 2.8, 2.19.

64 Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 10.22a (杭州八詠: 有美堂); Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.499 (杭州清暑堂記), 28.494–495 (杭州新作雙門記).

65 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 57.816 (送張吉老赴浙憲); Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 2.11 (送閻秘丞宰雩都).

66 Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 15.335 (觀音院餞送章子平出守鄭州探得「近」字); Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 4.1a; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 29.942; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 10.212. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 10.160; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 30.957; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.12b, 9.4a. The Japanese monk Jōjin (1011–after 1083) observed that the size and the density of buildings in Taiyuan (present Taiyuan, Shanxi province) made it “exactly like the capital.” Jōjin, *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji*, 5.391.

If these rival metropolitan centers diminished the singularity of Kaifeng as a center of commercial traffic and urban prosperity, the settlement and development of former peripheries reduced the prominence of the capital as a center of political ambition and cosmic power. The landscape and mode of life in the South, especially, had changed almost beyond recognition. According to Guo Xiangzheng (fl. 1046–1086), “The Pacification Commissioner of Fujian opened the mountains and abolished the frontier armies, / Allowing the humane benevolence of our Dynasty to issue forth.” In Tingzhou (present-day Changting, Fujian province), he found this transformation manifested in the sight of “Azure tiles glimmering on myriad buildings, / Doubled towers and multiplied pavilions lined up row after row.”<sup>67</sup> Wang Ciweng (1079–1149) praised the customs of Daozhou (now Dao County, Hunan province), on the border of Hunan and Guangxi, where the population had maintained shrines to admired prefects for several centuries.<sup>68</sup> During his exile on the southern island Hainan, Su Shi watched locals play chess and listened to the neighbors’ son reciting his lessons.<sup>69</sup> The kingdoms and empires of the tenth century had transformed the landscape and the cities of the South to an extent that Tang officials could not have imagined.

Unlike the officials of the Tang, moreover, officials of the Song enjoyed much of the food of the South, such as fish and rice, oranges and lichees, bamboo shoots and betelnuts. They also accepted variations in climate as a normal consequence of location and elevation, rather than abhorring it as evidence of lacking virtue and civilization. Song Qi, for example, regretted seeing plum blossoms before the New Year because it reminded him how far away he was from the capital (“South of the rivers the experience of cold is slight”), not because he thought it aberrant, and Wei Xiang (1033–1105) even expressed pleasure at finding the peonies in his garden in bloom eight days after Prime Eve, on the twenty-third day of the first month.<sup>70</sup>

The alien peoples who had dominated the southern landscape during the ninth century had by the eleventh century been contained and partly assimilated. In Yiling, for example, Ouyang Xiu discovered a community of Sichuanese merchants and Man wine houses, of unintelligible speech and aggressive harvesting of lacquer and pepper for the river trade.<sup>71</sup> In 820, Han Yu (768–824) had advised the throne that it was both impossible and a waste

67 Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 21.347 (次韻元興臨江書事三首, 其二).

68 See Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 1124 preface, 14a–15a.

69 See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 42.2310–2311, 42.2312–2313.

70 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 20.254 (南方未臘梅花已開 ...); Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 6.38a. Cf. Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 18.293; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 9.104, 24.297, 31.920.

71 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 11.170, 11.179–180. Cf. Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.1.4, 1.1.6, 1.1.6–7.

of resources to pursue and exterminate a group such as the Yiliao of Guangxi, who would at times attack a city and then withdraw to a small territory in the mountains (“they do not live in cities and they do not resemble human beings in either dress or speech”).<sup>72</sup> But Hu Su discovered that in the eleventh century the Man in the same area made themselves vulnerable by a change in strategy:

I observe that under previous dynasties the conquest and defeat of the Man bandits was difficult because *they ensconced themselves in nests and caves* and thence raided the frontier. An army either had to penetrate their territory, where they would encounter the obstacles raised by mountain forests, or had to build a lasting encampment, where they would imbue the poison spread by miasmatic fogs. Many soldiers thus died without ever engaging battle. This was the reason of the difficulty. Now, however, the Man bandits of the Yong region [present-day Yongning County, Guangxi province] have all gathered in rebellion and *have left their caves far behind, setting up camp in Guangzhou*, below the fortified wall, on the even plain, where they have at present been for more than sixty days. If they retreat, the road back will be very long; if they advance, a large army has already assembled. I estimate that the spirit of the bandits will deteriorate. I have also learnt that, *although Guangzhou has forested mountains, these are not very deep or forbidding*.<sup>73</sup>

Whereas Tang exiles to the South had been preoccupied with personal survival and occasionally with the promotion of learning and the layout of a prefectural seat, Song officials arrived in the South as representatives of a concerted civilizing force.<sup>74</sup> Song officials in the South had more ready

72 See Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2377–2379 (黃家賊事宜狀).

73 Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 8.91–92 (論征蠻), emphasis added. On the conquest and the extermination of the Man, especially during the rebellion of Nong Zhigao (ca. 1025–1055), see also Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.14.345; Tao Bi, *Yongzhou xiaoji*, 8b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 1.1a, 3.5a–6a, 5.3b, 5.4b–5b, 16.7a–8a; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 39.693–695. On the Nong Zhigao rebellion, see also Anderson 2007. For the suppression of uprisings of other peoples, see Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 4.3ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 29.436–439, 30.448–450; Tao Bi, *Yongzhou xiaoji*, 3a, 10b–11a; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 2.2b. Not all officials regarded these southern peoples as inhuman. Lü Tao, for example, protested against the excessive use of violence against a southern tribe that had caused a minor disturbance, and Qin Guan praised Ren Ji (1018–1081) for endorsing a claim to werewgeld by a people on the southwestern frontier. See Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 4.4b–5a; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.33.1103–1105.

74 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 29.519, 37.681; Feng Shan, *Anyue ji*, 11.9b–10a; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 64.980–981; Tao Bi, *Yongzhou xiaoji*, 6ab; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 89.560–561; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 6.24b–27a; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 26.397–407.

access to armed forces than their Tang predecessors, and they interfered with local agriculture and trade as well as with local beliefs and practices, seeking for example to prohibit sorcery, illicit cults, and shamanic healing.<sup>75</sup>

As the South became progressively integrated into the political and economic infrastructure of the North, and as the North became increasingly dominated by literati from the South, appointments to the South became routine and its landscape became less alien. Wang Yucheng, for example, suffered by the uncertainty that the punishment of exile inflicted on him, but he did not distinguish between exile in the North and exile in the South.<sup>76</sup> Wei Xiang complained of the difficulties of travel in the mountains of Sichuan and Fujian, but not of dangerous animals, strange plants, or oppressive heat.<sup>77</sup> The alien South of the Tang still makes an occasional appearance in the literature of the eleventh century, but it occurs mostly in hyperbolic, self-consciously archaic parting poems (“The sea animals are difficult to recognize; / The Man monks are impossible to understand”).<sup>78</sup> Otherwise the dense rainforests and miasmic fogs of the ninth century are conspicuous mostly by their absence. Southern counties and prefectures that inflicted illness and isolation on Tang officials became part of the regular rotation of appointments during the Song:

“Sending Off Someone to Become a County Magistrate in Min [i.e., Fujian],”  
by Sima Guang (1019–1086)

Ten thousand miles away, beyond the Eastern Ou,  
*Creeks and mountains stand out for their elegance.*  
*The local people all delight in learning;*  
The grand prefect also labors on writing.

75 See Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 7.9a–11a; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 12.248–251, 12.253–254; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 39.563, 79.1146; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 15.12a–13b; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 3.6b–7b. Cf. Hinrichs 2011.

76 See Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.17.12b.

77 See Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 6.10a–12b, 6.17a–19b, 6.24b–26b, 6.39ab. Cf. Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 2.74b; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 32.2a; Zhang Yong, *Zhang Guaiya ji*, 3.21. Zhang Yong cursed black flies across the empire, not just in the South. See Zhang Yong, *Zhang Guaiya ji*, 6.60–61.

78 Wei Ye, *Julu Dongguan ji*, 9.4a (送塞藏用省兄). Cf. Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 19.304; Qiang Zhi, *Cibuji*, 2.12; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.7b–8a. Moreover, rather than condemning the alien landscape of the South for assailing their personal health and wellbeing, literati of the eleventh century repeatedly condemn it for resisting the civilizing transformation of governance. See Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1.7b–8b; Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 5.8b–12b; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.9b; Xu Ji, *Jiexiao ji*, 4.1a–3a.

If you rely exactly on transformation by kind virtue,  
 Your tenure will not be disrupted by lawsuits.  
*Who says that you will be far from the capital?*  
 News of excellent governance travels quickly.<sup>79</sup>

Su Shi, leaving Guangzhou, found that “the edge of the sky never yet felt far away,” and Ouyang Xiu deemed that the Southern Liao in Qiande County (near present-day Laohekou City, Hubei province) lived at the edge of the sky, rather than the official who governed them.<sup>80</sup> Certainly the many southerners who served in the imperial government did not perceive their home region as alien or remote.<sup>81</sup> Cai Xiang (1012–1067), for example, requested appointments in Fujian and Guangxi, and was pleased in 1056 to leave the capital and its banquets in order to sail down the rivers and cross the mountains.<sup>82</sup>

The burden of economic activity also shifted to the South. According to Su Xun (1009–1066), the two circuits with the highest revenue were Guangnan (present-day Guangxi and Guangdong) and Chuan-Xia (present-day Sichuan and Hubei), and Li Gou (1009–1059) argued that the Lower Yangzi region might exist as an independent country, but that the North would not survive without the Lower Yangzi region.<sup>83</sup> When Ouyang Xiu in 1034 came upon a bustling town on the Yellow River where “the merchants who ply the capital all gather with their boats and carriages,” he noted with surprise that “the population is numerous and diverse, exactly like a town on the Yangzi River.”<sup>84</sup> In other words, he measured the economic activity on the Yellow River by the economic activity on the Yangzi River, instead of the other way around.

The improved infrastructure of roads and rivers, built by the rival empires of the tenth century and expanded under the Song, enabled the imperial court to pursue universal governance with new ambition and vigor. Zhang Yong declared in 985 that the controller-general in Linzhou Prefecture (north

79 Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 8.10b (送人為閩宰), emphasis added. Cf. Wei Ye, *Julu Dongguan ji*, 6.7a; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.12b–14a.

80 Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 38.2067 (發廣州); Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 53.743.

81 On the quality of education in the South and on the success of southern candidates in the examinations, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 29.509–510; Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 23.5a–6a; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 25.285; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 34.411; Lu Dian, *Taoshan ji*, 4.1a; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 30.10a–11a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 113.1717; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 3.28a–29a; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 2.12b.

82 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 25.421–422, 25.426–427, 6.109.

83 See Su Xun, *Jiayou jianzhu*, 4.100–101; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 28.317. Cf. Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 33.9a.

84 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 10.160 (朱家曲).

of present-day Shenmu, Shaanxi province) on the northwestern frontier carried out the civilizing transformation of the emperor like officials in every other of the five hundred prefectures:

The present office of controller-general is the ancient function of commandery inspector. The order of prefectural governance he aids and completes; the crooked in prefectural governance he straightens and corrects. Thus he promotes the transformation by the Son of Heaven and realizes the hopes of the weakest subjects. *Our dynasty has extended the borders to the eight extremities, has organized the realm in five hundred prefectures.* Those whom the Emperor covers with benevolent virtue delight with joy; those whom the Emperor treats with overpowering might shake with fear. *Therefore a classical scholar sent to enforce order beyond the pale of civilization need not be martial hero.*<sup>85</sup>

In a commemoration for a lock at Zhenzhou (present-day Yizheng City, Jiangsu province), Hu Su argued in 1027 that this unified, uniform administration allowed the imperial government to extract the resources of the empire with unprecedented efficacy, to the benefit of its subjects:

Our dynasty has established a sacred foundation for ten thousand years; has united the heavenly realm under a single rule. From the corner of the ocean where the sun rises, everyone is the emperor's subject; within the borders of the territory where the continent extends, everything belongs to the ruler's domain. *Where writing and cart tracks disappear, tax revenue is collected; from the Yangzi River southward, hidden treasures have emerged.* Thus we have the tributes of jade and gold mentioned in the documents of Yu [in the *Book of Documents*]; and we earn the profits from salt and iron devised by the officials of the Han [in the *Debates on Salt and Iron*]. What is produced of tusks and horns, of feathers and furs; what is received of money and grain, of shoes and slippers—certainly these stores aren't used with profligacy; and the realm possesses wealth in abundance. *Among the remote regions that welcome the imperial carriage are the large prefectures that border the Yangzi River.* With their precious eminences and level fields they occupy the five thousand *li* of the Chu region; with their expansive waters and towering mountains they swallow eighty to ninety percent of the Yunmeng marsh. To the south they

85 Zhang Yong, *Zhang Guaiya ji*, 8.75–76 (麟州通判廳記), emphasis added. Cf. Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 4.101.

traverse the five mountain ranges; [to the north] they border the three Xiang waters. In the west they extend from the fords of Ba and Xia; in the east they reach to the lands of Ou and Min. The through roads lead in all directions; the adjoining territories excel in forceful pride. If one reads the summary volumes of documents, one finds that the region greatly gathers the customs of the four quarters; when one handles the unusual wares in the market, one discovers that the area is indeed the wellspring of the myriad traders.<sup>86</sup>

Officials crossed and re-crossed this empire—“smooth as a whetstone”<sup>87</sup>—passing familiar landmarks, discovering their own handwriting on the walls of hostels past, finding identical government compounds in dissimilar places, accumulating knowledge of geography and navigation, and becoming in time confused about their whereabouts in this mobile realm:<sup>88</sup>

“Mooring below the Wall of Yangzhou,” by Li Zhaoqi (fl. 1086–1131)

This place occupies the hub of the Southeast:  
Ships sail by, the hundred commodities circulate.  
My face brightens: I like the food of the Huai region;  
My mood darkens: I pity the farmers of Wu County.

The spring summons the geese back to the north;  
The water pushes people farther to the east.  
*In what remote spot is my home?*  
In the distant sky the evening clouds turn red.<sup>89</sup>

86 Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.419 (真州水關記), emphasis added. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 39.564. Su Shi remarks that the former strife in the southern plains has been supplanted by peaceful commerce. See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 2.64.

87 The metaphor of the whetstone, signifying peaceful stability, appears in Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.5 (親祀南郊詩) and Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 3.24–25 (感事). Tian Xi compares the empire to a courtyard and to a net. See Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.2b, 21.12a.

88 For returns to former sites of parting and passage see, for example, Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 7.2ab, 10.7b–8a, 10.14b–15a, 11.17b. For comments on the sameness of official compounds see Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.8.43; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.5b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.15b. For unexpected reminders of dissimilar places see Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 3.82ab; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, *passim*; Wang Yuheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.6.1b–2b. For general remarks about the routine travel of officials see Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 5.59; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 11.120; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 28.1029, 28.1034; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 12.23b–24a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 15.724; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.9.205; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 14.220–221, 17.284–285; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 12.223–224. On official travel and on writing on the walls of hostels, see also C. Zhang 2005, 2011.

89 Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 3.7a (泊揚州城外), emphasis added. Cf. Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 3.7b.

Officials and commodities traveled along the same roads and waterways, sailing alongside each other, the commodities reminding the officials of their progress, and the officials promoting the commodities in their circulation:

“Sending Off Hu Tangchen [i.e., Hu Sengru, fl. 1086–1098] to Take Up His Post as Notary of the Administrative Assistant at Suzhou,” by Zhang Lei

*In former days you rode a barbarian horse,  
The windblown dust twisting your robe.  
Now the blossoms open over wine in Daliang City;  
Soon the leaves will drop above a sail on Taihu Lake.*

In the office you will labor with intelligence and ability;  
In the mountains you will indulge in laughter and talk.  
*In Chang'an the rice has become expensive:  
Could you ask about this in Jiangnan?*<sup>90</sup>

Although the literati of the eleventh century continued to take the revered poets of the Tang as their models and attempted to impose the awful landscape of the Tang onto their own empire, the increased mobility of people and goods defied the mood and the strictures of Tang literature, and spilt beyond the inherited images, tropes, and geographies. Wen Yanbo (1006–1097) noted the contrast between the new physical geography of the Song and the old literary landscape of the Tang—and between Song commodities and Tang poetry—in a poem about a newly opened transport canal at Luoyang:

A deep confluence for myriad ships in a well-planned site,  
Splitting the Luo and dividing the Yi as they run northward.  
A swift wind from far away brings southeastern goods;  
Scenic spots in fine array manifest Tang poetry.<sup>91</sup>

90 Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 19.336 (送胡唐臣赴蘇州僉判), emphasis added. The movement of officials and information was facilitated by a postal service, a system of hostels, and the circulation of an imperial gazette. See Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 4.46; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 48.1b–3a; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 76.482; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 14.9ab; Zhang Yong, *Zhang Guaiya ji*, 12.132; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 26.7a. On official communications, see also De Weerdt 2016, 35–104; C. Zhang 2011, 12–14.

91 Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.3a (次韻留守相公以羅門新渠並成喜而成詠). Cf. Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 3.42–47. Su Shi describes an unchanged Tang landscape as “ancient.” See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 9.433.



Chao Buzhi (1053–1110) commemorated famous sites of the Sui and Tang in Yangzhou that had vanished or that now lay isolated and meaningless in a new landscape of canals and dikes, of irrigated fields and merchant ships.<sup>92</sup> Peng Ruli (1041–1094) complained that a famous landscape described by the calligrapher Wang Xizhi (303–361) had become a traffic hub:

Painted boats hither and thither, appearing almost to fly;  
 Helter skelter carriages and horses, grinding dust and mud.  
 The calligraphy of Right Army [i.e., Wang Xizhi] emptied out the orchid bank,  
 The gallantry of Andao [i.e., Dai Andao] drew him [i.e., Wang] to Shan  
 Creek.<sup>93</sup>

Literati of the eleventh century also set commoners within this changed literary geography. Whereas the Tang poets had composed laments in the voices of old men drafted into the army and of wives waiting for news from the front, farmers in Song laments sigh about paying taxes in money and grain in order to maintain mercenary troops on some distant frontier: “Nowadays officials want money; they don’t want rice, / And ten thousand miles to the northwest they recruit the sons of Tibetans.”<sup>94</sup> The economic development of the South, the efficient travel of officials, and the long-distance shipment of goods for public provisioning and private trade integrated the empire to an unprecedented degree, and thereby made the geographic tropes of Tang literature archaic and quaint.

The new geography of commercial centers, transport hubs, official travel, and circulating commodities also diminished the stature of the capital as cosmic center. The Eastern Capital remained unique in its possession of the imperial palace and the offices of the central government, of grand rituals and the collection of eminent talent, but its metropolitan variety of people and commodities, of learning and entertainment, it now shared with many

92 See Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 20.11b–12b.

93 Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 8.7b (次雜端韻). Wang Xizhi commemorated the elegant gathering and lofty scenery at the Orchid Pavilion in hopes of preserving for future generations the mood of that afternoon, but Peng Ruli accuses him of having obliterated the site instead. For the text of Wang Xizhi’s “Preface to the Gathering at Orchid Pavilion,” see Zhang Pu, *Han Wei Liuchao baisan jia ji*, 59.95a–96b. For the anecdote about Wang Xizhi’s visit to Dai Andao, see Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu*, 5.197. The association of Wang Xizhi’s visit with gallantry (*fengliu* 風流) appears to derive from a line by Li Bai (*Li Taibai quanji*, 20.920): “How was it only gallantry that brought him to Shan Creek?”, which then suggests an alternative reading of Peng’s line: “Who says that gallantry ever visits Shan Creek?”

94 Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 8.404 (吳中田婦歎). Cf. Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 1.9b; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 11.4b–6a.

other cities in the realm. Although Kaifeng had impressive imperial parks and tasteful private gardens, these had to compete with the scenery of West Lake in Hangzhou and the gardens of Suzhou, which were maintained by equal wealth and a superior climate. Continuous travel through the empire and personal investigation of local conditions taught officials to recognize the coherence of diverse environments and to accept the differences in regional weather. Certainly the many officials who had grown up south of the Yangzi River could not be convinced that the climate, the blossoms, and the food of Kaifeng were better than those of their native regions.<sup>95</sup> The poets who gazed toward the capital and called it by the name of *Chang'an* emphasized the changed geography of the eleventh century rather than hiding it, since their deliberate archaism stood out from the literary context just as Tang buildings stood out in the landscape.<sup>96</sup>

## Open Streets

In their commemorations (*ji 記*) of buildings, literati of the eleventh century set pavilions and government offices, bridges and city gates along the same busy roads and swift waterways that they led through their poems. In the northeast, Chen Shidao celebrated the Dispelling the Clouds Tower in Dingtao (now Dingtao, Shandong province) as a monument to local peace and prosperity, erected “to await guests from the four directions and from the markets for the local population, and travelers arrived without cease.”<sup>97</sup> In the Southeast, Shen Gua (1029–1093) welcomed the restoration of Level with the Mountains Hall, where the prefect of Yangzhou (now Yangzhou, Jiangsu province) might find respite from the unending litigation brought by “travelers and traders from the eleven circuits and hundred prefectures, from the western part of Huainan and the southeastern course of the Yangzi to the five southern commanderies, Sichuan, and Shaanxi, who all arrive here on their journeys back and forth.”<sup>98</sup> Farther southeast, Cai Xiang praised the new Double Gate of Hangzhou as a fitting manifestation of civil governance, “where from the four directions that are connected by land and from all the

95 See, for example, Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 12.6b; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 3.8a; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 12.125, 29.346; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 40.585, 69.998, 152.2503, 153.2531; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.4.88; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 10.239–240; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 1.6.

96 On the strangeness of Tang architecture, see Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 9.433–434.

97 Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 15.1a–4b (披雲樓記).

98 Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 21.67a–68b (揚州重修平山堂記).

countries that lie beyond the ocean, commercial products are gathered and stored, and traveling merchants come and go, and customs and practices are diverse.”<sup>99</sup> In the south, Yu Jing placed the Zhen River Hall in Shaozhou near the end of a new, convenient route to Guangnan, “from the capital along the Bian and across the Huai, off the dam road into the transport canal and up the Yangzi, over the Plum Range and down the Zhen River, to points east and west along the southern ocean.”<sup>100</sup> In the Northwest, Chao Yuezhi (1059–1129) recorded the view from the tower he had built in Chengzhou (now Cheng County, Gansu province) to present a panorama of the trestle road to Sichuan, of the route by which Du Fu (712–770) had traveled to Sichuan, of the watermills that alleviated the burdens of the people, and of the farmlands that gladdened the heart of the magistrate.<sup>101</sup> In the southwest, Wen Tong agreed to compose a commemoration for the Northern Bridge in Yongtai County (near present-day Yanting, Sichuan province), which local officials had restored in order to accommodate “the goods and produce from Sichuan on which the prefectures of Langzhong, Qinghua, Shining, and Fuyang depend: wares such as silk and brocade, hemp and ramie, tea, embroidery, decorative carvings, and lacquerware, and commodities brought in for sale at the market, such as oxen, mules, goats, pigs, silk, cocoons, pepper, and honey—day and night these come and go, pell-mell in an incessant stream ... like water running downhill.”<sup>102</sup> In the west, Ouyang Xiu commended the intent of the Utmost Joy Pavilion in Yiling, built to assist Sichuanese merchants in their celebration of their safe passage through the Three Gorges on the Yangzi River, as once more “the Sichuanese wealth of patterned woven silk covers the subcelestial realm.”<sup>103</sup> In the heartland, near the imperial cemetery in Gong County (present-day Gongyi, Henan province), Yin Shu (1001–1047) even set a Temple of Kongzi “at the intersection of wide roads, at the confluence of the Yellow River and the Luo, where the mass of boats and carts bring wealth and strength to the people.”<sup>104</sup> Commemorations by Tang literati had placed temples and government buildings in time and in their institutional context; Song literati also placed buildings in space, not only by nearby roads and waterways, but also within wider networks of transport and trade.

99 Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiangji*, 28.494–495 (杭州新作雙門記). Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiangji*, 28.499–500.

100 Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.14a–15a (韶州真水館記). Cf. Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.12b–14a.

101 Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 16.29ab.

102 Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 24.752 (梓州永泰縣重建北橋記).

103 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 39.564 (峽州至喜亭記). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 39.561–563, 64.941.

104 Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 4.2b–3a (鞏縣孔子廟).

As eleventh-century literati traced wealth and trade throughout the Song Empire, across roads and bridges, past towers and pavilions, they also raised to representation the commercial streetscape. Wang Anshi captured this double movement—outward from the diminished center and upward in the regional cities—in a commemoration for a pavilion erected in 1060 by Shi Mao (fl. 1060–1078), Controller-General of Fuzhou Prefecture (now Fuzhou, Jiangxi province):

The present Emperor exerts himself in frugality. Some of the prospects of his ponds and preserves and his terraces and towers have been filled in or damaged without any effort to restore them. Such is his reluctance to cause disruption, and such is his yearning to pay homage to the intent with which the founding emperors cherished the people. For this reason the people can take advantage of their knowledge and strength to pursue profit and to satisfy their desires. *Even southern and eastern barbarians who dwell by the lakes and seas and in the mountains and valleys, as well as the households of prosperous farmers, wealthy artisans, and powerful merchants, are frequently able to expand their residences and to raise high towers, and to compete in inexhaustible extravagance with the richest families of the commercial centers and the capital.*<sup>105</sup>

Whereas the literati of the Tang had climbed city walls and towers to gaze at the countryside and had shunned the sight of traffic and commerce in favor of blossoming trees and bowered walls, literati of the Song looked upon houses and markets as well as mountains and rivers, and they included the urban streetscape in their poems.

As they looked down from prefectural towers and urban pagodas, from hillside pavilions and city walls, they discovered in the dense habitation and busy activity a distinct beauty, complementary and equal to the beauty of nature, yet distinct and particular to the city. For Song Qi, the orderly activity in a prefectural town betokened peaceful prosperity:

Dawn light and morning smoke amid a myriad of roof tiles:  
The distant view from the city gate takes in the entire town.  
Carriage wheels pass noisily by the terraces and markets;  
*This year's revenue is higher than Weilei Mountain.*<sup>106</sup>

105 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 83.530 (撫州通判廳見山閣記), emphasis added. Wang Anshi attributes this speech to his host, Shi Mao.

106 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 14.168 (登樓望郡中美人物之盛), emphasis added.

But to others the sight of piled mansions and crowded streets gave an aesthetic pleasure of its own.<sup>107</sup> Cheng Shimeng compared the view from his pavilion above Fuzhou (now Fuzhou, Fujian province)—“the scenic beauty of mountains and rivers, the spreading expanse of the city, and the splendid abundance of palaces and residences”—to “what the Daoists call the mountains of Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou,” and Zeng Gong praised him for his ability to “adjust to the excellences of the region in order to indulge the pleasure of his ears and eyes.”<sup>108</sup> Li Zhaoqi made an effort to take in the view of Yutai (now Yutai, Jiangsu province), despite being exhausted after ten days of travel:

The Huai swallows the Bian Canal, adding to its speed;  
 The city faces the Southern Mountains, proud of its height.  
 Traveling merchants have just arrived, talking in myriad places  
 The evening sun has begun to set, mooring a thousand ships.<sup>109</sup>

The beauty of a port city took Zheng Xia (1041–1119) by surprise, when he ascended a tower with a departing friend:

Accidentally I climb West Tower to part from a guest,  
*Together we're enraptured by the beautiful city on the coast.*  
 Like goose wings: a thousand alleyways of people's houses;  
 Like dogteeth: several islands of merchant ships.<sup>110</sup>

At elevated spots above the city, literati of the Song took pleasure, not only in viewing the myriad of buildings in spreading cities, but also in discerning orderly patterns in human behavior. Several compared the continuous busy movement in the streets to the activity on an anthill, which the city below resembled both in the expedience of the traffic and in its minuteness, “diminished to mole crickets and ants.”<sup>111</sup> The movement back and forth

107 See Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 23.386; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 10.150; Pan Lang, *Xiaoyao ji*, 1; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.90. The view from a pagoda in Huzhou kept Su Shi awake at night. See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 18.951–952.

108 Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 19.315 (道山亭記). Cf. Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji, yiji*.731.

109 Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 3.5a (過盱眙宿慈氏寺). Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.499–500; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 11.7.41; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 40.585; Wu Zeli, *Beihu ji*, 3.23a; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 19.315–316.

110 Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.31b (同子忠上西樓), emphasis added.

111 Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 3.26 (和鄰幾登鯨臺塔). See also Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 11.9.1056–1057; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 18.207; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 5.54; Wang

in the avenues of the capital reminded Qin Guan of a loom: “The heavenly capital has a ninefold warp and weft; / The people move like silk or hempen threads.”<sup>112</sup> The brothers Liu Chang and Liu Bin (1023–1089) followed the changing urban scenery over the course of the day and the seasons, finding a more general, more extensive convergence between the life of the city and the course of nature:

“The Shade of Locust Trees,” by Liu Chang

The capital city with its broad lanes resembles patterned silk;  
The locust trees to the left and the right merge into verdant clouds.  
*The chariot of fire rises in the east and descends again in the west;  
The prostrate shadows lie entangled at dawn, then at dusk.*

Light carriages and stout horses: whose sons are these?  
Shoulder to shoulder in both directions, packed like ants.  
Everyone looks to take the shade, in the smallest instance,  
How sad that this struggle for the road is the common way!

Below there is water in a gutter that runs day and night,  
When I see this in bright spring I am moved to sadness.<sup>113</sup>

“Matching the Rhymes of ‘North Tower’ by Mr. Song, Director of the Bureau of Operations,” by Liu Bin

Beautiful things often come ready to hand;  
This tower leaves nothing to add.

...

In this painting birdsong is silent;  
At harvest time the market noise is loud.

Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 10.256. Wen Tong compared the chaotic traffic in front of a city gate to the behavior of fleas. See Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 5.194.

<sup>112</sup> Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.5.150 (贈蹇法師翊之). Cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 21.567.

<sup>113</sup> Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 18.207 (槐陰), emphasis added. The poem contrasts the short-term, shortsighted competition for ease and favor among the wealthy youth (associated with the shifting shadows of the day and the passage of spring) with constant but neglected merit (represented by the water in the gutter).

A haze of willows: a many-layered canopy;  
The fragrance of lotuses: an omnipresent cloud.

The ships follow the bank into the distance;  
My view angles on the people in a slant.  
Hearing chatter I know the joy of the playing children;  
Composing poetry I resent the prowess of my honored guest.<sup>114</sup>

The view of numerous roofs and lively markets thus became a common element in eleventh-century landscape poetry, whether composed in large cities, in county seats, or in river towns.<sup>115</sup> From the Terrace of the Yue Kings, for example, Guo Xiangzheng sketched a view of Guangzhou that the Tang poets never offered, with the grey-tiled city wall, the brush-shaped minaret in the foreign quarter, and the merchant ships in the harbor unloading foreign luxuries.<sup>116</sup> Whereas earlier poets had praised Tiger Hill in Suzhou for its natural scenery, Fan Zhongyan and Zhu Changwen (1039–1098) also found beauty in the sight of “the hundred thousand households of the capital of Wu.”<sup>117</sup> Even the more modest scale of activity in mountain towns and river markets found a place in the compositions of Song literati. In a pavilion on a mountain in Fuzhou (now Fuzhou, Fujian province), Cai Xiang praised the view in which “The marketplaces of these myriad households offer fish and salt for sale; / The river plain of a thousand miles has the brightness of a painting in color.”<sup>118</sup> Zhang Lei suggested the dreary cold of a pavilion on

114 Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 16.215 (次韻和宋職方北樓). Cf. Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.5.121; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 40.1013; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 3.9a.

115 For additional views of houses and roofs, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 20.8a; Chao Buzhi, *Jibe Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 9.8a; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 21.347; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 14.3ab; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.9.54; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 5.6b; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 2.6a; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 6.14b, 7.14a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 3.7b; Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 1.2ab; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 8.210; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 83.530; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 4.14b; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 29.941–942; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 5.73, *jiyi*.731; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Xianqing gong wenji*, 10.37a. For additional views of markets in county seats and river towns, see Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 1.9ab, 1.18ab; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 3.8b, 4.18ab; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 16.215; Lin Bu, *Lin Hejing xiansheng shiji*, 2.20b; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 3.11a; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 5.15a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 25.813; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 4.183, 6.293–294, 48.2616; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.11.256, I.12.296; Wei Ye, *Julu Dongguan ji*, 7.1b; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 1.7a, 1.15a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 4.49, 13.224, 27.483, 29.505.

116 See Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 8.162–163.

117 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.5.104 (蘇州十詠：虎丘山). Cf. Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao*, 7.11a.

118 Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 5.87 (飲薛老亭晚歸).

the Bian Canal with its view of oil lamps on the ground, the singing and shouting of drunken travelers at a wine shop, and the extinguished lanterns on a decorated tower.<sup>119</sup> Like Liu Chang and Liu Bin, quoted above, these poets did not seek to set the buildings and pursuits of man against the landscape of mountains and rivers, but rather endeavored to find where they merged in pleasing and meaningful consonance. Liu Yan (1048–1102), for example, integrated human habitation with the natural landscape by tracing the flitting shadows of birds across urban roofs (“On the roof tiles of myriad houses float blue-green ducks; / From the lofty height of the gate tower descend pipes and drums”), and for others the sounds of a market indicated the time of day as reliably as a rooster’s crow or the setting sun.<sup>120</sup>

But Song literati also descended from the walls and towers to observe urban life from the thick of the crowd, from horseback and on foot. Huang Tingjian paid homage to a carefree blacksmith at Chen Liu Market who carried his little daughter home on his shoulders at the end of the day.<sup>121</sup> A flower seller’s peonies reminded Su Zhe of the end of the season, and Mei Yaochen (1002–1060) found his spirits lifted by the call of a fruit vendor outside his gate.<sup>122</sup> Li Zhaoqi saw porters playing chess.<sup>123</sup> Song Qi marveled at the skill of an acrobat shooting up a hundred-foot pole on a square in the capital, risking his limbs to draw the attention of passersby.<sup>124</sup> Song Xiang (996–1066) wondered at a crane he saw dancing in a market, unperturbed by the deafening traffic.<sup>125</sup> Visitors to Hangzhou described the dense throngs that gathered to watch the tidal bore on the Qiantang River, and the reckless young men who swam the wave with torches and banners.<sup>126</sup> Han Wei (1017–1098) teased his friend Fan Zhen (1008–1088) for standing transfixed amid a large, chattering crowd during a performance of music and dance at Xiangguo Monastery in Kaifeng, and for his competitive effort to capture the experience in a poem afterward.<sup>127</sup> Literati also wrote poems to come

119 Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 22.400 (都梁夜景).

120 Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 5.6b (秋日儀真即事十首, 其二). For examples of human sounds as markers of time, see Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 4.10b; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 8.111.

121 See Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 1.6.230.

122 See Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.8.175; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 29.1077. For other poetic descriptions of peddlers, see Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.105; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.269; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 13.149; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 18.1b.

123 See Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 4.5b–6a.

124 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 23.286. Cf. Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 3.21b.

125 See Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 6.64.

126 See Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 10.113; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 1.26ab. Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 33.620.

127 Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 1.1ab. Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 14.342.



to terms with the misery they encountered in the streets, with the starving poor and the homeless refugees, with begging cripples and frozen corpses. Qiang Zhi (1022–1076), for example, observed that snow and ice added to the splendor of the officials riding to court at dawn, but that the poor didn't notice them:

In myriad neighborhoods nobody turns his head;  
The destitute alleyways are stirring into frantic movement.

From the morning chimneys comes no black smoke,  
Hungry lips are pressed before stiff tongues.  
Labored breathing from the boys by the roadside:  
Those who are still alive are dressed in patches.<sup>128</sup>

These acrobats and peddlers, these urban crowds and starving poor acquired a presence in Song poetry and prose, not because the cities of the Tang did not have acrobats or peddlers or crowds or beggars, but because the literati of the eleventh century decided to create a space for them in writing.<sup>129</sup> Whereas Tang poets had preserved the hierarchical layout of the imperial capital and of administrative seats, and had suspended that hierarchy only within the confines of gardens or in rambles through parks and the countryside, Song literati attempted to capture the horizontality and simultaneity of the spreading metropolis and of lesser cities. Although the irregular layout of Kaifeng may have increased an awareness of urban contrasts, the plan of the Song capital cannot explain why Song literati invented an ordered hierarchical space where it didn't exist or defied it where they might have maintained it, or why they sought to render provincial markets and alleyways that Tang poets had neglected, much less why Tang literati avoided writing about the wine houses and brothels they visited, or about the markets that attracted long caravans from Central Asia.<sup>130</sup> Rather, the literati of the eleventh century

128 Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 1.10 (京華對雪). Cf. Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 7.138; Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 1.16b–17a; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, II.1.765–766; Lin Bu, *Lin Hejing xiansheng shiji*, 2.16b; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 13.171–172; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 32.385–386; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 5.75, 5.82; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.12.4b–5a. Cf. also Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 14.6b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 111.1690–1691; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 11.141; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 2.5b.

129 On beggars and homeless persons in Chang'an, see Thilo 2006, 100–102.

130 Unlike the court officials of the Tang, high officials during the Song lived throughout the city, possibly exposing them to a greater variety of urban life. See Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 2.8b–9a, 19.9b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 33.496; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 31.328–329; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 16.26b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 37.623. Thomas Thilo remarks, however, that

deemed the activity in the streets worthy of representation, and they sought to integrate such activity with more conventional vignettes of cosmic order and seasonal change, whether to protest social inequity or to startle by unusual images, to give expression to a new aesthetic sensibility or to entertain friends.

Poems about the ride to court at dawn illustrate the shift in spatial orientation, as Song literati maintained much of the cosmic imagery and imperial grandeur of Tang convention, yet introduced new elements of their urban setting. As the stars fade above the palace gates, Xu Hun (788–860) fixes his gaze on the buildings ahead, but Han Qi notices the criers who precede him and draws attention to the subjectivity and inadequacy of his perception:

“Prospect on the Avenue of Heaven at Dawn,” by Xu Hun

Bright stars hang low by Infinity Palace;  
The lotus gates swing open in lofty height.  
Layered drumbeats urge the waning moon;  
A faint bell welcomes the early frost.

In the guarded enclosure drifts an auspicious air;  
From the palace halls blazes a divine luster.  
Again I bow to wish my lord longevity,  
Like the Southern Mountains lofty and eternal.<sup>131</sup>

“On the Way to My First Attendance at a Morning Audience,” by Han Qi

Faint stars hang by a corner of the palace gates;  
The waning moon clings to a few light clouds.  
Stupefied this body is seated on its horse;  
*Loudly the men cry out before the horse.*

*My emaciated bones ache with the autumn frost;  
My suffering pupils are dulled by the road's dust.  
Considering myself in this plain manner;  
I wonder how I may serve my lord.*<sup>132</sup>

people of different classes also lived together in the wards of Chang'an. See, for example, Thilo 1997, 252–264.

131 Xu Hun, *Xu Yonghui wenji*, 2.27b (天街曉望).

132 Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 2.11b (初赴早朝), emphasis added. Cf. Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 14.143, 15.152; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 10.239–240; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.7.14a.

Even in a longer, more detailed itinerary, Zhang Ji (767–830) (who lived near the Western Market of Chang'an) does not record the detail of commercial activity that Song Qi observes on his way to the imperial city:

“The Morning Audience, Sent to Secretary Bai [Juyi, 772–846] and Director Yan [Xiufu, fl. 806–835],” by Zhang Ji

When the drums first rumble I have not yet heard the rooster;  
 In the avenues my scrawny horse treads on the frozen mud.  
*The dim lantern causes it sometimes to collide with a stone-hewn pillar;  
 The deep snow makes it impossible to discern the elevated speedway.*

Among the ranks of the court officials, the men are still few;  
 Outside the waiting room, the moon tends to the west.  
 Though the Drafter at the Phoenix Hall and the Star Gentleman are now  
 far away,  
 On the days when the inner palace gates open, we shall enter together.<sup>133</sup>

“Riding to Work I Look at the Markets,” by Song Qi

On the way to work I gallop my scrawny horse,  
*Looking upon a hundred warehouses in the clear morning.  
 The wine shops are loud as the entire market is washing dishes;  
 The pipes are warm as the stalls have started selling malt sugar.*

Flowing water fleets along with the light carriages;  
 Flying blossoms send off the fluttering saddlecloths.  
 Insipidly the guards stand by the market gates;  
 Certainly the immortal Zizhen is not among them.<sup>134</sup>

133 Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang ji*, 3.8b (早朝寄白舍人嚴郎中), emphasis added. The Drafter at the Phoenix Pavilion and the Star Gentleman are, respectively, Bai Juyi and Yan Xiufu (fl. 817–24), the recipients of the poem.

134 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 8.87 (赴直馬上觀市), emphasis added. The pipes were presumably warm from the hot syrup that was drained from a boiling mash of grain and malt in the process of making malt sugar. See Huang 2000, 457–460. The “immortal Zizhen” is Mei Fu (fl. 7 BCE–1 CE) who became an immortal after retiring from the Han court. “Later, some people saw Fu in Kuaiji. He had changed his name and served as a guard at the gate of the market of Wu.” Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 67.2927. For similar poems, see Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.937, 28.1061; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 2.23a; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 13.149, 17.216, 24.298; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 2.28.

Urban traffic and street scenes also obtruded into parting poems, whence Tang poets had largely barred them.<sup>135</sup>

The literati of the ninth century had shown the urban concourse of rich and poor only when they wrote during the exceptional time of annual festivals, as the custom of the season changed the appearance of the city and suspended conventions of behavior and of literature alike. The literati of the eleventh century continued the effort of capturing the sights and sounds of Prime Eve and Cold Food and other festivals in apt compositions, but they no longer restricted vignettes of urban contrast and commercial activity to such occasional poems, and displayed them also in the daily life of the city, in the daily cycle of human enterprise.<sup>136</sup> Mei Yaochen, for example, reflected that the traffic that rushed past day and night carried people from near and far, strangers and acquaintances, the foolish and the wise.<sup>137</sup> The dust stirred up by the traffic, moreover, obscured everyone equally:

Daliang [i.e., Kaifeng] is a place of carts and horses;  
Dust and grime fly up a hundred feet.  
The foolish and the wise walk within it,  
Their steps invisible in dawn and dusk.<sup>138</sup>

Wen Tong compared the discomfort of his own cramped dwelling to the silent poverty of his neighbor, who could not afford to light his stove, whereas Song Qi saw the pancake seller next door lift himself out of poverty as the number of his customers increased.<sup>139</sup>

Song literati became interested in the simultaneity of such contrasting lives and in the encounters that revealed divergent perceptions of the same

135 See, for example, Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, I.3.141; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 6.11b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 15.335; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 26.897; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 11.181; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 2.67.

136 For impressions of the mingling of rich and poor and the indulgence in spending and gambling during annual festivals see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 7.125, 7.126; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 3.25; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 18.427, 18.442, 27.923; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 3.22a; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 8.76; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 3.25–26; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 25.608, 33.831; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 22.5ab; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 24.431, 24.432; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 9.17ab. Cf. West 2005.

137 See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.679.

138 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 22.623 (邃隱堂). Cf. Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 1.5b. Zhang Lei wrote that a strong wind in Kaifeng shook his modest hovel just as it shook the palace. See Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 14.248.

139 Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 1.20–21; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 23.294. Zhang Lei similarly upheld his pancake-selling neighbor as a model of discipline and ambition. See Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 15.264–265.

city. Mei Yaochen, for example, wondered that he could step from the loud chaos of the secular world into a cool, quiet monastery, where men discoursed in terms different from his own and read other books, “all within the empire’s capital.”<sup>140</sup> Wang Anshi praised Zhang Youzhi (1006–1062), who talked to every kind of person in the capital, “from generals, grand councilors, and great and powerful men to common people and small boys.”<sup>141</sup> Nor did the literati of the eleventh century limit such vignettes of urban commerce and variety to the capital. Su Shi, for example, described how he had dozed off in his sedan chair on his return from an outing by West Lake in Hangzhou, to wake up on a busy street in the middle of the city:

My sleeping eyes were wakened with a dizzy start:  
A welter of lanterns creating havoc on Shahe Dike.  
City people clapped their hands and laughed;  
I looked like a roebuck lost from the woods.<sup>142</sup>

By the end of the eleventh century, Chen Shidao recorded even his impressions of commerce and daily life in river towns, such as Shankou in Shandong province:

The eastern region has abundant silk and hemp;  
A small market houses a hundred merchants.  
A row of masts comes from the south and the north;  
Among the passersby one hears speech from Qin and Chu.

Toward the evening the wind dies down;  
In the clear lake one can count the fish.  
Crows play around in the empty warehouses;  
Talk comes from the guesthouse windows.<sup>143</sup>

The urban streetscape thus extended into literary space as well as literary time, as crowds and commodities ceased to be the exceptional appurtenances

140 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 26.892 (留題景德寺吉祥講僧). Cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 22.644.

141 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 91.579 (建安章君墓誌銘). Cf. Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 28.17b.

142 Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 9.440–441 (湖上夜歸). Cf. Daoqian, *Canliaozi shiji*, 6.9b. On the bright nightlife of Hangzhou, see also Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 10.513.

143 Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 1.18b (山口阻風). Cf. Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 3.6ab; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.12.275; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 4.49, 16.271.

of lunar festivals and became instead a daily occurrence, set in motion by the sun:

The house to the west begins to pound the grain;  
 The neighbor to the east goes to buy some food.  
 The horses of travelers have already left the stable;  
 The carts of merchants will soon cross the ridge.

Once the sun's charioteer hauls his luster,  
 All the population's activity erupts in chaos.  
 Every living being has his needs:  
 Who can afford to stay in bed?<sup>144</sup>

Having made a place for the everyday streetscape in their compositions, Song literati pondered how they might capture the city in its full complexity. For some, the representation of the metropolis became a byword for impossibility: "The transformations are expansive and difficult to name, / Like painting the capital in colored pigments," wrote Su Zhe, and Lu Dian (1042–1102) found that "The beautiful things in the capital are impossible to depict, / Not even a chamber screen could contain their likeness."<sup>145</sup> Wang Anshi challenged his friend Wang Yirou (1015–1086) to write up the urban elegance of Hangzhou in all its fullness: "If you wield your brush to create a just depiction, / Send it to this dust heap to show these northern types."<sup>146</sup> But others tried to suggest the horizontality and simultaneity of urban life by placing unrelated scenes in close juxtaposition, replicating the geography of the city in the layout of the text:

"Written after Going Out to See the Abundance of the Capital," by Chao Yuezhi

The windblown traveler is still startled out of his wits:  
*Suddenly he sees the jade-white walls of the ruler's palace.*  
*The three markets utterly confuse his sense of north and south;*  
 The eightfold escorts contest the road in columns long and short.

144 Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 9.130 (旦起). For other poems that coordinate human activity with the daily course of the sun, see Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 10.7b; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 16.215; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 16.174, 18.207; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 51.727; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 34.4b; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 11.183–184, 32.548.

145 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.5.118 (遊太山四首: 四禪寺); Lu Dian, *Taoshan ji*, 2.11b (依韻和雙頭芍藥十六首, 其四).

146 Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 37.940 (杭州呈勝之).

With blossoms profuse as the boundless ocean, spring lasts forever;  
 Over towers touching to immortal mountains, the moon never sets.  
*How can a grey-haired man live amid these pleasures?*  
 By the River in the Pass I shall weep as I resume my lonely path.<sup>147</sup>

The philosopher Shao Yong (1011–1066) listed a quick succession of famous sites in Luoyang in order to convey the ease and speed with which he moved through the city in his little man-drawn carriage:

Leaving in the morning I cross Right Path Ward several times;  
 Returning in the evening I pass Perfect Peace Ward again and again.  
 In the thick of spring I survey everywhere what is bright and fresh;  
 In the depth of fall I see everything that is rich and lush.

The moonlight before the Five Phoenixes Tower;  
 The cool breeze on the Heavenly Ford Bridge.  
 The running water in the gardens of Golden Valley;  
 The tall bamboo on the Dike of King Wei.<sup>148</sup>

In the eleventh century, the urban streetscape became an acceptable subject for literary composition. Whereas literati in the ninth century had looked outward from walls and towers onto the countryside and had shunned the mention of shops and markets, literati in the eleventh century looked into city streets and sought suitable forms to capture their varied sights and activity. From Shandong to Sichuan and from Fujian to Shaanxi, literati wrote of splendid buildings and busy ports, of dense traffic and crowded markets, of darting acrobats and traveling merchants. Literati in the Tang had written of crowds and markets as the attributes of lunar festivals, but literati in the Song wrote of commercial activity as a daily phenomenon, dictated by the daily cycle of the sun rather than by the annual cycle of lunar seasons. Literati in the eleventh century, in other words, opened up the urban street to literary representation. They changed the geographic orientation of the genres they had inherited from the Tang in order to make a place for the city in writing.

147 Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 7.32a (出見京華之盛而作), emphasis added. Cf. Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 30.6b; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 15.251–252; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 52.731–732; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 1.18b.

148 Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 14.56b (小車六言吟). Cf. Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 2.19b, 2.21a, 14.58b–59a. On Shao Yong's carriage, see also Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 4.503; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 36.15a; Zhu Xi, *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu*, 5.8b.

## The Individual and the Crowd

The purpose of writing the city, however, was less aesthetic than ideological. By making a place for the city in writing, literati of the eleventh century could show themselves to advantage within it, distinct as individuals in the anonymous crowd, infallible as judges of urban crime, and discerning as connoisseurs of desirable goods. Urban crowds, criminal gangs, and puissant families daily threatened the hierarchies of status and taste that literati sought to maintain, and assaulted boundaries of morality and law that officials had to protect. But the distinctions that were obliterated in the street could be maintained on the page, where learning, wit, and erudition forever set literati apart from the crowd.

Literati of the ninth century had made references to “roaming” (*you* 遊) in the city but had not attempted to render that practice into writing. During the eleventh century, literati observed crowds and market stalls from towers and pagodas, but they also roamed among them, examining themselves and their perceptions by direct confrontation with anonymous strangers and anonymous goods. The crowds of people and arrays of commodities caused them to reflect how they differed from others, how they knew themselves, how others might know them, and how they might assess their value in relation to other people and in relation to things:

Which man does not love to roam?  
 In outward things he always seeks perfection.  
 For charming sites he scours lakes and mountains;  
 For splendid beauty he delights in cities and markets.

*But if he does not look inside himself,  
 He has not found the utmost roaming.*  
 An enlightened man does not look out the window:  
 The Way of Heaven is already resplendent.<sup>149</sup>

Literati of the eleventh century continued to roam the countryside, as the poets of the ninth century had done, and like the Tang poets they sought to capture the shifting light and changing sounds of their rambles in writing. Kou Zhun (961–1023), for example, described how the shadows shifted under

149 Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 4.7ab (至游堂), emphasis added. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 40.585; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 6.5b, 7.9b; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 19.315–316.



the willows and how distant peaks emerged beyond a village as he walked past a scintillating brook and a bright patch of sand into the solitude of the fields and the woods.<sup>150</sup> Mei Yaochen harmonized with a poem by Ouyang Xiu, commemorating their carriage ride through the eastern suburbs of Kaifeng in the fall, past crooked alleys lined with famous gardens, under trees weighted with fruit, surrounded by butterflies.<sup>151</sup> Zhang Lei revealed his progress from Luoyang into the Longmen Mountains by changing views and emerging sounds:

“Leaving Eternal Summer Gate (First View of Longmen),” by Zhang Lei

As I leave the city gate, my heart feels already lighter,  
*The blue-green mountains suddenly stand in front.*  
 Revelers follow the running stream,  
 Looking down and staring up in the gorgeous scenery.

Who put up that dark jade screen,  
 Cleft in two by the keen axe divine?  
 The clear Yi River runs through it,  
 The Milky Way stretches across the Branches of Heaven.

*Here and there emerge pavilions and monasteries,*  
 Hazy and deep are the forested foothills.  
 The sound of the cliffs responds to distant echoes,  
 The shimmer in the water plays with heavenly blues.

With a true gentleman as my companion,  
 My elation blends with the smoke and clouds.  
 Although our choice of scenic spots derives from this world,  
 High up we already cherish the world beyond the common dust.<sup>152</sup>

150 See Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*, 2.36ab. Cf. Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 5.60; Lin Bu, *Lin Hejing xiansheng shiji*, 1.4b–5a; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 1.9ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 10.152; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 32.1b; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 8.106; Zhao Xiang, *Nanyang ji*, 2.19.

151 See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.973. Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 2.27; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 2.12a; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 4.13b, 6.5b; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.8.63; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 28.1034; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1.8–9; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 9.102; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 32.3b.

152 Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.85–86 (出長夏門), emphasis added. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1.5–8; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.7.308; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 4.55a.

The reader of these lines follows Zhang Lei as he sets out from a city gate, walks upstream along the Yi River, ascends into the Longmen Mountains, and stands over the cliffs with his companion.

Unlike the poets of the Tang, literati in the eleventh century also wrote about roaming in the city. Some even acquired a taste for wandering the city for its own sake. Sima Guang, for example, having “come to the capital to roam,” abandoned the withered leaves blown around his studio by the autumn wind and “went out the gate without anywhere to go, / As flying dust filled the Avenue of Heaven.”<sup>153</sup> Li Zhiyi (1048–ca. 1128) prided himself on his extensive knowledge of the pleasures of the capital that he had accumulated during his long residence, “most certainly not by word of mouth, but by visiting them on foot.”<sup>154</sup> During the first cool days of fall, Fan Zuyu found himself longing to be in one of the capitals:

Then I long to be in Kaifeng or in Luoyang,  
Where carts and horses cram the city gates.  
The red dust covers over the sky,  
The foolish and the wise submerged together.

*I leave the gate without a place to go,  
My lungs and liver withered and dry.*<sup>155</sup>

For Fan Zuyu, as for Sima Guang and Li Zhiyi, the wondrous extent of the capital and the unpredictable variety of its activity compensated for the discomforts of noise, dust, and crowded streets.

Many, however, found no pleasure in the noise, the dirt, and the chaos of Kaifeng. The capital overwhelmed visitors and exhausted residents. Ouyang Xiu described in 1033 his stress and disorientation at entering the capital, for three friends he had left behind in Luoyang:

Gradually I confront the heavenly gates,  
Towering like the markers of central heaven.  
*Rushing to the gates I struggle for the right of way,  
My reins I cannot afford to loosen.*

153 Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.12a (都下秋懷呈聶之美). Cf. Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 7.9b.

154 Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.26.199 (與儲子椿: 又). Cf. Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 7.12b. For examples of itineraries through the capital see Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 7.11b–12a; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 5.59; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 18.441–442, 22.647; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 18.861.

155 Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 1.5b–6a (七月五日熱退喜涼資中有懷二十四韻), emphasis added.

As I travel slowly through the avenues,  
 I sigh at the volume of windblown dust.  
*In the capital the whole world is gathered,  
 Galloping around in frenzied chaos.*

I have just heard the night watch sound the drum,  
*Yet suddenly the night again turns into dawn.*  
 I think of my talented friends in Luoyang,  
 Already moved by the “Song of Longing to Return.”<sup>156</sup>

Song Xiang's first impression of the capital was likewise dominated by the traffic and the dust: “In the headlong rush of the Nine Avenues spans of horses are everywhere; / The floating clouds at the morning sun obscure myriad roofs.”<sup>157</sup> According to Liu Bin, the traffic in the capital became denser with his every visit.<sup>158</sup> Wei Xiang found himself covered in sweat and grime, riding through the Avenue of Heaven on a hot, humid summer day: “Sweat soaks my headcloth and cap, runs down in black pearls; / My eyes are caked and dim, and everything is blurred.”<sup>159</sup> Officials complained of the high cost of living, the cramped rental houses, the long ride to court, the strain of competition, the lack of leisure.<sup>160</sup> Some complained that

156 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 51.727 (代書寄尹十一兄楊十六王三), emphasis added. Cf. Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 30.5a–7a; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 4.9a; Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 7.12a; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 10.106; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 8.89; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 2.24.

157 Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 14.141 (初止轂下車馬羸憊). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 5.81, 52.731, 57.828.

158 See Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 4.42.

159 Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 1.13b–14a (暮夜還家得清叟所留二詩因以謝). Cf. Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 1.2b; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 4.11b–12a, 5.6a, 6.2ab; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, bu.3.1642; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 21.583, 26.837; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.4.88, 1.8.171; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 12.208–209, 21.380; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 3.10b. Cf. also Tsui 2018, 346.

160 On the high cost of living in Kaifeng, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 12.6b, 34.16b; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 22.619; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 148.2446–2447; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, yiwen.4.2527; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.16.13b. For examples of cramped houses and discomfort, see Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 2.8ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 6.95; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.7.14a; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 1.20–21. For an example of a long commute, see Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.934. Emperors sometimes bestowed houses on officials to reduce their expenses and ease their commutes. See Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 30.4ab; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 11.135–136; Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 8.25a; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 10.20b–21a; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 14.1ab. On the competition for promotion and the weight of responsibility, see Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 1.3b; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.33.252; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu*

the noise of the markets, the speed of the traffic, the press of people, and the lack of leisure distracted them from clear thought and sustained reflection, and even that it damaged their health and hurried their old age and death.<sup>161</sup> Chen Shidao worried that he had gone grey and had wasted half his lifespan during ten years of misery in the capital.<sup>162</sup> Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073) wondered whether anyone managed to grow old in the city: “How many grey-heads are there in the city? / The carriage wheels start rumbling before dawn.”<sup>163</sup>

The literati of the eleventh century differed from the poets of the Tang, not only by making vivid the oppressive crowding of the capital, but also by complaining of the noise of traffic and markets in provincial towns such as Hongzhou and Shaozhou,<sup>164</sup> and about the dust in cities in the Southeast, in Sichuan, and elsewhere:

“Harmonizing with a Friend’s Rhymes,” by Peng Ruli

The morning carts and evening horses run through dust and grime;  
The blinding dirt caked in my eyes I cannot wash away.  
But outside the city gate the willow’s shade is clear as water:  
I shall save all of it for you while I wait for your arrival.<sup>165</sup>

*quanji*, 6.99; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 60.1ab; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.10.7b–8b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 33.545–546. On the lack of leisure, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 11.16ab; Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 8.150; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 4.42; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 6.60, 9.101; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 8.127, 128.1950.

161 On the distraction from reflection, see Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 15.193; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 53.1585; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 6.2ab; Xie Ke, *Xie Youpan wenji*, 4.5ab; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 5.78; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 2.24.

162 Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 1.31a.

163 Zhou Dunyi, *Yuangong Zhou xiansheng Lianxi ji*, 6.29a (思歸舊隱). Cf. Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 5.48; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 2.26b; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, *yishi*.2.2665; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 38.530, 38.532.

164 See Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 26.6b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 1.8b. For other complaints about noise in provincial towns, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.12; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 29.17a–19b, 30.8b; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 10.3b; Li Peng, *Rishe yuan ji*, 8.3a; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.96, 11.136; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 13.138; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1.15; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 3.34b, 8.99ab; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 9.107; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 48.2662; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 3.12b–13a; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, *shiyi*.378; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.2a; Xie Yi, *Xitang ji*, 4.2b; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 2.27; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 3.36; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.15b.

165 Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 12.5b (次友人韻). Cf. Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 8.1b; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 13.174; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 1.9b–10a; Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 10.141; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 43.1131; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, *shiyi*.378; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 9.300; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 3.8b; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 26.12b.

Peng Ruli welcomed summer rain as a respite from the heat, dust, and noise that afflicts city dwellers.<sup>166</sup> Li Zhaoqi found that the sky opened up when he left the city: “When the city does not fill one’s eyes, / One realizes how broad is the sky.”<sup>167</sup> Li Zhi (1059–1109) rejoiced in the wide views and clean air of the mountains, because “Living in the city I am tired of the noise; / Dwelling in the world I hate the lack of space.”<sup>168</sup> Officials felt worn out by these conditions, and by the pressure of urban life—by the relentless pursuit of profit and fame, by a pace of life that did not leave time for reflection.<sup>169</sup> Even in Jiangzhou (present-day Jiujiang City, Jiangxi province), Xia Song (985–1051) lamented, “Spring passes before one’s eyes like a carriage, / With work bridling man like a horse’s bit.”<sup>170</sup>

Literati found that the noise and dust and incessant movement could so confuse the senses that the city revealed itself to them as a realm of illusion. The continuous flow of traffic, the constant renovation of buildings, the frequent sight of empty mansions, of former residences of departed friends, of lasting monuments amid unrelenting change all reminded them of the transience of human life.<sup>171</sup> Su Shunqin, for example, bewailed his rootless existence in “the realm of fame and fortune,” betokened by the dishes he broke and the books he lost as he trundled his belongings through the streets of Kaifeng seven times in one year, and then loaded them onto a boat in the canals of Suzhou three times the following year.<sup>172</sup> For Mei Yaochen, the dust that hid traffic and obscured buildings came to represent not the inconstancy of things, but the unreliability of perception. The dust not only made it impossible to distinguish between friend and stranger or between the wise and the foolish, but between true and false:

This monastery overlooks a thoroughfare,  
Often clouded by the dust of traffic,

166 Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 4.46. Cf. Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 4.1a; Rao Jie, *Yisong shiji*, 1.21b–22a.

167 Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 3.2a (出郭閒步).

168 Li Zhi, *Ji’nan ji*, 1.3b (清影為韻詩各六句, 其五).

169 See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 18.5ab; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 18.250. Cf. Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 2.8a–10b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, buyi.3.1642; Li Peng, *Rishe yuan ji*, 7.11a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 11.548; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 6.1a–2b. Several Song literati complained of urban fatigue. See Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 3.2a; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, II.3.1425; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 2.28a; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 43.1113.

170 Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 36.9b (江州琵琶亭).

171 See Li Zhi, *Ji’nan ji*, 3.19a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 4.66; Pan Lang, *Xiaoyao ji*, 4; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 4.50b–51a, 4.51b, 4.53a, 5.56b–57a, 10.147b, 10.150b; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 20.249; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 21.502; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 9.135, 21.387; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 9.27b–28a.

172 Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 3.34 (遷居). Cf. Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 12.125.

Spread like a hand before the sun,  
 So dark that people become lost.  
*How can one tell the present from the past?*  
*How can one tell the false from the true?*<sup>173</sup>

Elsewhere, Mei Yaochen contrasts the confounding traffic in front of his gate with the clear, enduring words of the ancient worthies that he examines in his studious retreat from urban chaos.<sup>174</sup>

But the ephemeral artifice of the city could also offer pleasure, even when it signified transience. When Su Shi joined Chen Xiang (1017–1080) and another friend to go drinking one night in Hangzhou, he delighted in the blazing lanterns on Shahe Dike, although he perceived the lantern light at the same time as a metaphor for the limited span of human life:

The fog of clouds over lakeside monasteries: every house its own realm;  
 The light of the lanterns on Shahe Dike: every night is New Year's.  
 Why shouldn't I persuade you to keep carrying your candle?  
 In old age this blazing light recalls a whirring wheel.<sup>175</sup>

For Wen Yanbo, the flower markets and bright lanterns of Luoyang during the spring turned the city into a paradise and a dreamscape of flowers and fashion, ephemeral yet every year renewed:

“Roaming the Flower Market, Shown to [Murong] Zhizhen,” by Wen Yanbo

Last year on spring nights we roamed the flower market;  
 Today it has returned, exactly as it was before.  
 The thousand lanterns on the stalls compete in flickering effulgence;  
 The myriad flowers in the corridors vie in beguiling freshness.

Azure canopies ride back and forth, and new gauze and silk;  
 Fragrant cups are presented and received, and elegant music.  
*People say that Luoyang is a realm of pleasure;*  
*When I ride home drunk I seem to dream of Heaven.*<sup>176</sup>

173 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 21.567 (送張著作孟侯宰上元), emphasis added. Cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 21.853, 22.623. Cf. also Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 1.5b.

174 See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.679.

175 Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 10.513 (次韻述古過周長官夜飲). Cf. Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 2.16b–17a.

176 Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.13a.

Literati found pleasure not only in the experience of sensory confusion but also in the reflection on such subjective perception and in the effort to replicate it on the written page. Shao Yong, for example, liked to lie down in his little carriage as it sped through Luoyang, looking up to the flitting branches and shifting leaves, and imagining that he was a flying immortal.<sup>177</sup> Huang Shu (fl. 1042–1058) boasted that, even as the peonies were withering in the late spring, a profusion of fresh blossoms sprang up in his poems, and that the flowers belonged to those who roamed the city rather than to the owners of gardens.<sup>178</sup> Su Shi wrote a famous poem about the impossibility of seeing the true face of Mount Lu—since the mountain looked different from every new angle and perspective—but in 1058 or 1059 he wrote a similar reflection on the “Eight Views of Qianzhou,” facetiously criticizing prefect Kong Zonghan (fl. 1058–1086) for the arbitrary number of his painted scenes. Su argued that there was either only one Qianzhou (present-day Ganzhou, Jiangxi province)—though the viewer might regard it from different sides—or an infinite number of views:

Master Su [i.e., Su Shi] remarks: These paintings show only that Nankang [i.e., Qianzhou] is one site. How did it become eight? What differs is the place from which the site is observed. Have you not seen that sun, in the morning like a plate, at noon like a pearl, in the evening like a broken disc of jade? How would these be three suns? If indeed we accept that there are eight views, then we must observe that all the differences of heat and cold, morning and evening, rain and shine, light and darkness, and all the changes in sitting and standing, moving and stopping, joy and sorrow, happiness and anger, and everything that reaches my eye and moves my heart produce an infinite number of views. How can there only be eight?<sup>179</sup>

Such reflections on the subjectivity of perception and the multiplicity of points of view did not require the rejection of an absolute truth, because not all points of view had equal merit and because (as Su Shi argues above) different points of view could confirm the singular substance of the object

177 See Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 12.24a.

178 Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 1.33a. On this motif in Tang poetry, see Owen 1996, 24–29. Su Xun, conversely, compared the experience of reading the collected works of Zhang Zili to roaming on a thoroughfare full of people and miscellaneous impressions. See Su Xun, *Jiyou ji jianzhu, yishi*.493.

179 Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 16.792 (虔州八境圖八首并引). Cf. Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 23.1219. Cf. also Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 32.2b, 36.7b.

at the center of observation. By roaming the streets and observing strangers, in fact, the literatus could learn to protect himself from false perceptions as it strengthened his knowledge of himself and of the singular qualities and truth lodged within him. Li Peng (fl. 1086–1121), returning from a long excursion in the mountains, found that internal certainty and individual experience could be difficult to maintain in the face of the crowd. Back in the city, he realized that others could not perceive in him the profound serenity he had discovered, and that he appeared indistinguishable from the crowd, like the seagulls in the flock he saw on a riverbank.<sup>180</sup> But the confrontation with the crowd could enhance individual experience and reflection as well as threaten it. Standing atop Jingde Pagoda, for example, Wang Anshi imagined the lives of the commoners below in order to reflect on his privilege and his obligations (see above). Surrounded by the traffic and noise on the Avenue of Heaven, Song Xiang assessed his ambitions and his place at court.<sup>181</sup>

Literati in the eleventh century recognized the mutual constitution of the crowd and the individual. They commented on the experience of being stared at by the crowd and on the realization that they created the crowd by their own gaze.<sup>182</sup> What Mei Yaochen said of an imperial procession that he watched from a tower but could not join—“As I lean against a pillar my heart goes out but my form stays behind; / Having this brilliant prospect I cannot roam within it”—might be said also of the crowd in general: to see it is not to be part of it.<sup>183</sup> Mei Yaochen experienced this exclusion from the crowd for himself when he went out roaming on Prime Eve in order to seek comfort, only to find that his melancholy prevented him from sharing in the broad companionship of rich and poor, and therefore would not be dispelled by it.<sup>184</sup>

Like Han Qi, who considered himself plainly when his “suffering pupils” were “dulled by the road’s dust,” the literati who roamed amid the noise and the dust and the crowds reflected on themselves and on the subjectivity of perception. Often the dirt and the noise wearied and confused them, but

180 See Li Peng, *Rishe yuan ji*, 8.11b. Cf. Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 4.42–43.

181 See Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 10.257; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 2.10.

182 For examples of staring at crowds and being stared at, see Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.7.55; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 17.195; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 14.235.

183 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.925 (莫登樓). Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 47.1273.

184 See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.268. Cf. Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 1.3.141; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 3.25–26; Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 4.41; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.23ab.



sometimes the press of the crowd and the variety of impressions exhilarated them. The dust that blurred their vision offered a metaphor for the illusory nature of human existence. The view of anonymous crowds leaving for work in the morning and returning home in the evening reminded them of the simultaneity and multiplicity of human experience, an experience both personal and arbitrary, both individual and interchangeable. Confronting the gaze of the crowd, literati reflected on the multiplicity of points of view and learnt to see themselves as another.

### Stories of Detection

The anonymity of the metropolis not only overwhelmed the roaming literatus, but it also challenged the serving official, as the teeming crowds offered refuge to confidence artists and forgers, to burglars and murderers.<sup>185</sup> If the literatus attempted to establish his own identity in the city and to set himself in a privileged position in relation to the crowd, the official tried to establish the identity of others, isolating them from the crowd and placing them at a particular hour at the scene of a crime. In their inquests and investigations, officials in the eleventh century relied on an increasing body of forensic manuals as well as on shrewd reasoning, psychological manipulation, and detective work.<sup>186</sup> Officials who solved difficult cases could thereby earn an immortal reputation, praised for their “divine intelligence” (*shenming* 神明) in forensic manuals and casebooks, and even in tales performed in the streets by professional storytellers. The ratiocinating official, both detective and judge, exposed others by hiding himself, and stood out as an individual by identifying the anonymous.

Edicts of appointment admitted that Kaifeng Prefecture, although located at the center of the Emperor’s virtuous transformation, was difficult to administer due to the size and diversity of its population, the complexity of its commerce, and the profusion of its crime and litigation: “It is a forest of travelers from the five directions, and of talented men; it is a pool of merchants in the hundred commodities, and of armed robbers.”<sup>187</sup> The formidable recipients of these appointments to the capital prefecture complained that “after the

185 On the increase of urban and economic crimes during the Song dynasty, cf. McKnight 1992, 94–95, 109–110, 284–289, 515–518. Cf. also Egan 2017.

186 Cf. McKnight 1981, xi, 5–6, 17–21; Van Gulik 1956, xi; Van Gulik 1976, ix–xiii.

187 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 39.1112 (羅適知開封縣程之邵知祥符縣). Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 11.200; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 22.314, 22.315; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 30.358, 30.359; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 8.13a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 79.1137; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 49.288–289;

capital reached three hundred thousand households, armed robbery and lawsuits, official documents and recordkeeping increased tenfold,” that its workload exceeded three to five times that of other large prefectures, and that the incessant crime made it impossible to last longer than a year in the position without damage to one’s reputation: “In the capital, the perverse customs never improve, the brazen burglaries never stop, and the overcrowded prisons never empty.”<sup>188</sup> Zheng Xia (1041–1119) warned a student departing for the Imperial Academy against con men who disguised themselves as “our sort” in order to lure young men of good family into gambling and ruin.<sup>189</sup> When Zhang Gong (fl. 1079), who sold medicinal herbs in a market by the Yichun Gate, was approached by a Daoist immortal with blazing eyes, he assumed at first that he was just “a con artist: there are lots of people like this in the capital.”<sup>190</sup> The imperial center of sacred ritual and virtuous transformation thus also produced its opposite: a capital of counterfeit officials and false priests who robbed, kidnapped, raped, and murdered.

A number of prefects, however, withstood the workload and earned acclaim for their divine intelligence. When Li Xuan (1013–1052) was appointed Prefect of Kaifeng, for example, “there were in the capital many old criminals and masters of cunning that officials had been unable to apprehend. But my lord followed their traces to establish their appearance and their whereabouts. He wiped clean almost the entire slate of that period.”<sup>191</sup> Wu Kui (1010–1067)—who passed the imperial examinations at the early age of seventeen—found “numerous, complicated criminal and commercial matters” at his arrival in the prefectural office,

but my lord responded to each case with intelligence and expedience.

The clerks did not dare deceive him. The wealthy commoners of the

Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 25.391. Cf. also Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 33.348; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 8.248; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 23.1b.

188 Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 32.435 (開封府南司判官題名記); Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 7.78a–79a, 8.7ab (乞罷府事劄子第三). Cf. Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 2.1a–5b, 21.7a; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 13.1b–2b. Bi Zhongyou proposed the appointment of six Township Police Chiefs, assisted by clerks, who would be responsible solely for police work. See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 1.17b–18b. Paul Jakov Smith mentions that the Mutual Security system implemented in 1073 (see Chapter 3) was originally instituted to improve security in the capital. See Smith 2009, 407–409.

189 Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.8a–9b (送陳守仁入太學). On this widespread scheme of deception, see also Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.19.124. For other associations of the capital with crime and deception see Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 2.6ab; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 28.329–331; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 70.2233; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 5.7a.

190 Li Zhi, *Ji’nan ji*, 6.40a (張拱傳). Cf. Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenxian*, 1.10ab, 1.30a.

191 Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 78.8a (龍圖閣直學士李公墓誌銘).

Sun family were very powerful in the capital, due to their monopoly on moneylending. When people were behind in paying interest, they would come to assess and take away their belongings, even their wives and daughters. My lord exposed their inveterate criminality and petitioned to the throne to have the brothers exiled to Huainan and Fujian and held under supervision. The powerful and the cunning took fright and laid their hands off.<sup>192</sup>

The *History of the Song* (*Song shi*, 1345) adds: “Within three months in office, he had achieved a brilliant reputation for governance.”<sup>193</sup> Zhang Fangping intimidated his staff by not writing out the slate of hundreds of complicated cases, but rather memorizing them instead. “Then he handled them in sequence, without the slightest omission. The clerks and the commoners were so startled that they thought he was a god, and never dared to deceive him.”<sup>194</sup>

Crime and detection of course were not limited to the capital, and shrewd judges earned similar reputations in provincial cities. In Hangzhou, for example, Hu Yixiu (1058–1108) ended the daytime burglaries by expert thieves nicknamed “the plain-day ghosts”; took measures against the confidence artists who entrapped proper young men into gambling and debt; moved against private ferrymen who deliberately capsized their boats in order to rob the drowned passengers; tattooed and exiled a powerful usurer and his violent gang; and rid the city of a man who wrote insulting ditties about people on their walls and windows. “Throughout Zhedong and Zhexi [i.e., present-day Zhejiang province], my lord’s portrait was painted in monasteries, where it attracted immediate worship, while others burnt incense for him at their houses and sacrificed to him at every meal.”<sup>195</sup> As prefect of Jiangning (present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu province), Yuan Jiang (1008–1083) pretended to believe a woman who told him that her husband had been beaten up in the street and had then broken his foot chasing a

192 Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 37.491 (吳公墓誌銘).

193 Toghto, *Song shi*, 316.10320.

194 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 14.447 (張文定公墓誌銘). For other examples of crime, criminals, and detection in the capital, see Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 16.11b–12a; Fan Zuyun, *Fan taishi ji*, 14.7b, 21.13b–14b, 39.9a; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 34.463; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 32.389; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 31.463; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 21.1b–3a, 21.7a–8a, 28.7b–8b, 63.10a; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 14.175; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 10.127–129; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 1.16b–17a, 1.19b–20b, 1.21b, 1.23a–30a.

195 Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.19.124–125 (故朝請郎直秘閣 ... 胡公行狀). For other examples of investigations into anonymous satire, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 106.1618–1619; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 20.281; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 1.7a.

robber, but he secretly instructed a runner to follow her. When the runner reported that the woman had met up with a monk and that they had smiled and whispered congratulations to each other, Yuan had the monk arrested and confronted the woman, who confessed to adultery. “Everybody wanted to know how he had solved this case. He said, ‘I noticed that the wife wailed without mourning and cried without tears, and that she had shared a bed with her wounded husband, but had no blood on her garments.’ Thereupon everybody shouted, ‘My lord has a divine intelligence!’”<sup>196</sup> When a commoner in Pucheng County (now Pucheng, Fujian province) reported a theft, Chen Xiang ordered the arrest of a large number of known thieves. In order to determine which of them had committed the recent burglary, he told the suspects that the bell of a nearby temple sounded spontaneously when touched by a criminal. After offering sacrifice and prayers to the bell, he secretly coated it with ink and told the suspects to go behind the curtain to touch it. “When he called them out, only one man did not have a stain on his hands. He had the man tied up, and he was indeed the burglar.”<sup>197</sup>

Stories of detection such as these not only demonstrated the just foundation of imperial governance and the universal pertinence of moral learning (cf. Chapter 3), but they also confirmed the possibility of an individual heroism that lifted literati above the anonymous crowds, by their very ability to individuate. Their uncommon powers of memory and reasoning established their distinct individual identity in the process of establishing the identity of individual persons and of individual objects in the commercial cityscape: the man eating with his left hand in the prison courtyard was the same man who stabbed someone to death in a fight several months earlier; the man with the unstained hand was the same man who recently burgled a house. During the eleventh century, most stories of detection were recorded in epitaphs, records of conduct, and official biographies, among other examples of the superior learning and governance of a late official. The exploits of the redoubtable Zhang Yong, however, were anthologized already during his lifetime, in his *Recorded Sayings* (*Yulu*, before 1015).<sup>198</sup> Other experienced judges compiled their own casebooks. Wang Shu (963–1034)—who in Sichuan won the same admiration as Zhang Yong and who in Shangdang (present-day Changzhi, Shanxi province) doubted a previous conviction, “conducted a

<sup>196</sup> Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 8.19ab (資政殿學士 ... 元公墓誌銘).

<sup>197</sup> Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, fu.26a (國史本傳); Toghto, *Song shi*, 321.10419–10420.

<sup>198</sup> See Zhang Yong, *Zhang Guaiya ji*, 12.129–130. According to Robert van Gulik (1956, 173–174) “collections with his judicial decisions circulated widely among officials” during Zhang Yong’s lifetime.

secret investigation and caught the murderer”—wrote *On Discernment in Legal Cases* (*Bian yu ji*, 11th century) to instruct his fellow officials.<sup>199</sup> Yuan Jiang (who caught the adulterous monk, above) wrote *Deliberations in Legal Cases* (*Yan yu ji*, 11th century), with fifty-five cases in thirteen fascicles.<sup>200</sup> During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a number of casebooks appeared that culled stories of detection from eleventh-century epitaphs and biographies, such as Zheng Ke's (fl. 1124–1154) *Magic Mirror for Solving Cases* (*Zheyu guijian*, 1154) and Gui Wanrong's (fl. 1196–1234) *Parallel Cases from Under the Pear Tree* (*Tangyin bishi*, 1211).<sup>201</sup> The thirteenth-century forensic manual *The Washing Away of Wrongs* (*Xiyuan jilu*, 1246), compiled by Song Ci (1183–1246), also contains materials from the eleventh century.<sup>202</sup> By 1235 at the latest, stories of detection had become a set genre in the repertoire of storytellers in Hangzhou. The “four kinds of storytellers” mentioned in the *Splendid Scenery of the Capital* include “Those who tell ‘legal cases’ [*gong'an*]: these are all stories about men who rush in with drawn swords to rescue their fellows, and about men who rise to fame from modest origins.”<sup>203</sup> These ratiocinating judges were heroes of the metropolis. By hiding in the crowd they exposed the identity of criminals, and by disguising themselves they unmasked others.

## Commodities and the Self

If the confrontation with urban crowds could assist literati in the determination of their individual identity and in the approximation of a singular truth, their immersion into an urban economy of competitive consumption posed a fundamental challenge to absolute values by inserting their actions, their skills, their aesthetic preferences, and their persons into a regime of

199 Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 12.11b (協謀同德佐理功臣 ... 王公神道碑銘).

200 See Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 8.19a–20a, 8.24a. In time, Bao Zheng (999–1062) became the most famous of the eleventh-century judges, but during his life he appears to have been known for the austere justness of his verdicts rather than for the ingenuity of his investigations. See Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.23.1428; Toghto, *Song shi*, 316.10315–10318.

201 Cf. Van Gulik 1956, 3–43.

202 See Song Ci, *Xiyuan jilu*; McKnight 1981. For additional examples of forensic investigation during the eleventh century, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 65.18ab; Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 18.7b; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.15.361; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 30.367; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 53.640; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 20.3ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 31.463; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 60.891–892.

203 Guanpu naide weng, *Ducheng jisheng*, 98 (瓦舍眾伎). Cf. Luo Ye, *Zuiweng tanlu*, I.1.3–4. Cf. also Idema 2010, xiii–xiv.

relative values and shifting prices. This regime revealed the very foundations of the social and political hierarchy in a different guise, as it showed the imperial family and the noble lineages distinguished by their material possessions rather than by their moral example or their ritual conduct. The association of power and prestige with wealth and consumption, moreover, placed prosperous merchants and other persons of means in a position to create relations with the powerful by material favors and lavish hospitality, regardless of moral learning or political office. Although during the Song the capital remained “a realm of fame and fortune,” where literati vied with one another for literary distinction and prestigious appointments, it became at the same time “a field of commodities and wealth,” where literati competed with each other and with imperial kinsmen and affluent families for houses and gardens, for rare paintings and seasonal delicacies.

Literati endeavored to set themselves apart within this competition by asserting superior taste and discernment, and by emphasizing the value of their possessions instead of their price. Yet they could not separate themselves as easily from the relative values of the market as from the anonymity of the crowd. The faceless crowd they could leave in the margins of their compositions, because of its facelessness, in evident contrast with their own rich individuality, but they could demonstrate the value of their connoisseurship only by placing the commodity at the center of the reader's attention, in close association with themselves, and in implicit association with other commodities beyond the page. The attempt by literati to set themselves apart from the “field of commodities and wealth” thus always risked producing the opposite effect: instead of demonstrating the absolute value of their connoisseurship, it would draw them into a regime of relative values, and instead of proving their mastery of commodities, it would prove that the commodities dominated them.<sup>204</sup>

During the ninth century, power and prestige had belonged securely to ancient families of learning and political experience.<sup>205</sup> The forbidding gates and tall mansions of those families gave material expression to their wealth and privilege, but their power and prestige did not depend on such material expression and could not be confused with it. The literati who in that period had achieved access to high office through the imperial examinations likewise attained their positions through qualities inherent in themselves—their exceptional mastery of literary learning and, frequently, descent from families of hereditary wealth and power—and therefore

204 On this mechanism, cf. Benjamin 1983b, 53.

205 See Bol 1992, 37–47; McMullen 1988, 250–262; Tackett 2014; Thilo 2006, 46–47.

wrote about their material possessions only inasmuch as these possessions revealed their own inherent qualities.<sup>206</sup> By the eleventh century, however, the expanded scope of the imperial examinations and the unstructured diversity of economic competition made the rivalry for power and prestige so general that the standard for measuring inherent qualities became uncertain, and literati felt compelled to distinguish themselves by their possessions as well as by their literary accomplishments, rather than by placing themselves outside the realm of competition as their predecessors had done.<sup>207</sup>

Because literati used their skills in literary composition to demonstrate their connoisseurship, to display their taste, to justify their purchases, and to increase the value of their possessions, texts from the eleventh century preserve the mechanisms and substance of this competitive consumption while distorting the scope and detail of its practice. Although it is likely that many literati were wealthy enough to compete with nobles and merchants in paying high prices, in their writings they pride themselves on their acquisitions for their value, not for their exorbitant cost. When they defeated their competitors by paying a higher *price* for a desired object, writing served only to hide this material fact, and to transform evidence of superior wealth into a demonstration of rare taste. In the contest for *value*, however, writing extended and replicated the competition rather than obscuring and displacing it. Confessing to an irrational obsession with ancient inkstones or to the extravagant purchase of an ornamental rock redeemed moral impropriety with the coin of ironic wit and literary invention.<sup>208</sup> The genres that literati of the eleventh century invented or appropriated to write about commodities—notebooks (*biji* 筆記), commemorations (*ji* 記), catalogs (*pu* 譜), biographies (*zhuan* 傳), and inscriptions (*ming* 銘)—thus at the same time describe the objects they owned and reproduce the knowledge and judgment by which they acquired them, and these genres emphasize value instead of price. Literati consistently criticize the “puissant families” (*haojia* 豪家) of nobles, merchants, and officials for their lavish expenditures on expensive clothes and carriages and food, and even on worthless things such as seasonal decorations, and they contrast such needless expenses with their own discerning purchases at a moderate or otherwise at a justifiable price, secured by superior judgment, effort, and patience.<sup>209</sup> Their ironic

206 On the family ties of examination graduates to the great surnames, see Tackett 2014, 124.

207 Cf. G. Chen 2009, 177; Hymes 2015, 527–536, 661–663; Kuhn 1987, 233.

208 Cf. Clunas 1996, 98; Zeitlin 1991, 7–11.

209 For examples of the condemnation of fashion as a frivolous, wasteful, and dangerous preoccupation of noble and puissant families, see Chen Shunyu, *Duguan ji*, 2.19b–20a; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 4.10ab; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 6.70–71; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 28.358–359,

self-deprecation at the same time acknowledges and relaxes the moral strictures of classical writing.

Ouyang Xiu's poem about his discovery of an exceptional rock in a creek bed in eastern Shandong illustrates the subtle understanding among eleventh-century literati of multiple regimes of price and value, as well as the replication and preservation of material objects in writing and the clever transmutation of a valuable possession into the cultural capital of literary achievement:

"The Large Rock from Water Caltrop Creek," by Ouyang Xiu

When the first frost came at night and autumn waters stood low,  
A rock became exposed at the cold edge of the creek.  
Dark with moss and caked with soil, it was pecked by birds,  
Appearing and disappearing in the creek, as spring succeeded fall.

*The elders by the creek-side had seen it all their lives,  
And wondered why I came to look at it so often.*

I loved that it had traveled far to this neglected gully;  
I pulled it out with three oxen, carted it off on two wheels.

*When I came through town, the entire market came to watch me,  
Startled only by the strangeness, not because they prized the rock.*  
In rural mist and tousled grass it had lain buried for many years;  
I washed it with clear, cold water from a cavern spring.

Where the vermilion railing and the green bamboo shade each other,  
I chose an exquisite place for it by the southern balustrade.  
Next to the southern balustrade rise now ten thousand peaks:  
Never was there such a mysterious layering of mountaintops.

*Only now I realize that extraordinary things are rare in this world,  
Sought with ten thousand pieces of gold and owned by few.*

As a hundred wars turned mountains and rivers into graveyards,  
Why was this object dropped on the strand of a ragged brook?

61.829–830; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 27.281; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 52.792, *fu*.1182–1183; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 69.440–441, 70.445; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 2.50a–52a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 45.717–718. On the purchase of worthless goods at exorbitant prices see Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 3.22a.



...

*Now that Lu Tong [790–835] and Han Yu [768–824] are no longer among us,  
Virtuosic descriptions capture a hundred marvels, yet writing is weak.  
When everybody wins in vying for the strange and fighting for the unusual,  
We shall be left with empty nonsense and without a solid basis.*

Under the high heaven and on the ample earth anything can be found,  
Beauty and ugliness in myriad shapes—not worth talking about.  
One need only sweep away the snow and sit by its side,  
And every day offer this honored guest a cup of wine.<sup>210</sup>

Ouyang Xiu is able to acquire his rock because the residents of this rural outpost do not recognize its beauty or its value. Even when he carts the rock past a market, the local population does not perceive the rock as a potential commodity and is struck only by the strangeness of the scene, not by the rarity of the stone. After Ouyang Xiu washes the rock and gives it a fitting place in his garden, the rock at last manifests its true beauty and numinous power. By conjuring the strange, powerful beauty of the rock in writing, Ouyang Xiu exalts its extraordinary value to the extent that he can turn the enduring strangeness of the rock against writing itself—in which strangeness is so easily achieved that it loses its value—and thus erases his own replication of the rock and its value in writing by presenting them as natural and unwritten, indeed as irreplicable.

Whereas Ouyang Xiu solicits the admiration and envy of his reader by acquiring in a peripheral region an object of great value at an insignificant cost, Mei Yaochen generates cultural capital by daring his reader to condemn him for sharing a poor man's taste for a lowly food that grows right outside the palace:

“Eating Shepherd's Purse,” by Mei Yaochen

My peers think that shepherd's purse is poor man's food,  
But shepherd's purse is something that I like.  
*I happen to see a man collecting shepherd's purse,  
Just as I leave the southern palace gate.*

210 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 3.50–51 (菱溪大石), emphasis added. Han Yu and Lu Tong were famous for abstruse, virtuosic descriptions of mountains: Han Yu's “Poem of the Southern Mountains” (“Nanshan shi”) and Lu Tong's “Remembering Hermit Shen of Golden Goose Mountain” (“Yi Jin'e shan Shen shanren”).

The soil corrodes his slender iron knife;  
 The frost mottles his green bamboo basket.  
 He goes to rinse the herbs in a frozen pond,  
 Then mixes them with roots and blossoms.

His hands are chapped and he remains unsatisfied,  
*And yet some shame him for his food.*  
 Fat lamb and red-tailed fish,  
 Fresh meat and mutton are all you crave.<sup>211</sup>

Mei Yaochen taunts his reader in the opening lines by repeating the name of the despised food three times and by juxtaposing the herb and his liking for it with his service in the palace. Similar to Ouyang Xiu, Mei Yaochen uses the material description of the poor man's repast to turn the hierarchy of value of his peers on itself, reminding them that their preference for meat and fish is both extravagant and easy, whereas his own liking for shepherd's purse distinguishes him simultaneously by its virtue and by its eccentricity. Like Ouyang Xiu, Mei Yaochen competes for a value that is disproportionate to the price. Ouyang Xiu harvested a rock that would have been unaffordable in the capital; Mei Yaochen confesses to liking an herb that grows neglected below the walls of the palace. Their poems indicate discrepant regimes of value, record their acts of discrimination, and replicate the value of their discerning taste in the rarified wit of their compositions.

Ouyang Xiu became a central figure in the effort to create acceptable literary forms for the display of specialized knowledge about commodities and for the preservation of valued objects in writing. During the early years of his career, Ouyang Xiu used a modified form of the commemoration to document the annual celebration of the tree peony in Luoyang and to summarize the technical expertise that local gardeners had developed to perfect this beguiling blossom in all its many varieties.<sup>212</sup> His apologetic preface to this *Commemoration of the Tree Peonies of Luoyang* (*Luoyang mudan ji*, 1030s) betrays the generic innovation that he accomplished by composing a detailed treatment of a flowering plant that owed its reputation solely to its prodigious beauty and to the extravagant prices that its admirers were willing to pay for rare specimens.<sup>213</sup> In a 1063 colophon to Cai Xiang's

211 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 17.419 (食齋), emphasis added.

212 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 75.1096–1103. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 2.34.

213 Cf. Egan 2006, 109–111, 116–133. Ouyang Xiu, in fact, was not the first to write a treatise celebrating a single flower. In a detailed preface to a poem about the *Primula poissonii* (*haixian*

*Catalog on Lichees* (*Lizhi pu*, 1063), Ouyang Xiu argued that Cai Xiang's catalog complemented his own commemoration of the peony from thirty years before, because the peony and the lichee both manifest the "pattern of things" (*wuli* 物理) in their utmost form, and because the lichee is unrivaled among fruits just as the peony is unequaled among flowers.<sup>214</sup> In the same year he wrote to Editorial Director Ma that he had long intended to have the two texts published together, but that his poor eyesight prevented him from writing out the colophon, which Cai Xiang insisted should be appended in Ouyang's own calligraphy.<sup>215</sup>

Also in 1063, Ouyang Xiu published his *Record of Collecting Antiquities* (*Jigu lu*), an annotated transcription of the rubbings from bronze vessels and stone steles that he had acquired between 1045 and 1062. In the preface to this work, he explains—in terms similar to those of his poem about the ornamental rock—the discrepancy between the modest cost and the great value of his collection. People have such an avid desire for ivory, jade, pearls, and gold that there has never been a lack of people willing to brave the difficulties and dangers of obtaining them. By contrast, the "rarest treasures from the Three Dynasties and after—strange and wondrous, awesome and beautiful, things of intricate and pleasing workmanship—lie not far from human habitation, and one may collect them without danger," and yet they languish neglected in mountains and wastelands because few people desire them, "and when happily there are those who desire them, their strength is often insufficient, so that they only acquire one or two pieces and cannot create a collection."<sup>216</sup> Ouyang Xiu hoped to ensure the value and longevity of his epigraphic catalog by having Cai Xiang write out

*hua* 海仙花), Wang Yucheng mentions that "aficionados in recent times have composed catalogs of flowers [*hua pu* 花譜]" that rank blossoms according to their beauty. Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.11.7b–8a (海仙花詩并序). Because Wang Yucheng died in 1001, "recent times" must refer to the tenth century. Nor did Ouyang Xiu have the last word on the tree peony: in 1072, Su Shi wrote a preface to a ten-fascicle *Commemoration of the Tree Peony* (*Mudan ji*) by a Mr. Shen, which collected literary lore about peonies as well as practical advice for growing them. See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 10.329.

214 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 73.1060.

215 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 152.2514.

216 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 42.599–600 (《集古錄目》序). For the text of the *Record of Collecting Antiquities*, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2061–143.2324. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 52.741, 155.2586. For other remarks by Ouyang Xiu about his collection and about his *Record of Collecting Antiquities*, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 70.1022–1023, 148.2420, 148.2428–2429, 148.2438. For descriptions of Ouyang Xiu's antiquities collection by others see Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 2.1a–2a; Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 6.11b–13a; Zhao Xiang, *Nanyang ji*, 4.11ab. On the *Record on Collecting Antiquities*, see also Egan 2006, 7–59; Sena 2019, 29–64.

the preface in his “subtle and exquisite” calligraphy.<sup>217</sup> In addition, Ouyang Xiu wrote a catalog on inkstones, composed a commemoration of three zithers he possessed, and included several entries on connoisseurship (of tea, of painting, of oranges) in his notebook, *Records for Retirement to the Countryside* (*Guitian lu*, 1067).<sup>218</sup> He moreover gained fame by owning a white rabbit, a possession whose eccentricity was replicated and enhanced by the poems that he and his friends wrote about it.<sup>219</sup>

How closely Song literati identified themselves with the material objects of their learning and connoisseurship may be illustrated by a gesture of friendship “unknown among the ancients,” recorded by Chao Yuezhi in his affectionate eulogy for Wang Lizhi (1069–1109). A man of pure emotions and a melancholy disposition, Wang “had no other predilection than reading books day and night,” copying them out by hand, roaming their wide extent in search of moral exemplars, and transmitting within the capital the songs and poems sent to him by his friends, “as though they lived only a few feet away and had handed their compositions to him in person.” When a fatal illness confined him to his bed during the final two years of his life, “he took out the books, the paintings, and the antiquities he had collected in prior days and dispersed them among friends in all quarters until he had nothing left. Such was the rare eminence of his earnest respect for propriety and his devout joy in virtue. I venture that a similar deed was unknown among the ancients.”<sup>220</sup> Just as in health he had encouraged the conversation of his guests by a liberal entertainment that depleted his modest means, so in illness he gave away to his friends the objects that represented the learning he shared with them, that they might remember him.

Although collected works of the Tang dynasty contain references to libraries and even to the obsessive purchase of books, only in the eleventh century did literati begin to represent collections of books, paintings, and antiques as material expressions of individual character, whether in catalogs of their own possessions or in commemorations of the libraries and studios

217 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 70.1022–1023, 148.2438 (與王龍圖九通, 其六).

218 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 75.1094–1095, 64.943–944, 126.1915, 127.1929, 127.1931, 127.1939. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 130.1975–1977.

219 See Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 4.19b–20a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 6.101, 54.766; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 16.447; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 14.348–349. For eccentric poems about Ouyang Xiu’s other pets and the pets of his friends see Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 19.215; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 1.5–6, 2.50, 8.135, 26.874, 27.935, 28.1057; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 1.14, 8.124, 58.834–835. See also Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, II.7.976; Li Peng, *Rishe yuan ji*, 7.3a; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.18ab; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 1.8b–9a.

220 Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 19.39b–41a (王立之墓誌銘).

of others.<sup>221</sup> Ouyang Xiu named himself the Retired Scholar of the Six Ones, after the Six Ones Hall where he kept “one myriad fascicles of books, one thousand scrolls that reproduce remnant inscriptions on metal and stone since the Three Dynasties, one zither, one *go* board, and frequently one jug of wine,” as well as his one old self.<sup>222</sup> To Chen Shidao, this collection of rubbings, antiquities, and books lent material form to the political and cultural eminence of Ouyang Xiu, as it set him among the erudite scholars and the gifted calligraphers of the ages in whose ranks he belonged, and secured his legacy by affording to his descendants the means to carry his learning into the future.<sup>223</sup> In Shi Kangbo’s collection of calligraphy, paintings, antiques, and curiosities, and in the catalog of his paintings (see above), Su Shi perceived the highly individual taste of its eccentric owner, who had gathered it over the course of forty years, sometimes pawning his clothes and starving himself in order to purchase an object he liked.<sup>224</sup> The superb art collection crammed into Mi Fu’s (1051–1107) ramshackle house in Kaifeng evinced both his rare expertise as a connoisseur and his idiosyncratic, obsessive manner.<sup>225</sup> The diminished traces of Zhao Mingcheng’s (1081–1129) collection of books, rubbings, and ancient bronzes reminded his widow, the poet Li Qingzhao (1084–ca. 1155), of the wars that had scattered and obliterated their belongings, but it recalled also her husband’s meticulous scholarship and the shared passion for books and antiques that had bound them in intimate companionship, until a dangerous attachment to the objects wore away their pleasure and diminished their affection.<sup>226</sup>

221 For mentions of private libraries in Tang collected works, see Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, I.1.81; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 941; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 30.781; Sun Qiao, *Sun Kezhi wenji*, 884 preface. For an example of obsessive purchasing of books in the Tang, see Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 4.1b. See also Barrett 2008, 137; McDermott 2006, 50–51; Schafer 1963, 271–272; Tackett 2014, 137–140.

222 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 44.634–635 (六一居士傳).

223 Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 2.1a–2a. Cf. Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 4.11ab.

224 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.364–365.

225 See Mi Fu, *Baojin shanlin ji shiyi, muzhiming*.1a–3a; 1201 postface.1ab, 2.4b–6a.

226 See Li Qingzhao, *Chongji Li Qingzhao ji*, 6.123–128. Cf. Egan 2013, 191–212; Idema and Grant 2004, 207–214; Owen 1986, 80–98; Zeitlin 1991, 6–7. On Zhao Mingcheng’s collection, see also Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 2.6ab, 6.11b–13a; Zhao Mingcheng, *Jinshi lu*. For other collections of books, paintings, epigraphic rubbings, and antiques, see Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, 28.760–767; Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 7.15b–16b; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, I.17.131; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 8.81a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 16.837–839, 44.2395–2398. On the reproduction and preservation of such collections in catalogs, see Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 2.6ab, 6.11b–13a; Mi Fu, *Baojin shanlin ji shiyi*, juan 5–7; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 48.750. For libraries, see Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 16.14a–17a; Daoqian, *Canliaozhi shiji*, 5.7b; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 29.9b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, II.9.1067; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 2.39b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 23.265; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen*

Through such close personal identification with their books and ancient vessels collectors sought to gain mastery over these expensive commodities, at a time when critics worried that ownership of books was becoming a substitute for learning. “In the past, those who loved antiquity amassed the Way; at present, those who love antiquity amass objects,” says an imaginary critic in Zhu Changwen’s preface to his *Anthology for Perusing Antiquity* (*Yuegu congbian*, late 11th century); “Steles are also things. Why have you collected so many of them?” Zhu defends himself by arguing that human beings cannot avoid loving things, and that it is relatively harmless “to box exquisite examples of the six scripts, to net remnant texts from a thousand years. Thus I have described what stone inscriptions stir in me and recorded the ones I love, by way of a preface.”<sup>227</sup> When Zhu Changwen at the end of his life bequeathed to his descendants a library of twenty thousand fascicles instead of money, he demonstrated that he valued learning above material possessions, yet demonstrated at the same time that learning required money, and that learning and material possessions were materially equivalent.<sup>228</sup>

Collectors might also assert control over these powerful objects by buying them cheaply, seeking them in remote places where people did not perceive their value or finding them in urban markets where others had overlooked them. Wen Tong, for example, boasted that he had bought from an old man in Shaanxi a bronze plaque bearing an edict by the First Emperor of the Qin (r. 221–210 BCE), for only a hundred cash.<sup>229</sup> A man who sold steles in Chang’an had moreover given him a rubbing of an ancient cauldron with a long inscription.<sup>230</sup> Mei Yaochen, by contrast, prided himself on having

*ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.951; Qin Guan, *Huaihai jianzhu*, 1.5.192; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 3.10ab; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 15.185; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 19.197; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 44.2394–2395, 45.2452; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 28.3ab; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 4.20ab; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 6.3b; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 6.12b–13a. Su Xun mentions that books are available everywhere in the empire, and that good libraries have become widespread. See Su Xun, *Jiayou jianzhu*, *yishi*.493. Others complain that they feel overwhelmed by the number of their books. See Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 1116 preface.3b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, 18.467; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.8.191.

<sup>227</sup> Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao*, 7.8b–9a (《閱古叢編》序). For other criticisms of the eleventh-century fashion of collecting antiques, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 9.8b–9b; Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 15.41b–42a.

<sup>228</sup> Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao*, *fulu*.4ab. On Zhu Changwen’s library, see also Mi Fu, *Baojin shanlin ji shiyi*, 4.10b. Cf. Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 20.10b, which records that Xiao Zhi sold clothes and a fully equipped horse in order to purchase books at the Imperial Academy for the benefit of his sons, who eventually passed the examinations.

<sup>229</sup> See Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 18.588.

<sup>230</sup> See Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 18.587.

detected a small jar of azure jade that everyone else had neglected, in the crowded antique market at Xiangguo Monastery, in the middle of Kaifeng:

“Roaming Xiangguo Monastery with Cidao [i.e., Song Minqiu, 1019–1079]  
I Buy a Small Jar of Azure Jade,” by Mei Yaochen

In the ancient monastery, under the old cypress,  
An old man sells a jar of azure jade.

On its animal feet it faces forward,  
Over its melon body it closes evenly.  
Its cavity will hold a spoonful,  
Its color is that of blue water.

*I don't know what I was doing,  
But suddenly my eyes became alert.  
At home I haven't half a vat of rice,  
Yet I don't grudge a hundred pieces of gold.*

*Nobody in the capital recognizes a treasure,  
In broad daylight their eyes are blind.*<sup>231</sup>

The tools of writing and scholarship became the objects of a similar connoisseurship. Song literati ranked writing brushes and paper, shared advice about ink, and compiled catalogs of valuable ink-stones.<sup>232</sup> Like collectors of antiques, devotees of fine stationery developed an intimate, personal relationship with their prized possessions, referring to them as their aides or as their companions. The monk Huihong (1071–1128), for example, portrayed his friend Li Demao as daily ensconced within his “city of papers,” where he was assisted by his four worthy, faithful friends—his brush, his

231 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.268 (同次道遊相國寺買得翠玉罍一枚), emphasis added. Ouyang Xiu, who inherited the jar from Mei Yaochen, learnt later from a knowledgeable colleague that it was indeed a very precious object. See Ouyang Xiu, *Guitian lu*, 2.33–34, cited in Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.268–269. On the art market in Kaifeng, see also Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, II.15.1327–1329, *buyi*.2.1592; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 22.614, 28.1052–1053.

232 See, for example, Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 34.628–634; Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 29.6b–8a; Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 9.13a–14a; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, I.17.131–132; Mi Fu, *Baojin shanlin ji shiyi*, 8.1a–12b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 75.1094–1095, 130.1975–1976; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 70.2221–2242; Xie Ke, *Xie Youpan wenji*, 3.1a–2a. Cf. Ko 2017, 61–67.

ink-stone, his paper, and his ink.<sup>233</sup> Mi Fu, too, anthropomorphized his writing implements, and he confessed to an obsession with ink-stones.<sup>234</sup> Zou Hao (1060–1111) wrote a tribute to an ink-maker named Zhang Chuhou; Huihong composed a rhapsody on an ink-stone; Hu Dan (978 *jinshi*) insisted on being buried with one of his ink-stones.<sup>235</sup> Chen Shidao bragged, much like a collector of antiquities, that his connoisseurship had allowed him to purchase an antique ink of great rarity and exceptional quality, unrecognized by others: “This world does not lack for marvelous things; it merely lacks men of discernment.”<sup>236</sup>

Although literati in the eleventh century laid out their urban gardens with rare plants, expensive rocks, and costly buildings, they disguised the fact that their gardens were commodities, and that they competed for flowers and rocks and the services of carpenters with the princes and merchants whose tastes they condemned.<sup>237</sup> They insisted that they bought gardens in undesirable neighborhoods, that they designed them with the utmost simplicity, and that they achieved a pure expression of their aesthetic sense and their political ideals. When they admitted to an extravagant purchase of an ornamental rock or to specialized knowledge about useless plants, they justified it by hyperbole and ironic wit and dismissed it as an exception.<sup>238</sup> This reluctance to discuss price in favor of an almost exclusive discourse of value suggests that literati of the eleventh century perceived

233 Huihong, *Shimen wenzi chan*, 23.22ab (李德茂書城四友).

234 See Mi Fu, *Baojin shanlin ji shiyi*, 2.33ab, 8.1a.

235 See Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 32.8a; Huihong, *Shimen wenzi chan*, 20.20a–21b; Fan Zhen, *Dongzhai jishi*, buyi.47.

236 Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 3.10a (古墨行并序).

237 In the collected works of the eleventh century I have discovered only two mentions of the price of a garden, and both are extreme: Marquis Li paid 4 million cash for a garden in the competitive market of Kaifeng, and Su Shunqin paid 40,000 cash for a neglected piece of land in the city of Suzhou. See Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.16.13b–14b; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.158. Shao Yong mentions that in Luoyang a mountain view raises the price of a house. See Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 17.95b.

238 For examples of specialized knowledge of gardening techniques, plants, and flowers see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 18.313–314, 75.1097–1103; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 10.329, 73.2361–2366; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.11.7b–8a. For indirect admissions that the plants and trees in literati gardens were also commodities, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 8.140; Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 6.31a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 18.441–442, 23.663; Rao Jie, *Yisong shiji*, 2.14b; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.368–369; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.1.250; Yang Yi, *Wuyi xinji*, 3.12a. Peonies and ornamental rocks were more commonly admitted to be commodities, their purchase justified by obsession. On peonies as commodities, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 2.34, 7.112, 13.223; Xu Ji, *Jiexiao ji*, 2.3a–4b; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 22.7b. On ornamental rocks as commodities, see Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 3.4b–5b; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 6.15a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 30.1137; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*,



a contradiction between commodities and expression.<sup>239</sup> Objects removed from the commodity sphere, such as the rock that Ouyang Xiu lifted from a riverbed in Shandong, possessed a natural uniqueness that responded fully to the sensibility of their discerning finders. Money infringed upon this natural sympathy, reducing the owner's mastery of the commodity in proportion as price absorbed value. The gardens of eleventh-century literati were virtual creations, not only because their trees, ponds, and rocks represented forests, lakes, and mountains, but also because plants and sites in a garden alluded to famous gardens and compositions of the past, and in their turn offered material for new poems and commemorations, and because the cultural economy of gardens was identical to that of literati painting and calligraphy.<sup>240</sup>

Literati found it more difficult to deny the commodity nature of food and therefore indulged it, taking pleasure in the display of specialized knowledge about horticulture and cooking, and delighting in the novelty of celebrating the texture of fish or the flavor of southern fruit in classical language.<sup>241</sup> The consumption of tea had become by the eleventh century a common practice—a necessity even, according to Huang Chang (1044–1130): “It is the property of tea to dispel accumulated [lassitude] and to restore alertness in the drowsy. When anywhere in the subcelestial realm one invites guests and wishes to demonstrate one's feelings of love and respect, one cannot dispense with tea any more than one can dispense with wine. It is not that tea is particularly suited to human feelings, but that ritual inheres in it.”<sup>242</sup>

38.2047–2048. On the discursive difficulties caused by the commodity nature of peonies and rocks, see also Egan 2006, 109–161, 218–234.

239 The garden aesthetic of Ancient Prose literati may not have been widely shared. In his *Famous Gardens of Luoyang* (*Luoyang mingyuan ji*, ca. 1095), Li Gefei (d. 1106) disparages Sima Guang's garden as “lowly and small, and not of the same class as the other gardens,” and praises those other gardens for the richness of their buildings, the expanse of their ponds, the rarity and number of their flowers and trees, and the intricacy of their hydraulic devices—in other words, for their size and their cost. See Shao Bo, *Shaoshi wenjian houlu*, 24.200, 24.191–25.202, quotation at 24.200. Li Gefei himself, however, created an exemplary scholarly garden in Kaifeng, planted only with bamboo. See Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 30.5a–7a.

240 See Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 31.5b–8a; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 10.3a–5a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 17.388; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 6.104, 40.580–582; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.6.129–135; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.16.13a–14b; Xie Ke, *Xie Youpan wenji*, 2.4ab, 2.7a–8a, 2.9a; Xie Yi, *Xitang ji*, 3.2b–3a, 7.12ab; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 61.902.

241 Cf. Owen 1996, 83–85. Owen explains that the interpretation of humble everyday things by Tang poets produced wit as surplus value.

242 Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 46.2b–3a (茶法). Cf. Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 16.1ab.

Lu Yu (733–804) had written a *Classic of Tea (Chajing)* as early as the eighth century, but treatises on the connoisseurship of tea proliferated in the eleventh century, and literati competed with noble families for the freshest harvests and the rarest varieties.<sup>243</sup> Huang Tingjian composed rhapsodies and song lyrics about tea.<sup>244</sup>

Other prized foods, such as fish, oranges, and lichees, also came from the South and were shipped over long distances to discriminating, wealthy residents of northern cities. Whereas exiled officials of the Tang had been dismayed and disgusted by the southern habit of eating seafood, literati of the eleventh century paid large sums of money for seasonal crab and shrimp in the capital (as well as for carp caught in the Yellow River at the first snow and ice) and welcomed the opportunity to eat a variety of cheap, fresh fish when they were appointed to southern jurisdictions.<sup>245</sup> According to Ouyang Xiu, the golden oranges of Jiangxi were unknown in the capital until they arrived along with bamboo shoots from the region in the early 1030s, and weren't prized until Empress Wencheng (d. 1054) developed a special fondness for them: "From that moment, their price multiplied in the capital."<sup>246</sup> Sima Guang commemorated his first taste of an orange in a poem, and many others composed tributes to this precious fruit.<sup>247</sup> Lichees from Fujian received similar attention, becoming a subject

243 For treatises on tea, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 35.638–644; Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 16.1a–2a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 126.1915, 127.1931; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 12.11b. For examples of competitive consumption of tea, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 7.114, 9.141; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 28.1482; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 70.444–445.

244 See Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, 12.300, 12.302–303, 13.322–323, 13.328–329, 13.334–335, 13.340, 13.342, 13.350. See also Xie Yi, *Xitang ji*, 6.13ab.

245 On the competitive consumption of fish in the capital, see Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 6.4b–5a; Li Peng, *Rishe yuan ji*, 5.10b–11a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 21.577, 26.837; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.15.352; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 17.16b–17a. For displays of specialized knowledge about fish, see Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 15.337; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 1.1b–2a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 6.98–99, 8.128; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 64.1993–1994. On the pleasures of eating fish in the South, see Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 1.19.655, 1.19.657–658; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 12.151; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 16.174; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 4.59, 8.124; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 1.1b–2a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 125.1899, 145.2377, 153.2531; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.6.209; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 2.16; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.16.376, 1.16.380. On the consumption of fish in Kaifeng, see also West 1987.

246 Ouyang Xiu, *Guitian lu*, 2.33. Cf. Feng Shan, *Anyue ji*, 11.1a–2a.

247 See Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 15.11ab. See also Chen Shunyu, *Duguan ji*, 14.1a–3a; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 4.49; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 5.55; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 31.10b; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 4.61, 8.124, 15.321; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 1.8a; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 4.11b, 4.25b; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.24a; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 1.7.

of poems, song lyrics, and catalogs.<sup>248</sup> Some literati paid tribute to grapes, persimmons, sweet wild plums, or bamboo shoots, or noted the combination of regional specialties in the dishes they ate. Liu Bin, for example, praised Mei Yaochen for serving local carp with ginger from Sichuan and oranges from the Southeast.<sup>249</sup>

While literati thus sought to distinguish themselves by their discriminating connoisseurship and their refined taste, by their ability to obtain value in excess of the prices they paid, they debated whether the qualities that defined them as literati—talent, literary skill, knowledge, moral conduct—remained outside the commodity sphere or whether their value, too, was relative rather than absolute. Because success in the examinations promised a prestigious career, a substantial income, and fiscal privileges, it could hardly be denied that the knowledge and skills acquired by examination candidates and displayed by imperial officials were themselves a form of wealth, accumulated as an investment toward material riches, with the assistance of ambitious family members and calculating patrons.<sup>250</sup> As competition in the examinations increased and the chance of success declined, moreover, it became evident that the value of a candidate's talent was relative at least to some extent, as it depended on the number and quality of his competition, on the acumen of his judges, and on accidents of taste and fashion: "Within the seas classical scholars number seventeen myriad, / Reciting daily the *Songs* and *Documents*, their heads half grizzled."<sup>251</sup> When Liu Yan offered a sample of his writings to Surveillance Commissioner Chen Cisheng (1044–1119), for example, he worried that his ignorance of his competition caused him to overvalue

248 For catalogs about lichees, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 35.644–652; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 73.1060, 152.2514; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 35.497–499. For poems about lichees, see Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 8.4ab; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuanji*, 3.9a; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 28.454, 29.491; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 37.1996–1997, 37.2010–2011, 39.2121–2122, 40.2192–2194; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 8.132; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 2.6a. For song lyrics about lichees, see Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, 13.332–334, 13.363–364.

249 See Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 17.192; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 9.152; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shijianzhu*, 14.352; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, 12.303–304; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 3.51–52; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.98. Those whom poverty in exile forced to grow and cook their own food developed a particularly precise and personal knowledge of food. See, for example, Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.24.181–182; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 41.2254; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 64.1987–1989, 20.595; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.12.286, II.4.1171, II.4.1176–1177, III.5.1519–1520; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 10.141, 15.260, 15.264, 16.271, 32.548.

250 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 108.1632–1633; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 48.620. See also Chaffee 1995, 166–169, 186–188; Hymes 1986, 29–53. Cf. also Liebert 1993, 156.

251 Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 18.17ab (海内). Cf. Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 2.3a; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 35.409; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.17a.

his own compositions, just as he had once refused to believe that fish was used as dogfood in the Southeast:

It has long been reported that *people in the Jiang-Huai region feed fish to their dogs. At first I doubted that this was true.* But when I came to serve as an official near the coast and traveled widely, I sometimes saw fish heaped on the water's edge like piles of dirt. People would come with large nets and carry them away completely filled. They didn't even bother with bamboo baskets on a shoulder pole. From whatever remained unsold after one or two days, they would often remove all the small fish and throw them onto the sand, as though they didn't care about them. When I asked some old fishermen about this, they all said, "Other animals will eat them." Only then did I know that the story about the dogfood was true. ... Now, Heaven has granted me the fortunate opportunity to serve here under your Excellency. On the one hand, I think that I should not submit my writings to you, as I am afraid that this would be the first of many burdens I would impose on you. On the other hand, *I worry that submitting my writings to you would be like bringing fish to the Jiang-Huai region, like selling wood in the Taihang Mountains, like discussing fine foods at an aristocratic table, or like counting grains in the legendary storehouses of the Qin Empire and the Shang Kingdom.*<sup>252</sup>

Liu Yan speculates that the literary talent that his family and teachers had praised as rare and valuable might appear common and cheap to a more experienced judge. His choice of metaphor, however, and the delay of its explanation demonstrate a daring wit and reveal his proclaimed diffidence to be ironic: the manner in which he depreciates himself confirms his true value.

Some literati took for granted that talent functioned as a commodity in the marketplace of the examinations and used the analogy to devise effective strategies for advancement. Qiang Zhi, for example, advised that since literati were now numerous and cheap, it was best to seek recognition in the most competitive markets: "Compare it to selling goods: if one lays them out in the marketplace, one will sell them easily and with profit, but if one takes them into some poor alley, nobody will be able to determine whether they are real or fake, and one cannot hope that anyone will buy them."<sup>253</sup> Li Zhiyi impressed on a departing friend that

<sup>252</sup> Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 16.14a–15b (上陳按察次升書), emphasis added.

<sup>253</sup> Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 25.361–362 (上提刑司封書). On the cheapness of literati, cf. Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan*, 1.121.

“a scholar must market his talent” and encouraged him to develop to the utmost whichever gifts made him unique, so that his talent would stand out and his worth would be recognized, even among the many eminent men in the capital.<sup>254</sup>

Others, however, rejected the analogy and deemed that those who invoked it disqualified themselves as judges of true learning. Zhang Fangping, for example, contrasted canonical scholarship with the unworthy behavior of examination candidates who “try to sell themselves by means of their writing, looking exactly like merchants in a market.”<sup>255</sup> Wang Ling (1032–1059) would not even grant the commercial competence of such interested students: “Indeed, those who learn in hopes of gaining office are sometimes compared to market people. Markets, now, are places that circulate commodities and money [*cai* 財, homophone of *cai* 才, “talent”]. People who have commodities or money are ready to go to market. But someone who has neither commodities nor money can only enter the market by rushing in. What would be the equivalent in regard to the Way?”<sup>256</sup> In other words, whatever one might object against them, merchants have true possession of their money and their wares, but one couldn’t say even that much of mercenary students.

A compromise between these two positions, accepted by men of divergent convictions, held that writing, morality, and talent did function as commodities but that they possessed a fixed, stable value, independent of judgment or fashion. Su Shi, for example, endorsed Ouyang Xiu’s observation that writing had an inherent, unchanging value: “Lord Ouyang Wenzhong [i.e., Ouyang Xiu] said that true writing [*wenzhang* 文章] resembles fine gold or pure jade: it has a fixed price in the market that cannot be raised or lowered by someone wagging his tongue. No matter how much he talks, it will not have the slightest effect on the bystanders.”<sup>257</sup> Li Gou denounced the examination candidates of his time who neglected the inherent force of true writing and who pursued instead a superficial novelty that invalidated

254 Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.35.266–267 (送鄭穎叔入京序). For similar analogies, see Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 11.10a–12a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 67.977; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji, zouyi*.2.1b.

255 Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 31.509 (上蔡內閣書).

256 Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 17.308 (答劉公著微之書).

257 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 49.1419 (與謝民師推官書). Cf. Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 53.1563. Su Shi also taught that intention functioned as a standard of value, making it possible for readers to assimilate a large body of dissimilar texts and for writers to assemble diverse arguments into a convincing exposition. See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 60.1822; Zhou Hui, *Qingbo zazhi*, 7.299. On the lasting value of writing, see also Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 1135 preface.2b; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 14.6b–7a; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 1135 preface, 1a–5b.

their compositions and canceled their identity, in a marketplace of their own making:

Instead of pondering canonical exegesis, they cite trivial works in order to be novel; instead of contemplating the patterned Way, they apply decorative scrollwork in order to be pretty. A thousand phrases, ten thousand words, without head or tail. *To read their compositions is like roaming a market in the capital, where one observes only that it gathers in the morning and disperses at night, frantic and chaotic, and one recognizes nobody.*<sup>258</sup>

Ouyang Xiu, similarly, contrasted the constancy of virtue with the caprice of fashion, chiding the noble families of the capital for boasting of their extravagant indulgence in early-harvest tea and their unrelenting pursuit of the latest enthusiasm: “One would forget the lasting virtue of the gentleman, / Most precious and untransformed by time.”<sup>259</sup> Wang Anshi observed that moral stature was neither diminished by criticism nor increased by praise, and that even the Emperor could not raise a man’s value above his substance:

“The Crowd,” by Wang Anshi

With the confounded crowd it is not worth contending;  
*Their approval and rejection have nothing to do with me.*  
 The unbroken chant of hymns did not make [Wang] Mang a worthy;  
 In spite of rumors in the fiefdoms [Ji] Dan remained a sage.

*Only the emperor can determine the value of men,  
 But even he cannot turn an ounce into a hundredweight.*  
 Thus it’s clear that worth does not depend on others:  
 Knowledge of my character must come through me.<sup>260</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 27.305–306 (上宋舍人書).

<sup>259</sup> Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 9.141 (雙井茶). The poems in this ninth fascicle of Ouyang Xiu’s collected works (*Ouyang Xiu, Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 9.135–148) constitute an extended, coherent reflection on price and value, surface and substance, fashion and unchanging standards. The poems demonstrate that the very intensity of competition betrays its instability, and that only simple virtue affords steadfastness. Cf. Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 35.407–409, 35.417.

<sup>260</sup> Wang Anshi, *Wang jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 21.507. In this poem, Wang Anshi appears to defend himself and his New Laws against his critics by arguing that others cannot know his character and that the very division of opinion demonstrates the wrongheadedness and uselessness of the assessments. The second couplet refers to Wang Mang (45 BCE–23 CE), who usurped the throne of the Han Empire and implemented a series of controversial reforms, and to Ji Dan, the Duke of Zhou (11th century BCE), whose virtue was impugned by rumors during the reign of King Cheng.

To illustrate the inherent, unchanging value of talent, literati preferred the metaphor of raw jade, a precious stone that was sought and prized by all yet recognized by few, except in its polished state. The finished jade vessel was not merely valuable: it was priceless.<sup>261</sup>

By comparing writing to gold and talent to jade, literati intended to explain and to justify the position they occupied among their fellow men. Just as gold and jade circulated within an economy of commodities and yet remained separate from it—unaffected by fashion or by fluctuations in the value of other commodities—literati insisted that they circulated in society and participated in the economy of commodities and yet occupied a separate, superior position in the social hierarchy. Their refined taste and discerning connoisseurship—in fruits and in antiques, in paintings and in ornamental rocks—placed them outside the mean competition and conspicuous consumption of the common marketplace, and their canonical learning and literary talent conferred an unmatched, lasting prestige: “If one has several hundred fascicles by heart, one will never be held in contempt.”<sup>262</sup>

### Withdrawal from the City

Even by their own estimation, however, eleventh-century literati did not succeed in overcoming the relative values of the urban market. The separate, elevated position they sought proved difficult to establish in practice. The imperial court adopted the tastes and enthusiasms of the literati, thereby raising the price of paintings and antiques. Fashionable writing, as even its critics admitted, won reputations and made careers. Most unsettling of all, the endemic factionalism of the late eleventh century revealed that the true, eternal meaning of the ancient canon, although intuited by many, could be demonstrated by none (see Chapter 3). Having failed to isolate themselves from the shifting, relative values of fashion and social competition, literati withdrew from the streets and markets in order to find absolute truth and absolute values within themselves, whether in urban seclusion or in the countryside. The confrontation with urban crowds and commodities had given rise to new notions of individual identity and the self, but now these same crowds and commodities were perceived to infringe upon the self and to hinder its cultivation.

261 See Li Peng, *Rishe yuan ji*, 3.12a; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng wenji*, 7.3ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 8.127; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 48.1378; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 14.346–347, 17.431.

262 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 48.620 (治戒).

Reclusion within the city itself required a concentration of the mind that became ever more difficult to achieve in the eleventh century. In an autobiographical poem composed in 1056 for Ding Baochen (1010–1067), Mei Yaochen recounts how he became capable of such concentration after he stopped learning for the examinations and established his own purpose:

When I befriended the wise and famous,  
I had fixed my ambition on what I valued.  
*I did not mind the noise of urban markets;*  
*I did not need the quiet of mountain forests.*

I did not pursue resplendent beauty;  
I did not pursue forbidding severity.  
Whatever I approached revealed its pattern,  
Arranged as though by discipline and order.

Thus did I resemble the wild bamboo of Chu,  
Suddenly sprung from a single root,  
Then turned into an azure gemstone,  
Hardened over time by wind and frost.

Although I had penetrated my essence,  
Who would be there to examine it?  
Our times neglect the open road;  
Everybody seeks the secret path.<sup>263</sup>

Huang Chang paid tribute to the mental powers of a certain student Zhou, who could discern the character of men by their calligraphy or their zither playing, which he judged from behind a screen that prevented him from seeing them. Huang admired Zhou's deep concentration especially because he accomplished it in the middle of an urban marketplace: "While his body dwells in the market, he can roam alone in the realm of form and sound in his effort to arrive at the external expression of intent." In praise of Zhou's abilities, Huang Chang composed a poem in which he tried to depict Zhou's serene inner landscape:

On the peaks and in the valleys, there are no mortal travelers;  
The skills contained in his heart are unknown to others.

263 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 26.836 (依韻和丁元珍見寄), emphasis added.



A wind blows through this landscape, his spirit soars;  
The moon shines on the market, his mind is still.<sup>264</sup>

Others manifested their individuality and developed the self in a direct engagement with the crowded urban environment. Su Shi described the collector Shi Kangbo (see above) as walking “in and out of the alleyways” of the capital, “his ears and eyes alert in the dense crowd, focused entirely on the search for things he likes,” achieving an intense concentration by his focus on paintings and antiques.<sup>265</sup> According to Li Zhiyi, Shi Yan-nian (994–1041) expressed his unrestrained individuality by roaming the alleyways of the capital at night and visiting wine houses, in deliberate defiance of court regulations: “Even when he served at the Palace Library, he continued his nightly rambles with abandon, appearing and disappearing into the alleyways. To those who saw him he appeared enveloped in a fog. With a drinking companion he once ordered countless rounds of wine, not saying a word during the entire session. People today still point to the place where they sat, saying that two immortals descended there.”<sup>266</sup> All four of these men, in fact, won comparison to immortals by the independence of their spirit and by the strength of their character—not unlike the judges who by their “divine intelligence” saw through the confusion of the city and the distractions of the crowd.

But other literati sought knowledge of the self and of absolute truth in provincial towns and in the countryside. They regarded the metropolis as inherently corrupt and corrupting, with its deceptive appearances, its vain competition, its useless fashions, its deafening noise, and its blinding dust, which they associated not only with misguided ambition but also with the false policies and the confounding factionalism under Wang Anshi. When a visiting student asked Li Fu (fl. 1079–ca. 1127) why he had been content to live in a small room during his long six-year tenure in Shangdang (present-day Changzhi City, Shanxi province), Li Fu warned him against taking as his standard “the splendid profusion of personages and vehicles, the forceful beauty of offices and palaces” that he might encounter in “a spreading metropolis or a large city.” Within the vast space between Heaven and Earth, after all, the difference between a mansion and a hovel was negligible, and a

264 Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 4.8ab. Cf. Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 16.5a–6b.

265 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.364–365 (《石氏畫苑》記).

266 Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi wenji*, 1.40.310–311 (跋石曼卿二疏墓詩). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Guitian lu*, 2.34; Shen Gua, *Mengxi bitan*, 23.1a.

large residence and a fast career might have prevented him from perceiving his place in cosmic time and space: “This is why I have lived here in peace and contentment, relying on my own resources [*zi de* 自得]. Those who want a rich mansion and a rapid career but who fail to obtain them will be permanently anxious and thereby incapable of knowing themselves.”<sup>267</sup> Zeng Gong found that, as he rowed away from the traffic and the dust of Jing’an (now Jing’an, Jiangxi province), the pristine air of the cliffs and the clear sound of the water allowed him to perceive the self as the enduring standard, which so many allowed to be obscured by ambition and greed:

Human beings value noble titles,  
Resplendent like streaked jade.  
*Even if the brilliance lasts awhile,*  
*Fear and worry fill their faces.*

At cock’s crow they already race each other,  
Their fine horses straining at the bit.  
Isn’t it better to be this humble official here?  
The sun is high but my gate remains closed.

*If one doesn’t guard what one holds within,*  
*Ambition will work its bewitching change.*  
Isn’t it better to be this humble official here?  
I consider no appointment beneath me.<sup>268</sup>

After Lü Nangong (1047–1086) failed the examinations in 1069, he retired to his ancestral estate in Xicun, outside Nancheng (now Nancheng, Jiangxi province), where he contrasted the simple joys of the countryside with the corrupt ambition of the city, and criticized Wang Anshi’s New Laws for precipitating the ruin of precarious farmers.<sup>269</sup> The artifice of cities obscured the cosmic destiny of all things and perverted genuine emotions. Urban dust blinded riders and covered pedestrians, or turned to mud that impeded the movement of horses and carriages.<sup>270</sup> The changing

<sup>267</sup> Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 6.1a–2b (于于齋記).

<sup>268</sup> Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 1.13–14 (靖安縣幽谷亭), emphasis added. Cf. Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 1.1.

<sup>269</sup> For Lü Nangong’s criticisms of Wang Anshi see, for example, *Guan yuan ji*, 4.3b–4a, 8.10b–11a, 8.13b, 14.10b–17a, 17.8a–9a, 20.3ab.

<sup>270</sup> See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 1.12a, 6.6a. Lü Nangong also wrote a poem in tribute to an urban recluse, Codger Cai. See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 3.5ab.

metropolitan fashions in houses and clothes tempted rich families across the empire to spend their wealth on needless luxuries and to ignore the long-term prosperity of their lineage.<sup>271</sup> Xicun, by contrast, lay in a winding valley with fresh gardens and green fields, with unobstructed views that inspired positive intentions:

The clouded peak three miles away,  
 Rewards those who look up to seek it out.  
 Since here is no clamor of carts and horses,  
 Who would worry about fame or profit?<sup>272</sup>

In his rural retirement under the New Laws, Lü Nangong conducted a life and pursued ideas that are more commonly associated with the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He propounded a strict classicist morality in all literary genres, in prose as well as in poetry.<sup>273</sup> He examined the precedents for his refusal to serve in the government and argued that voluntary retirement could be a form of virtue equal to active service.<sup>274</sup> He compiled, in 1075, a record of twenty-four incidents that had revealed to him the reality of the cosmic pattern that informs all things and explains apparent anomalies, including the emergence of Heaven, Earth, and the Way from nothing—from a condition in which even nothing did not exist.<sup>275</sup> He took comfort in the knowledge that true writing endured, in spite of Wang Anshi's corruption of the examinations, and that the duty and ritual with which the ancients had governed had issued from their minds, whence present students might again recover them.<sup>276</sup> Such anticipation of twelfth-century tendencies during the period of the New Laws suggests that the withdrawal from the city and government and the search for absolute truth and absolute values within the self resulted, during the twelfth century as during the eleventh century, from the realization that current learning could overcome neither the relative values of urban life nor the factionalist tautologies of political debate.<sup>277</sup> As the next

271 See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 4.10a–11a.

272 Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 3.17ab (西村).

273 On the transformation of poetry by the Learning of the Way during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Fuller 2013, 299–494.

274 See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 8.20a–21a, *juan* 10–14, *passim*.

275 See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 7.20a–22a. Cf. Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 8.4b–5b. Cf. also Zou Hao's account of his enlightenment experience. See Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 28.9a.

276 See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 5.9b, 8.13b–15a.

277 Cf. Hymes 2015, 631–645. On the perception of the New Laws as a turning point during the Song itself, see Hartman 2021, 206–207.

chapter will show, the rejection of activist government and the anger at the loss of the northern territories, often cited as the main reasons for the changed intellectual orientation in the twelfth century, were only epiphenomena of this fundamental crisis in the received tradition of classicist learning and knowing.

## Conclusion

As the Song imperial house of Zhao built its palaces and its government offices within the irregular grid of Kaifeng, the former capital at Chang'an became a peripheral place of ruined mansions and toppled steles. Kaifeng, however, never acquired the cultural hegemony that Chang'an had possessed during the Tang. The cities that during the tenth century had served as the capitals of a succession of empires and kingdoms retained their roads and canals, their temples and markets, their libraries and printing houses, and thereby rivaled the splendor, the wealth, and the learning of the imperial metropolis. The roads and waterways on which the imperial court depended for the provision of its soldiers and officials made Kaifeng comparable to other cities. "The magnificence of the palaces and gates of the Son of Heaven, and the wealth and scale of the granaries and the prefectural storehouses, of the walls and lakes, the parks and gardens" may have remained unmatched, but the goods that filled those granaries and warehouses came from other places, where they might be bought fresher and cheaper, and although "the writing of the empire" may have gathered in the capital, this talent arrived from the provinces, where it had been trained in a shared curriculum by means of standardized texts.<sup>278</sup> Whereas in Chang'an the luxury goods of the caravan trade, the manuscript texts in the capital libraries, and the erudite descendants of the great clans had been "refined and rare," unique and set in place, the commodities, the books, and the literati of the eleventh century were "various and many," comparable and interchangeable, mobile and cheap.<sup>279</sup>

In their commemorations of pavilions and government compounds, literati of the eleventh century placed such structures along the highways and canals of this mobile, multi-centered empire. Although they took the writers of the Tang as their models, they reoriented the geography of the literary genres they inherited. Instead of gazing toward the capital and confining their exploration of individual inclinations to gardens and the

<sup>278</sup> Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.22.477-478 (上樞密韓太尉書).

<sup>279</sup> Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 25.361 (上提刑司封書).

countryside, literati of the Song looked into the streets of provincial cities and reflected on themselves in close concourse with urban crowds and commodities. The representation of the urban streetscape in writing by its newness offered opportunities for innovation and distinction in the literary marketplace, but it also provided avenues for complex, ambivalent ruminations about anonymity and individuality, relative value and absolute worth, and the perception of the self in relation to others and in relation to commodities. Looking out from a pagoda, Wang Anshi considered his privilege, at the same time embarrassed and pleased at his advantages over the people below. Mei Yaochen sought to distract himself from his melancholy by immersing himself in the throngs of Prime Eve, only to find that his somber mood excluded him from membership in the crowd. Cai Xiang dramatized the relationship between self and commodity, imagining the city from the perspective of a monkey in order to explain to a friend why such sentient beings should not be treated as commercial wares:

“In Answer to Ge Gongchuo’s [i.e., Ge Weiming] Request for a Monkey,”  
by Cai Xiang

In your quest for a young monkey you sent a letter to Fujian;  
*In return I offer you an explanation of how a monkey thinks.*  
In my province, cliffs and peaks rise in all directions,  
Enormous trees stand in confusion, piercing the mists and clouds.

If I were to build a nest and make haste to set a trap,  
I could place it in ten days on the banks of the Cheng.  
*Alas! I believe that all creatures possess their proper nature;*  
*In fleeing sorrow and seeking pleasure they are all alike.*

...

At dawn it sits in the dense growth of a lofty tree;  
At dusk it drinks from the calm water of a hidden creek.  
As the moon shines on the empty mountains, one long scream;  
The merchant ships on the ocean hear it on the wind.

The eastern garden of your house is beautiful of course,  
The cypress and bamboo a dense azure, the orchids and angelica fragrant.  
But if this monkey remembers its companions of yore,  
It will lift its head and tear through a thousand layered clouds.

I shall free it and not send it, leave it where it belongs,  
 And I shall spread this reasoning in a soothing cloud of empathy,  
 Ordering all my towns and cities to open their pens and cages,  
 To let the footed run free and the feathered soar.

Then we shall see the little creatures submit to the transformations:  
 The story about the presentment of a swan explains it well.<sup>280</sup>

Even the lifeless infrastructure that sustained the city prompted literati to reflect on themselves and on their place in the social order. Su Shunqin felt embarrassed by the tremendous strength of the lock gates built in 1043 on the Huai River at Lianshui military prefecture (now Lianshui County, Jiangsu province).<sup>281</sup> Mei Yaochen marveled at the power of the water driving an untiring watermill in Xuzhou.<sup>282</sup> Su Shunqin perceived watermills as metaphors of the human condition—producing invisible good by endless labor, without due recognition—but others acknowledged that millstreams and waterwheels substituted for human labor and brought benefits that it lay not in the power of any single man to bestow: though lacking consciousness, these machines afforded leisure to thousands of human beings and animals, grinding grain and pounding tea to nourish them, lifting water uphill and into irrigation canals, and providing diversion by their ingenuity, by their sound, and by their scenic setting.<sup>283</sup>

280 Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiangji*, 3.45–46 (答葛公綽求猿), emphasis added. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 7.117–118 (代鳩婦言), where Ouyang Xiu “speaks on behalf of a female pigeon.” The Cheng River runs on Hainan Island. The scream of a monkey was often said to “tear the intestines” (i.e., to break one’s heart), but Cai Xiang’s monkey “tears through a thousand layered clouds” to communicate its sorrow to its companions in Fujian. “The story about the presentment of a swan” refers to an anecdote about Chunyu Kun in “The Biographies of Wits and Humorists” in Sima Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian*. Sent by the King of Qi to present a swan to the King of Chu, Chunyu liberated the swan from its cage soon after departure, then lied about the true state of affairs to convince the King of Chu of his loyalty and honesty, earning himself a rich award. See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 126.12ab. Cai Xiang invokes the story with self-deprecating wit, admitting that he has taken the moral high ground for his release of a monkey he hasn’t even caught. Cai Xiang knew Ge Weiming’s Eastern Garden well: he had composed a commemoration of it. See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiangji*, 28.494.

281 See Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqinji*, 4.45.

282 See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochenji biannian jiaozhu*, 16.382.

283 See Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 16.29a; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzhengji*, 5.99–100, *jiyi*.1.530; Han Qi, *Anyangji*, 13.5a, 18.3a, 19.3b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 5.110–111; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochenji biannian jiaozhu*, 7.100–101, 16.382; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 14.248; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 3.59a, 3.63a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 11.558; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqinji*, 5.53; Wei Xiang, *Qiantangji*, 6.39b–40a; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 17.555; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*,

The anonymous crowds and anonymous transactions of the metropolis raised the most forceful questions about individuality and identity, in the Song Empire of the eleventh century as in the industrial cities of nineteenth-century Europe. Shen Liao “entered the capital once more,” wondering who his neighbors would be, and Zhang Lei left the city reflecting how few people knew him—or knew each other (*Chang'an cheng li shei xiang shi* 長安城裏誰相識).<sup>284</sup> Su Zhe thought the capital wide and expansive as the sky, and full of strangers, but Li Zhiyi—with Su Shi and Wu Ke (fl. 1100–1125)—compared the “royal city” to an ocean, where a man of resolve could achieve perfect reclusion.<sup>285</sup> The heroes of the overwhelming metropolis—in the Song Empire of the eleventh century as in the industrial cities of nineteenth-century Europe—were men whose power of personality stood out in the crowd as well as men who blended into the crowd in order to find the thieves and murderers who hid there. The memorious Zhang Fangping, the graphologist named Zhou, the collector Shi Kangbo, the haunted and haunting Shi Yannian, and various urban recluses projected such power of concentration that urban crowds compared them to immortals.

The changed geography of poetry, the development of stories of detection, and the conception of a literature of connoisseurship demonstrate that the city in the tenth and eleventh centuries had given rise to new ways of seeing and thinking. The capitals of the Han and Tang Empires had been populous, and more imposing than Kaifeng, but the detail of their urban life had been written only in the past tense, in memoirs such as the anonymous *Plan of the Three Capital Regions* (*Sanfu huangtu*, 3rd or 4th century CE), Yang Xuanzhi's (fl. 547) *Record of the Monasteries of Luoyang* (*Luoyang qielan ji*, 547), Cui Lingqin's (fl. 730s–760s) *Record of the Court Entertainment Bureau* (*Jiaofang ji*, ca. 762), Sun Qi's (fl. 880s) *Record of the Northern Ward* (*Beili zhi*, c. 884), and Wang Dingbao's (b. 870–ca. 941) *Gleaned Accounts of the Tang* (*Tang zhiyan*, ca. 940) (cf. Chapter 1). When authors of the Han and the Tang wrote the city in the present tense, they configured it into the hierarchical geography of the rhapsody or the treatise, as in Sima Xiangru's (179–118 BCE) “Rhapsody on the Imperial Park” (“Shanglin fu”), Ban Gu's (32–92 CE) “Rhapsody on the Two Capitals” (“Liang du fu”), and Wei Shu's

10.1b–2b; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 4.6b. Cai Xiang offers the chain-pellet pump as a metaphor for the cycle of rural poverty and urban extravagance. See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 3.53.

284 Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.23a (暫來); Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 28.497 (出京寄无咎二首, 其一).

285 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.6.144 (次韻蔣夔寒夜見過); Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, 1.36.287 (吳思道藏海齋記), citing Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 4.156 (病中聞子由得告不赴商州三首, 其一). Cf. Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 26.1950.

(fl. 717–759) *New Record of the Two Capitals* (*Liangjing xinji*, 757). Liu Zhiji (661–721) advocated the addition of a “Treatise on Capitals” to future official histories because he regarded the capital as another imperial institution, designed to pacify the people and defined by its palaces and its rituals.<sup>286</sup>

Literati of the Song dynasty, by contrast, wrote the chaotic urban streetscape in the present tense, in provincial towns as well as in the capital. They found new possibilities, new challenges, and new pleasures in extending inherited literary forms and diction to the patterns of human activity, the encounter with anonymous strangers, the phantasmagoria of shops and markets, and the disorientation of traffic and dust. Writing through the living scenery of urban streets gave them the opportunity to set themselves in their desired place within a fluid society of relative values and social competition. Whereas the literati of the Tang posited clear boundaries between the political elite and commoners, between the learned and the unlettered, between the civilized heartland and the alien South, the literati of the Song lived in a mobile, multi-centered empire where social and cultural difference had shifted into the confounding horizontality of the city. Surrounded by street vendors and shop keepers, wealthy merchants and sickly beggars, fresh tripe and ancient paintings, they could no longer assert their superiority by avoiding the market and the crowd, but had to establish their identity and the identities of others through their interaction with strangers and commodities. When they discovered that their connoisseurship did not place them above competitive consumption, as they had thought, and when they found that the absolute values of their moral learning were drawn into the relative values of the market, they lost interest in the city as a place for reflection on the individual and the self. In order to protect the absolute values they discerned in the sacred texts of antiquity, they considered the individual and the self in studious withdrawal, in the context of the family and the community. This withdrawal of literati to the towns and landed estates of their home regions, documented and analyzed by Ihara Hiroshi, Robert Hartwell, and Robert Hymes, began during the intellectual crisis occasioned by the New Laws, rather than with the loss of the northern half of the empire in 1127.<sup>287</sup> Men such as Lü Nangong and Zhu Changwen lived like the literati of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, taking pride in the stable values of their family and their community while refusing to participate in the aggressive financial reforms of Wang Anshi.

<sup>286</sup> See Liu Zhiji, *Shi tong*, 3.11b.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. Hymes 2015, 627–650.



Historians who have taken up the categories of Max Weber have debated for many years whether the cities of the Song, the Ming (1368–1644), and the Qing (1636–1912) were genuine urban communities, and whether they were truly distinct from the countryside, as the cities of medieval Europe had been.<sup>288</sup> An intellectual history of the city demonstrates that the cities of the Song Empire had more in common with the industrial cities of the nineteenth century than with the feudal cities of the Middle Ages. The cities of the Song were not industrial, to be sure, but they gave rise to modern ways of seeing and thinking, and the modern metropolis of Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin is more apparent in the writings and paintings of the eleventh century than is the medieval city of Max Weber.<sup>289</sup> Song literati did not live in autonomous citystates, but they reflected on the individual and the self, on subjective perception and subjective expression. Toward the end of the eleventh century, however, many literati began to consider these new notions of the individual and the self away from urban traffic and metropolitan crowds.

288 For a critique of this scholarship, see de Pee and Lam 2017.

289 Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer recognized this affinity in their characterizations of Chinese landscape painting and calligraphy. See Benjamin 1938; Kracauer 1963, 60.

### 3 Losing the Way in the City

#### Infrastructure, Money, and Intellectual Crisis in the Eleventh Century

##### Abstract

During the first half of the eleventh century, officials of the Song Empire grew confident that they would discern in the city the immanent pattern that aligned human civilization with the moral cosmos. They saw the health of the body politic manifested in the health of urban populations, fed by predictable harvests and sustained by the efficient circulation of goods and money. The intellectual confidence of Song literati was defeated, however, by their inability to eliminate the budget deficit created by military expenditures. Irreconcilable debates about economic reforms, especially about the New Laws of Wang Anshi, caused a profound intellectual crisis. As a result, literati withdrew from the city to search for the immanent pattern within themselves and their community.

**Keywords:** Song dynasty; intellectual history; civil engineering; economic reform; Fan Zhongyan; Wang Anshi

The provision of the growing cities and the gratification of refined tastes depended on an infrastructure that was created and maintained by the government. Imperial officials bore responsibility for repairing the roads that carried trade within their jurisdictions. Imperial officials drew up the plans and recruited the labor for digging new canals, whether to drain floodwaters, to improve transport, or to extend irrigation. Imperial officials supervised the removal of dangerous rocks and treacherous shoals in rivers, and installed sluices to prevent silting. Imperial officials erected and strengthened the dikes that protected the people from floods, and imperial officials built the embankments and ports that allowed merchants to unload their ships. The first known pound-lock in history was invented and installed in 984 by Qiao Weiyue (926–1001), Vice Fiscal Commissioner of

Huainan Circuit, who sought to end the loss of grain due to shipwreck and robbery on a series of slipways in the Huai River.<sup>1</sup> The first “flying bridge”—a self-supporting, pierless wooden bridge—was reportedly conceived and built in the early 1030s by a former military engineer who had been commissioned by Xia Song (985–1051), then prefect of Qingzhou (present-day Yidu, Shandong province), to construct a bridge without piers across the Yang River, so that the bridge would never again be destroyed by spring floods. Soon, the bridges across the Bian Canal were all replaced with such flying bridges (or “rainbow bridges”), making the bridges more durable and the river traffic safer.<sup>2</sup> The government even took the initiative in creating irrigation systems, reclaiming land, and laying out rice fields, all of which required investments of labor and treasure that farmers themselves could not supply. The government also maintained the monetary infrastructure that set the physical infrastructure of the empire in motion, issuing billions of bronze coins along with iron coins, stamped ingots of gold and silver, vouchers for salt and tea, and paper money.

Much of its infrastructure the Song Empire (960–1279) inherited from the Tang (618–907) and the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907–979), whose rulers had created it for the same purpose that moved the Song to repair and extend it: namely, to extract increasing amounts of resources and revenue for the maintenance of the court, the government, and especially the army. After the Tang dynasty had lost control of Shandong and Hebei, it had relied increasingly on revenue and grain from the Southeast, shipped up the Huai River, the Grand Canal, and the Wei River.<sup>3</sup> Military colonies had transformed extensive tracts of the landscape into rice fields, and the indirect taxation of the decentralized Tang government had encouraged farmers in the Southeast to grow rice also.<sup>4</sup> The division of the Tang Empire into a shifting array of smaller polities had only intensified the colonization and exploitation of the land south of the Huai and Yangzi rivers.<sup>5</sup> The

1 See Toghto, *Song shi*, 307.10118, translated in Needham 1964, 91. For other pound-locks during the Northern Song, see Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.419–421; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1.29b; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 4.45; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.14.338; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 23.2b.

2 On the invention and spread of the flying bridge, see Wang Pizhi, *Shengshui yantan lu*, 8.100–101, translated in de Pee 2017b, 150. On the flying bridges across the Bian Canal, see Jōjin, *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji*, 3.261; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 19.868; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 13.417; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 3.30b. See also Needham et al. 1971, 165–167.

3 See Chi 1963, 124–130; Lamouroux 1995, 145–146; Twitchett 1965, 212–223. Cf. Pi Rixiu, *Pizi wensou*, 4.44; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, 5.97–98, 6.121–122.

4 See Lamouroux 1995, 152–153, 164–170. Cf. Chi 1963, 124–130; Mihelich 1979, 10–11; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 39–41.

5 Cf. H. Clark 2015, 46–71; von Glahn 2016, 211–227. Cf. also Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 29.512–513.

Kingdom of Wu and Yue (in present-day Zhejiang province) had during the tenth century built such an extensive, intricate network of rice- and wheat-growing polders—protected by dikes, irrigated by ditches, and drained by channels—that the Song proved unable to restore it to its full extent and effectiveness.<sup>6</sup> The kingdoms of Min (in present-day Fujian province) and Southern Han (in present-day Guangdong province) had for the first time used maritime trade as an active source of revenue.<sup>7</sup> The Song inherited also the regional currencies that the kingdoms and empires of the tenth century had issued.<sup>8</sup> Although the Song used bronze coin as its money of account and as the preferred medium of payment and exchange, it retained some of the regional currencies (e.g., iron coins in Sichuan, silver along the border with the Liao Empire [907–1125]) to create regional economies and to prevent the outflow of bronze coin, a strategy similar to the mercantilist policies of the tenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The unification of the newly productive, newly wealthy territories in the South under the centralized government of the Song created an economy of unprecedented volume and complexity. In order to extract the wealth of the far-flung empire, to commute it and ship it to the imperial capital and the armed frontier, the Song minted more bronze coins than any dynasty before it or since, and yet it had to increase liquidity by means of additional currencies and monetary instruments.<sup>10</sup> Although bronze coin functioned to a certain extent as a fiduciary currency (most evident in the valuation of the string of 770 coins at 1,000 cash), the remaining use value of copper set a limit to the extent to which the government could increase the volume of bronze coin by debasing it.<sup>11</sup> Debasement of copper coins by a higher lead content was prone to cause inflation, to incite counterfeiting, and to encourage the melting down of coins to make religious statues and other objects. Coins with a high copper content retained their value, but for that

6 See Bian and Zheng 1985, 77–78, 82; Jm Liang 1989, 333–335; Mihelich 1979, 11 and *passim*; Z. Zheng 1987, 82–87. Cf. Lamouroux 1995, 172–175. See also Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.20b; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 22.73b; Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*, 3.1b–2a. Su Shi, similarly, wondered why the sluices on the Bian Canal malfunctioned during the Song, if they worked during the Tang. See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 66.2075.

7 See H. Clark 1991, 64–70; Schottenhammer 2015, 461–464.

8 See Hartwell 1967, 280–281; Lamouroux 2000, 283–284; Lamouroux 2007, 173.

9 See Hartwell 1967, 281; Lamouroux 2007, 177–178; Miyazaki 1959, 131–136; Oberst 1996, 371–374; von Glahn 2010, 465; von Glahn 2016, 228. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 115.1745–1748, 116.1757–1759; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 23.341–342.

10 See Golas 2015, 207–211; Hino 1983, 466; L. Yang 1952, 38; McDermott and Shiba 2015, 368–385; Miyazaki 1938, 145. Cf. Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 28.8b–9a.

11 On bronze coin as a fiduciary currency, see Andreau et al. 2007, 265–267, 289–290, 294.

reason were likely to be hoarded in the storehouses of the rich, which in turn contributed to regional coin shortages and deflation.<sup>12</sup> The multiplicity of currencies, combined with the cyclical, regional deflation during harvest seasons, made it difficult to control the value of money, all the more because the paucity of money relative to the size of the economy made money a commodity, giving it a price as well as a value.<sup>13</sup> Long-distance trade, moreover, inevitably brought inconvertible regional currencies together. Christian Lamouroux's analysis of public debt and monetary policy in Shaanxi illustrates the potential intricacy of the resulting financial and monetary relations. In the 1040s, during the war between the Song and the newly founded Xia Empire (1038–1227), the government issued in Shaanxi a unique bimetallic currency of iron coins and large bronze coins. The merchants who provisioned the troops in Shaanxi, however, were paid in vouchers for salt, a valuable commodity controlled by government monopoly. The value of these salt vouchers in the Southeast simultaneously secured the value of Shaanxi's regional currency and determined the size of the government debt.<sup>14</sup> Long-distance trade also resulted in complicated litigation between merchants from different regions (and from foreign countries), in the courts of prefects and magistrates already overworked by the proliferation of property disputes and urban crime.<sup>15</sup>

Although imperial officials had difficulty deciding the complicated cases brought before them and controlling the fluctuating prices in their jurisdictions, they intuited within the apparent confusion an enduring, immanent pattern: the pattern that the kings of the Shang (ca. 1500–ca. 1045) and the Zhou (ca. 1045–256 BCE) had made manifest in their governance—the Way of the ancients. As the imperial examinations gained in prestige and in scale during the eleventh century, the study of the classical canon increased across the realm. In order to supply the growing number of students with authoritative editions of these numinous texts, literati and officials dedicated themselves with new vigor to philology and textual criticism.<sup>16</sup> They grew

12 See Andreau et al. 2007, 271, 285–288; Oberst 1996, 359–370. Cf. Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 16.150–152; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.20.453–454; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji, jiyi*.749–750; Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan*, 2.144.

13 See Lamouroux 2007, 189–190 and *passim*; Miyazaki 1938, 143; Oberst 1996, 354; von Glahn 2004, 167, 172–177. For instances of the purchase of money, see Jōjin, *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji*, 1.26, 1.35–38.

14 See Lamouroux 2006. Cf. Andreau et al. 2007, 291–293; Lamouroux 2007, 177–186.

15 When Su Xun, in an essay on law, explains why laws have proliferated and why they are difficult to enforce, all his examples are of economic crimes. See Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 5.114–117.

16 See Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.1b.

confident that they could improve upon the commentaries from the Tang and Han (206 BCE–220 CE) dynasties. Taking advantage of the new textual environment created by printing, they increased their reading and shared their discoveries and insights with a widespread community of peers. Their progress in the criticism of received texts, in the identification of excavated ritual vessels, and in the decipherment of ancient scripts convinced them that they stood nearer to sacred antiquity, and hence nearer to the recovery of the perfect governance of the ancient sages, than any generation since the Zhou dynasty.<sup>17</sup> The Song Empire, with its large cities, no longer resembled the simpler settlements of antiquity, with their thatched huts, and the confounding movement of people, goods, and money obscured the immanent moral pattern discerned by the ancient sages, but the pattern itself had not changed, and remained accessible through the study of the sacred canon and the contemplation of the ordered cosmos:

The rulers of antiquity governed all under Heaven, just as the rulers of today govern all under Heaven. The ears and eyes, mouths and noses, hunger and thirst, and food and drink of the people in antiquity resembled those of the people today. And since these were similar, their hearts-and-minds were also the same. *Why, therefore, were the ancients able to establish lasting governance whereas we are not?* The reason is that we at present do not make use of antiquity. When today someone says that the ancient methods of [the sage rulers] Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou can still be used, everyone will start yelling and laughing at him. But this is because they haven't considered how antiquity may be used. ... *What traces [Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou] left in the canon can all be examined and ascertained.* They do not contain arcane or esoteric techniques, or matters that are impossible to implement, or anything that would forever exceed the abilities of later generations. The method of their governance, too, was to exert themselves for the ease of the people, and that was all.<sup>18</sup>

Epitaphs from the 1030s and 1040s manifest the intellectual confidence of the period, as they describe men who by their classical learning had acquired the comprehensive means of enlightened governance. These officials cowed their underlings into honest service, settled lawsuits that had defeated their predecessors, arrested thieves and murderers who had escaped detection,

17 See de Pee 2007, 21–26, 45–55; de Pee 2017b, 129–134.

18 Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 16.3a–4a (用古論), emphasis added.

built dikes that ended devastating annual floods, conducted successful military campaigns against bandits and rebels, devised strategies to drain counterfeit coins from regional markets, adjusted exchange rates between currencies and goods, and protected the population from droughts, locusts, and epidemics. The moral learning of these men had revealed to them the unity and coherence of all things, and had therefore taught them to detect deviations from the pattern and to restore all affairs to the true.

The cities of the eleventh century hid this sustaining pattern by their artifice, by their novelty, and by their confusion, but for this very reason they would offer the clearest, most immediate evidence that the Way of the ancients had been recovered. Whether as county magistrates or as prefects, as fiscal commissioners or as court ministers, imperial officials lived in cities: “Why feel sorry for this night in the double enclosure of Linzhang [in the North], / When it is so like life in the government compounds of Jiangnan [in the Southeast]?”<sup>19</sup> Officials therefore experienced the effects of their own governance in the first place within the city. If they failed to maintain the roads or to dredge the canals, merchants might not come and prices in the city would rise. If wealthy families hoarded the region’s cash, farmers might not sell their produce and urban residents would starve. Merchants converged on the city because markets, shops, and money were concentrated there, but besides trade they also brought lawsuits and disease.<sup>20</sup>

Within the walls of the city, therefore, officials found manifested both the accomplishments and the failures of governance. On the waterways, in the streets, and in the markets, the body politic became visible as the body physical, in the health and the strength of the residents, and in the activity and the prosperity of the city. Officials compared themselves to doctors. By regulating the flow of traffic and stimulating the circulation of money, by draining floods and containing fires, they promoted the health of the population, and of the empire. Thus, Huang Shu (fl. 1042–1072) imagined financial experts as accomplished acupuncturists:

“The Bian Canal,” by Huang Shu

The capital at Bian [i.e., Kaifeng] rises like a mountain from the even plain,  
The Song trusts its virtuous power as its metal gate and fiery moat.

19 Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 16.5b (中夜聞泉). Linzhang is present-day Linzhang County, Hebei province.

20 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 56.1692. Traveling officials were also prone to illness. See Okanishi 1958, 960.

The founding emperors in the beginning had profound intent,  
To prevent their descendants from growing lazy or careless.<sup>21</sup>

Myriad ships come north to feed the capital city,  
*Making the Bian River in effect its southeastern throat.*  
And the million armored soldiers are thus sustained,  
*The receptive intestine of the thousand-mile realm.*  
The people's hearts love and cherish this flowing water,  
Which offers to them more than cloth, rice, and grain.

In the capitals of the Han and Tang for many centuries,  
Wheelbarrows could fill the imperial granaries till their contents rotted.  
Boats profit the present a hundred times more than the past,  
And yet one never sees in the storehouses a trace of mold.

If Heaven intends to remedy the transformation,  
*Why isn't there a man skillful in the use of needling stones?*  
From the hollows just remove the vermin of cash and grain,  
And this river need not seek a man like Sang Hongyang.<sup>22</sup>

By removing the “vermin” that consume excessive amounts of cash and grain—identified by Zhang Fangping (1007–1091) as engrossers, Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, soldiers, and horses—a capable financial expert would secure the sufficiency of the capital and the empire without resorting to contrived, disruptive policies.<sup>23</sup> The body to which this financial expert ministers is both political and medical, both metaphorical and physical.

21 Because “the capital at Bian” (present-day Kaifeng, Henan province) was situated in a plain, it lacked the natural defenses that had protected the capitals at Chang’an (present-day Xi’an, Shaanxi province) and Luoyang during the Tang (cf. Chapter 2). Huang Shu argues here that the founding emperors deliberately chose this exposed city as their capital so that their successors would have to protect themselves by the impeccable virtue of their governance.

22 Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 1.13b–14a (頁下三行), emphasis added. Cf. Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 1.15ab. The “man skilled at using needling stones” is probably a reference to the legendary Warring States (479–256 BCE) physician Bian Que, whose use of stone lancets to drain excess yin and yang and to move *qi* is invoked as a metaphor for sound economic policy in the *Debates on Salt and Iron* (*Yantie lun*, 1st century BCE). See Huang Kuan, *Yantie lun* XIV.16. Sang Hongyang (152–80 BCE) was a proponent of imperial monopolies during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty and is caricatured in the *Debates on Salt and Iron*. For other examples of medicine as metaphor and a means of governance, see *Tongren yuxue zhenjiu tujing*, 1026 preface, 1a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 5.78–79; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 1.2, 5.114–115; Wang Shu, *Dili xinshu*, preface, 1a–3b; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.10.10a; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 11.1ab.

23 See Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 14.178.



This was the endeavor, and this the ideology, of the great reforms of the eleventh century: the reforms led in 1043–1044 by Fan Zhongyan (989–1052) and the so-called New Laws implemented by Wang Anshi (1021–1086) between 1069 and 1076 and continued by others thereafter. Although the leaders and supporters of the reforms of 1043–1044 became fierce critics of Wang Anshi's New Laws, the two reforms shared a fundamental classicist ideology as well as many concrete measures. Both Fan Zhongyan and Wang Anshi urged the emperor to appoint men of talent, that is, men who by their classical learning had achieved insight into the pattern of things and thereby acquired wide-ranging practical abilities. Both reformers believed that with the aid of such men they would be able to make more efficient use of the resources of the empire, eliminate the structural deficit in the government budget, protect the borders against foreign invasions, and restore trust in imperial benevolence. Both Fan Zhongyan and Wang Anshi proposed to increase revenues by reclaiming land and improving irrigation, technologies with which both men themselves had considerable practical experience. Both reformers, moreover, promoted urban public health by establishing hospitals and by regulating the drug market. Both reforms, in sum, tested the intellectual confidence that since the 1030s had enthused the proponents of Ancient Prose, the confidence that the superior classical learning of their time would enable them to restore the perfect governance of the ancient kings within a complex, extractive, urban economy: "The world of today is the same as the world of the former kings," wrote Wang Anshi. "During the time of the former kings, human talent was always abundant. How could it be that at present such talent would be deficient?"<sup>24</sup> But both reforms failed.

The irreconcilable debates that erupted in the 1070s between the opponents and the supporters of the New Laws defeated the intellectual confidence of the previous decades and precipitated classicists into a profound intellectual crisis. The enlightened officials commemorated in epitaphs had proven the superiority of their moral learning by concrete accomplishments: they diverted the flooding river, fed the hungry, increased the harvest, found the murder weapon. The New Laws, however, did not produce such incontrovertible results. The complexity of the reforms required that they be implemented in stages and judged over the course of years rather than weeks or months. To assess the effects of the reforms, moreover, the reformers and their critics had to depend on memorials from the counties and prefectures, which reported a variety of successes and failures. Both the

24 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 39.219 (上仁宗皇帝言事書). Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 41.238, 64.402–403.

reformers and their opponents could therefore find examples to support their arguments, and each side had grounds to dismiss the evidence of the other as insufficient, prejudiced, or inaccurate. The supporters of Wang Anshi insisted that the reforms needed time to take effect; the opponents of Wang Anshi demanded that the reforms be abolished before their damage became irreversible. Neither side proved capable of convincing the other. Every example of success could be opposed with an instance of failure. Every canonical phrase and historical precedent that justified the reforms could be dismissed with a passage that condemned Wang's methods.<sup>25</sup>

These irresolvable debates between the supporters and the opponents of the New Laws exposed a frightful fissure in the foundations of classical learning. In the absence of a sudden virtuous transformation of the realm or an unambiguous celestial omen above the capital, neither opponents nor supporters of the New Laws could offer conclusive evidence that their interpretation of the canon was correct, much less that their proposed measures accorded with the "intentions of the former kings." Classicists discovered that they knew no objective, external criteria by which to differentiate subjective interpretations from correct knowledge, or to distinguish a talented fraud from a genuine worthy.<sup>26</sup> As a result, the debates revolved in destructive tautologies, as Fan Chunren (1027–1101), a son of Fan Zhongyan, recognized: "Because I despise those who are different from me, words that sting my conscience are unlikely to reach me; because I favor those who are similar to me, falsehoods that meet my preconceptions grow daily more familiar. In the end, nobody will know truth from fabrication, and the stupid will be placed above the wise."<sup>27</sup>

To determine absolute criteria for moral knowledge, literati withdrew from officialdom and from the metropolis. First during the political violence of the New Laws and their aftermath, then after the loss of the northern half of the empire in 1127, literati took up residence in provincial towns and in the countryside in order to resume their studies, to contemplate their moral nature, to instruct their family, and to order their community.<sup>28</sup> The immanent pattern they had previously sought in society, they now hoped

25 See, for example, Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 6.4a–5a; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji, zouyi*.2.16b–17b, *zouyi*.2.37a–38b; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.21a; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.35.760–761; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 21.507. Cf. Bol 1992, 212, 246; Golas 2015, 152; Smith 2009, 363–367.

26 I am grateful to Angela Zito for urging me to think about "the third term" in Song debates about government policy and canonical exegesis.

27 Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji, zouyi*.2.37b (論不宜分辨黨人有傷仁化), emphasis added.

28 See Hartwell 1982, 405–425; Hymes 1986; G. Liang 1997, 165–218.

to find within themselves.<sup>29</sup> The confused, confusing movement of people, goods, and money in the cities might still hide an intrinsic coherence, but they had failed to discover it, and the cities and their traffic had become associated with unsuccessful financial reforms. Whereas epitaphs of the mid-eleventh century had enumerated the practical achievements of the deceased in office, epitaphs of the 1080s and 1090s commonly reduced the career of the deceased to a list of offices he had held and, instead of providing details about his concrete accomplishments, expatiated upon the particularities of his moral character.

The literati of the eleventh century had tried to grasp the city for themselves, in relation to crowds and commodities, and they had tried to grasp the city as a whole, in hopes of understanding the movement of people, goods, and money. After their withdrawal from the streets and markets, the city during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was written by pseudonymous authors who did not perceive cities as places where literati might distinguish themselves by connoisseurship, or as self-sustaining, organic unities patterned on a moral cosmos. Instead, these authors relished the distinction purchased by wealth and expressed in the conspicuous consumption and easy pleasures that literati of the eleventh century had condemned.

The consideration of the reforms of Fan Zhongyan and Wang Anshi within an intellectual history of the city restores the coherence between aspects of these reforms that have generally been treated in separation. Intellectual historians, for example, have demonstrated the central importance of classical learning and Ancient Prose in the reforms, but political histories and economic histories of the reforms have rarely found a place for exegetical disputes in their accounts of factional strife and fiscal measures.<sup>30</sup> Historians of science have emphasized the importance of the reforms in the development of medicine, pharmacology, hydraulics, and military technology, but these aspects of the reforms have mostly received only cursory mentions in other studies.<sup>31</sup> Because the cities of the eleventh century manifested with particular vividness the great changes of the period—the growth of the population, the increasing use of money, the efficiency of transport, the dependence on interregional trade, and so forth—the city prompted literati to reflect on the relationship between the present and the ancient past, and on the unchanged coherence of the moral pattern that connected

29 Cf. Bol 1992, 300–327; Bol 2001, 108–115; Bol 2015, 698–708, 726.

30 For intellectual histories of the reforms, see Bol 1992, 212–253; Bol 2009; Bol 2015, 674–720.

31 For discussions of the reforms by historians of science, see Forage 1991, 24–30; Goldschmidt 2009, 46–50, 58–60, 124–128; Goldschmidt 2019; Mihelich 1979.

them, and their reflections on the city can therefore serve the same function for present historians.

In the city converged, for literati of the eleventh century as for present historians, fundamental challenges to classical scholarship, confounding problems of monetary policy, endemic threats to public health, and an urgent need for good harvests and for efficient transport.<sup>32</sup> In their search for the dynamic pattern that sustained urban life, literati perceived the city as a living organism that was both physical and metaphorical, that was metaphorical *because* it was physical. Medicine and hydraulics were at the same time concrete technologies and discursive imaginaries, applicable to the circulation of money as to the circulation of bodily essences, to the flow of goods as to the flow of water, to the body politic as to the body medical.<sup>33</sup> The penetrating, dynamic understanding (*tong* 通) that literati hoped to achieve was similarly physical and metaphorical: it would enable the unobstructed flow of traffic, the equitable circulation of money, a comprehensive knowledge of all things, the establishment of universal governance, and the mergence of the present with the past.<sup>34</sup> Literati in the eleventh century sought this universal, penetrating pattern in the city, and the city showed them that they had failed to grasp it. They lost the Way in the city.

## Transport and Irrigation

Although the literati of the eleventh century often decried the political disintegration of the ninth century and the immoral chaos of the tenth century, they knew that the Song had inherited important segments of its infrastructure from those shameful eras. From their familiar reading of Tang history and poetry, they must have been aware that rice had not been a staple food during the Tang, and that the paddy fields in the Southeast had been created mainly by military colonies during the ninth and tenth centuries:

How beautiful! The broad Ying River clear and fair,  
It makes the Imperial Capital appear nearby.  
Enormous ships and hulking freighters raise their masts;  
The rice fields on the Ying and Huai produce a harvest every year.

32 Cf. Bao 2014, 356–390.

33 See, for example, Okanishi 1958, 928–929, 936–937. Cf. Hinrichs 2018, 243.

34 On the meanings and the epistemology of *tong*, see Scheid and Virág 2018.

On and on, diked paddies linking in the even plain,  
 The former creeks and ditches a network still.  
*These were once garrisons for frontier soldiers;*  
 Now they are gridded plots and rows of tombs.<sup>35</sup>

Fan Zhongyan in the 1030s, like Jia Qiao (fl. 1107) and Shan E (1031–1110) in the 1080s and 1090s, understood that the frequent flooding of Lake Taihu and the silting of the Song River resulted from the disruption and neglect of the irrigation and drainage networks built by the Kingdom of Wu and Yue.<sup>36</sup> Officials who reopened transport canals and drainage ditches in jurisdictions elsewhere, too, occasionally acknowledged that they had restored a neglected older infrastructure.<sup>37</sup> The main legacy from prior centuries was of course the Grand Canal, which brought the harvests from the rice fields in the Southeast to the capital at Kaifeng in the North. Literati of the eleventh century, like literati of the ninth century, occasionally reflected on the stark contrast between the suffering that the canal had inflicted on those who dug it and the prosperity that the canal brought to those who had inherited it: “Later generations received its benefits; / Its merit is impossible to recompense.”<sup>38</sup>

The Song government, however, connected and greatly expanded these inherited segments, and improved them by technological innovations and hydraulic expertise.<sup>39</sup> Imperial officials oversaw the excavation and restoration of canals in order to facilitate the transport of construction materials and merchandise, to alleviate the traffic on other waterways, and to prevent floods.<sup>40</sup> To protect the banks of these waterways and the

35 Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 13.220 (美哉), emphasis added. The gridded plots and rows of tombs reveal that by the time of Zhang Lei’s visit the rice fields had been cultivated for several generations by private farmers. Su Zhe, in contrast, believed that the Qin and Han dynasties had built cities and settled the land of the South, and that this infrastructure had been destroyed during the wars of the tenth century. See Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, III.10.1690–1691. On the transformation of the South by military colonies, see also Lamouroux 1995, 148–175; Mihelich 1979, 10–11, 17–25, 28–32, 219–223; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 20–22, 39–41, 120–123; von Glahn 1987, 1–67.

36 See Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.20a–27b; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.11.264–266, *zouyi*.1.533–534; Shan E, *Wuzhong shuili shu*, 10; Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xiji*, 3.2a–3a, 3.5b–6a.

37 See Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 4.10b; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.864–865, 31.901, 32.906–909; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 25.8b.

38 Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1.10b–11a (汴渠). Cf. Pi Rixiu, *Pizi wensou*, 4.44; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 2.18a. On the intensive use of the Grand Canal during the late Tang, see Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, 13.892; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiexian ji*, 5.97–98, 6.121–122. Cf. Chi 1963, 128. On the creation of the Grand Canal, see also Needham et al. 1971, 311–320.

39 Cf. Kuhn 2009, 232; Needham et al. 1971, 282–284; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 20–22.

40 See, for example, Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.488; Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 14.13a–15b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 45.639–641; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 3.6a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 1.46,

land beyond, they built embankments and erected dikes.<sup>41</sup> Some officials constructed watermills on canals and rivers to save their subjects the drudgery of milling grain or grinding tea (and no doubt also to survey the harvest and exact taxes).<sup>42</sup> After Qiao Weiyue built the first pound-lock in 984, in the Huai River, pound-locks were installed on other waterways as well—at the confluence of the Grand Canal and the Huai River in 1022 and 1025, between the Huai and Lake Quepo at Anfeng, in the canal to the Northern Capital—to increase the ease and safety of river traffic while eliminating the misery and the cost of towmen.<sup>43</sup> Officials built and moved ports to connect the waterways to the land, and bridges to connect the land across water.<sup>44</sup> Song officials and craftsmen invented the self-supporting wooden bridge and perfected the arched stone bridge, and officials could choose from a growing array of possible structures to connect opposing banks without hindering traffic on the water that flowed in between.<sup>45</sup> Officials also bore the responsibility for inspecting

2.79–80, 8.388–389, 8.391, 15.769–770; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 20.269–270; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.3a, 25.8b; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 7.8b–9a; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 3.14a–16a; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 23.9a.

41 For examples of the construction of embankments, see Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 13.5a; Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 1.12b–13a, 1.15a, 1.17a. For examples of the erection, fortification, and repair of dikes, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 12.9ab; Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 26.439–440; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 20.11ab; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 16.5ab, 17.2b–3a; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 14.8b–10b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64.941–942; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 21.62a–67a; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 19.232–234; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 25.829–831; Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 4.4ab; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 24.371; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 2.22b–23b. See also Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.1b–3b; Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 1.13b–14b.

42 See, for example, Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 16.29a; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji, jiyi*.1.530; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 13.5a, 18.3a, 19.3b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 5.110–111; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 16.382; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.37.813–814; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 6.39b–40a; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 17.555; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 4.6b. While exiled in Huizhou (now Huizhou, Guangdong province), Su Shi estimated that a local river, if properly dammed, would have sufficient force to drive two watermills, with two pestles each. See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 39.2111–2112. On watermills and other water-driven machinery, see also Kuhn 2009, 220–224.

43 See Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.419–421; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1.29b; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.162–163; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.9.212–213, I.14.338; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 23.2b. See also Jōjin, *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji*, 1.21, 1.38–40; Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 1.15a–17a; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 98.620; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 20.352–357. On the pound-lock, see also Kuhn 2009, 227; Needham 1964; Needham et al. 1971, 350–353.

44 For examples of the construction of ports and harbors see Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 82.525; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 20.3b.

45 For tributes to a variety of bridges see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.486–487, *yiwen*.774–775; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 13.13b, 15.10a; Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 13.11a; Liu Zhi,

and maintaining roads, which deteriorated rapidly under the rains and under the crush of hoofs and wheels.<sup>46</sup> Zheng Xia (1041–1119) praised the road to Lianzhou (now Lian County, Guangdong province) as evidence of benevolent governance, the prefect having cleared the road of brambles, equipped it with sturdy bridges, and planted trees along the road to protect travelers from the sun.<sup>47</sup> (Buddhist monks also maintained roads and constructed bridges, to remind people by material metaphor that piety provided stability on the road of life and ensured safe passage “to the other shore.”<sup>48</sup>)

Literati celebrated these waterways and bridges in odes and hymns, in rhapsodies and commemorations. Song Qi (998–1061), for example, composed a hymn on a drainage canal in Weishi County (now Weishi County, Henan province), dug to divert floodwaters from the Huimin River and to ensure a continuous flow of transport ships.<sup>49</sup> Mei Yaochen (1002–1060) wrote a series of three songs about the Bian Canal, commending its connection of the Yellow River to the Huai and its reliable delivery of “the grain of the government, the goods of the merchants,” to the benefit of all.<sup>50</sup> Chao Buzhi (1053–1110) and Su Shi (1037–1101) together watched the opening of an old salt canal, which brought in a thousand ships (“gathered at the shore like roosting crows”), along with fresh mud for the fields.<sup>51</sup> Literati also sang about

*Zhongsu ji*, 17.384; Lu Dian, *Taoshan ji*, 3.13a; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 16.15b–16b; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 19.229–231; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 32.924; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 40.2199; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 13.417; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.13.300, 1.23.500–501; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 2.34–35; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 3.306; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 24.751–755; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 21.7b–8a, 25.4ab; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 18.298–299; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 8.1b–2b; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.40ab; Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao*, 5.4b. See also Needham et al. 1971, 145–210.

46 See, for example, Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 47.493; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 6.57, 16.176; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 18.434, 18.449, 18.450, 23.663, 28.1005; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 8.24b; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 19.259; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 25.603–604. On roads, see also Needham et al. 1971, 1–33.

47 See Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.24b–25a.

48 See Huihong, *Shimen wenzi chan*, 28.15b–16a; Liu Qi, *Xueyi ji*, 6.32a–33a; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.156–157.

49 See Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 35.450–452.

50 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.278–279 (汴之水三章，其二).

51 Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 4.10b (飲酒二十首同蘇翰林先生次韻追和陶淵明，其九). For other poems about canals, see Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 30.757–758; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 27.419–420. For tributes to rivers, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 9.11b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 1.1–2, 28.320–322; Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 3.5b–6a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 10.158, 51.726; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, *yishi*.500; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 13.220, 49.768–769.

the ingenious novelty of pound-locks, the untiring power of watermills, and the elegant solidity of bridges:

“Bridge without Piers (on the Bian Canal),” by Wei Xiang (1033–1105)

Mortises and tenons, tightly joined;  
 Arching across the sky, unshakable.  
 Pressing waves—but no stone breaker;  
 Straddling shores—just an arching rainbow.

This new structure will last a thousand years;  
 Capsized boats are saved numerous disasters.  
 Those who cross the bridge by carriage  
 Are gracious, keeping a marked distance.<sup>52</sup>

Eleventh-century literati also made observations about the behavior of water, such as the location of watersheds, the tides of the ocean, and the tidal bore on the Yangzi River.<sup>53</sup> Literati in the eleventh century made a place for the city in writing, and they made a place also for the infrastructure that sustained the city.

The canals and bridges, the dikes and roads stood in the landscape as material evidence of good governance and as its objective metaphors, as instruments of government and as its signs.<sup>54</sup> An official such as Xu Hui, who in 1041 oversaw the construction of an extensive irrigation network at Changzhou, was himself the moisture that he brought to the fields: “Oh! The river and the lake by their generous benefit profit the ten thousand things; they do not begrudge their benefit. *Perfect indeed is he who pursues governance like this river!* Taking a position from which he may pour down relief and grasp the means to take action, what benefit couldn’t he produce

52 Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 3.30b (無脚橋, 汴上).

53 For general observations about water, see Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 2.15b–16a. On watersheds, see Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 4.5b–7a. On tides, see Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.6.133; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 5.19b–20b; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.14.333; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 3.10a–12a. On the tidal bore, see Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 2.15ab, 2.18b–19a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 14.233; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.25b–26a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 6.4a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 10.484–486, 47.2550–2551; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 7.73; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 10.113–114; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 1.26ab, 7.23a. Su Shi noted that during the tenth and eleventh centuries there had been a number of excellent painters of crashing waves and living water, a subject matter first taken up by Sun Wei during the 880s. See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 12.408–409.

54 Cf. H. Liu 2002, 569–570, 585–588.



and which harm couldn't he remove?"<sup>55</sup> Benevolence would forever flow by the bridge across the Ma River in Yingzhou, built by prefect He Zhiweng: "Beams jutting from stone abutments: *the prefect's wisdom*."<sup>56</sup> According to Cai Xiang, the new city gate of Hangzhou by its width betokened the peaceful unification of the empire, which had expanded the hinterland of the city, and by its height recalled the righteous power of the emperor, which shamed those who entered the city with selfish intentions.<sup>57</sup> The Granary of Eternal Aid in the capital to Mei Yaochen represented the auspicious peace of the realm, stored with the grain from distant regions that martial valor had conquered, and providing ease to the people.<sup>58</sup>

But the close attention to infrastructure, and the determination to give its technology and its functions a place in literature, points to a more general, technical interest in hydraulics among literati during the Northern Song. The extant sources no doubt exaggerate the contributions of imperial officials to the design of irrigation works and to the construction of hydraulic machinery. For example, in his *Records for Leisurely Conversations on the Banks of the Sheng* (*Shengshui yantan lu*, 1095), Wang Pizhi (1031–after 1095) preserved the name of the official who commissioned the first self-supporting bridge, but not the name of the military engineer who built it (see above).<sup>59</sup> An inscription by Qiu Yuquan (fl. 1055–1062) recorded the name of the official who in 1055 built a dike from Kunshan County to the Lou Gate of Suzhou that soon collapsed, but omits the name of the commoner who devised a method for constructing the enduring causeway that was completed in 1061.<sup>60</sup> The collected works that survive from the eleventh century, however, leave no doubt that some officials possessed a detailed, technical understanding of hydraulics.

55 Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.426 (常州晉陵縣開渠港記), emphasis added. Cf. Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.419–421; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1.29b; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 1.6–7; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 20.16b–17a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.9b; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.863, 30.865; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.162–163; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 10.155–157. Cf. also H. Liu 2012, 91–92; L. Zhang 2013, 146–148.

56 Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.40ab (和英州太守何智翁次韻馮仲禮麻江橋), emphasis added. Cf. Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 24.751–753.

57 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.494–496. Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.499–500; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 8.12ab; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 27.6ab; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 23.260–261; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64.925; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 4.5a; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 23.8b–10a; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 2.9b–10b; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 19.317; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 3.16b–17b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 33.533–535; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 6.3b–5a. Cf. also Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 19.259.

58 See Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.691.

59 See Wang Pizhi, *Shengshui yantan lu*, 8.100–101.

60 See Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.3ab. See also Shen Gua, *Mengxi bitan*, 13.17a.

Fan Zhongyan, for example, before he became the leader of the reforms of 1043–1044, made a comprehensive survey of the water system around Suzhou, where he served as prefect in 1034–1035. After a summer flood had not receded during the entirety of the fall, he decided to set aside local explanations and to investigate for himself: “When one visits and inspects the sites, and considers them with care, one obtains a clear, penetrating understanding of the situation.”<sup>61</sup> He determined that the course of the Song River was too slow to drain Lake Taihu during the summer rains, and that all other rivers and canals in the region had silted up or disappeared. He therefore proposed to ensure better drainage of the Song River, to dig new drainage canals to the Yangzi River, and to install sluices in the waterways to reduce silting as well as to retain water during droughts. Although this overhaul of the water system would require the mobilization of numerous crowds of service laborers, Fan Zhongyan reasoned that the labor would pay for itself, by the increased harvests it would ensure in future years, to the benefit of the local population as well as the government.<sup>62</sup> A few decades later, Zhu Changwen (1039–1098)—perhaps not without partisan bias—praised the wisdom of Fan Zhongyan’s insights and recommended that the present generation should continue his meritorious works.<sup>63</sup>

Wang Anshi demonstrated similar interest and skill in water management. When he assumed his post as magistrate of Yin County (south of present-day Ningbo, Zhejiang province) in November 1047, he made a tour of his jurisdiction, “taking along commoners to deepen canals and rivers.” During this excursion, he inspected two canals and considered the possibility of building a sluice on the seacoast (presumably to prevent silt formation in a stream that emptied into the sea).<sup>64</sup> The next year, he reported to the fiscal commissioner of the region that a dense maze of ditches, canals, and rivers protected the people from floods, but that the neglect of the waterworks built by the military colonies of the Kingdom of Wu and Yue had made the county prone to drought. Wang therefore proposed to take advantage of that year’s good harvest by recruiting well-fed local labor to dredge and restore rivers and canals. The

61 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.11.264 (上呂相公并呈中丞諮目). Fan Zhongyan coordinated a similar project on the Yi River at Luoyang. See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiangji*, 28.488.

62 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.11.264–266. Cf. Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *zouyi*.1.533–534, *xubu*.2.800–801. Cf. also Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*, 3.2a–3a. Cf. also Needham et al. 1971, 324–325.

63 See Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*, 3.5b–6a. Sue Takashi has argued that Zhu Changwen compiled this gazetteer in anticipation of the abolition of the administrative reforms implemented by Wang Anshi as part of the New Laws. See Sue 2009.

64 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 83.526 (鄞縣經遊記). Cf. Smith 2009, 358.

improved water storage would prevent future droughts.<sup>65</sup> A few years later, as controller-general of Shuzhou (present-day Qianshan, Anhui province), Wang Anshi received orders to inspect the water system around Suzhou and to devise a plan for proper drainage of the region: “After Lord Wang arrived, county runners rowed him through wild brambles and sailed him past crumbled embankments, while he made inquiries among the local population. He acquired a full understanding of the costs and benefits, the long and the short of it. Following the old waterways, he drew up a map.”<sup>66</sup> In a travel diary, Zhang Shunmin (fl. 1065–1102) mentions that Wang Anshi also opened a canal at Jiangning (present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu province) to circumvent several miles of rapids in the Yangzi River, “very beneficial to boat traffic.”<sup>67</sup>

Su Shi, the most famous poet of his time, also had a keen understanding of hydraulics. In 1078, he received an imperial edict praising him for having taken immediate action during the previous year, when a flood of the Yellow River had threatened Xuzhou (now Xuzhou, Jiangsu province). As the water approached the city, Su Shi had recruited five thousand men as well as local soldiers to construct an emergency dike, with fascines and sandbags to block the dike’s drainage holes. In addition, he had the city wall enhanced on the inside so that it could function as a dike, and he had boats installed at right angles to the city wall to act as breakers.<sup>68</sup> As prefect of Hangzhou in 1090, he planned and oversaw a complicated, comprehensive restoration of the city’s water system, informed by personal investigation as well as by knowledge of the city’s historical geography. Because silting of the rivers and canals had backed up into the city, half of West Lake had become a swamp, and this in turn muddied the water of the seven main wells inside the city. Su Shi began by dredging two rivers, installed a sluice in the Maoshan River to keep out mud from the Yangzi River, and arranged the periodic dredging of the Yanqiao River outside the city walls. He then opened new ditches to let water from West Lake into the city at different places, and to serve as drainage channels during floods.<sup>69</sup> Having reversed the progressive

65 See Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 75.478. Cf. Higashi 1970, 929–933; Mihelich 1979, 52; Smith 2009, 358.

66 Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.2a (水利), transcribing a 1061 inscription by Qiu Yuquan. Cf. Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*, 3.3b.

67 See Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 7.8b–9a (柵行錄).

68 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.380–381. Cf. Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 15.769–770; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 23.653. Cf. also Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 17.1b–4a; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.1.7–8; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.17.417–419, II.22.1416–1418. On the temporary changed course of the Yellow River in 1077–1078, see L. Zhang 2016, 151–152, 197.

69 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.866–869. Cf. Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.22.1416–1417.

silting of the waterways, Su Shi turned his attention to his main concern: the preservation of West Lake. This scenic lake fed the seven wells of the city, irrigated the fields of local farmers, introduced clean water into the city, and sustained a wine industry that every year submitted over 200,000 strings of cash in tax revenue. The lake moreover contributed to the moral stature of the city, offering an auspicious place to “release life” (i.e., saving fish and fowl from being killed and eaten by setting them free in the lake) and bathing the population and its animals alike in boundless, life-giving imperial grace (*tong yong shengze, wu you qiong yi* 同泳聖澤，無有窮已).<sup>70</sup> Finally, Su Shi oversaw the repair of the seven wells of the city, which had to be fitted with new pipes—an effort in which he was assisted by four monks who had also advised Chen Xiang (1017–1080) when the latter had restored the wells in 1072.<sup>71</sup> The grateful population of Hangzhou honored Su Shi by naming after him the scenic dike he had built to prevent West Lake from turning into marshland: the Lord Su Dike (now called the Su Dike).<sup>72</sup> The next year, as prefect of Yingzhou (present-day Fuyang City, Anhui province), Su Shi carried out an extensive, detailed investigation of the local water system to protest against plans made for the Bazhang Ditch by three magistrates. These magistrates, according to Su Shi, had based their plans on a report by two men who “had merely ridden their horses along the Ditch, without ever examining the moats and embankments, or using a water level to determine the elevation of the terrain.”<sup>73</sup>

Other eleventh-century officials, too, made extensive investigations of water systems before offering advice or making decisions about hydraulic projects. Su Song (1020–1101), for example, advised Emperor Yingzong (r. 1063–1067) in 1064 that deepening and widening the rivers and canals around the capital, including peripheral waterways, would help prevent the inundation of Kaifeng. His advice was implemented a few years later, but only after the capital suffered another disastrous flood.<sup>74</sup> Shen Li (1030–1074) composed a *Comprehensive Discussion of the Control of the Yellow River*

70 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.863–865, 30.869–872, *yiwen*.2.2458, *shiyi*.1.2661–2662. The quote is from Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.865 (杭州乞度牒開西湖狀). Cf. Su Zhe, *Luanchengji*, II.22.1416–1417. Cf. also Duan 2020, 70–73.

71 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.379–380, 31.901–902, *shiyi*.1.2661–2662. Cf. Su Zhe, *Luanchengji*, II.22.1416–1417.

72 See Su Zhe, *Luanchengji*, II.22.1417.

73 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 33.938–944. The quote is from Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 33.941–942 (奏論八丈溝不可開狀). For other examples of Su Shi’s involvement with hydraulics, see Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 35.1876–1879; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 32.906–909, 32.916–927.

74 Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 17.237–238. Cf. Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 20.268–269. Cf. also Qin Guan, *Huaihaiji jianzhu*, I.25.831.

(*Hefang tongyi*, 1060s–1070s), presumably based on historical records and on his experience as fiscal commissioner and as a functionary in the Directory of Waterways. He rejected the notion, put forward by officials during the Han dynasty, that the Yellow River flooded in response to bad government and that human effort availed nothing.<sup>75</sup> Shan E (1031–1110), in his “Memorial on the Water Control of Wu County” (*Wuzhong shuili shu*, ca. 1091), similarly criticized the officials and commoners who attributed the frequent flooding of the region to fate, arguing that their ignorance and laziness had prevented them from understanding the true causes of the floods. Instead of seeking office after obtaining the Advanced Scholar degree in 1059, Shan E spent thirty years exploring every river, canal, creek, dam, dike, bridge, sluice, and waterlogged field in the Lake Taihu area in order to determine how future floods might be prevented and river traffic might be improved. Su Shi submitted Shan E’s lengthy analysis and recommendations to the throne, augmented by a preface of his own.<sup>76</sup>

The Song used its extended and improved network of waterways for the same purpose as its predecessors during the ninth and tenth centuries: namely, to ensure the regular, efficient provision of the imperial court, the central government, and especially the army.<sup>77</sup> Zhang Fangping admitted that the Tang government had been able to supply its standing army—a change from the traditional farmer-soldier conscript army—with grain from the Southeast, but warned that the Song government extracted ten times more grain from Jiangnan to feed its troops and the “tens and hundreds of thousands of mouths of the capital population,” and that this placed an unsustainable burden on the farmers.<sup>78</sup> Qin Guan (1049–1100) argued that the dynasty had chosen Kaifeng as its capital specifically in order to provision this new kind of army, “reportedly numbering over a million. ...

75 See Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 1.1ab. Shakeshi’s *Comprehensive Discussion of the Control of the Yellow River* appropriates the title of Shen Li’s treatise, but it is a different work, composed of material from various Song- and Jin-dynasty treatises on the Yellow River.

76 See Shan E, *Wuzhong shuili shu*; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 32.916–927. Cf. Mihelich 1979, 119–133; Needham et al. 1971, 324–325. For additional examples of the interest in hydraulics among Song officials, see Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 5.13b–15a; Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 1.4ab. See also Higashi 1970, 304–306; Needham et al. 1971, 324–344. Okazaki Fumio and Ikeda Shizuo (1943, 96–105) observe that Song officials produced sources on the Song River substantial enough to enable scholars in the twentieth century to make a detailed study of the changing course, volume, and tributaries of the river.

77 Cf. Elvin 1973, 139–142; Golas 2015, 200–206; Lamouroux 2003, 17; Lo 1987, 46–50; Miyazaki 1938, 142; C. Zhang 2011, 43–68.

78 Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 15.187–189 (原蟲). Cf. Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, fu.798.

Now, Liang [i.e., Kaifeng] occupies the crossroads of the realm. Every year the government ships six million *hu* [i.e., over two billion liters] of grain from the Southeast to feed the armies and still fears that it will fall short.”<sup>79</sup> Many literati marveled at the efficiency, the volume, and the dependability of the grain shipments on the Bian Canal. To a friend who was leaving to become a fiscal commissioner in the Southeast, Wang Yucheng (954–1001) wrote, “Jiangnan and Jiangbei border on the royal precinct; / The masts of grain ships depart as though they fly.”<sup>80</sup> Jin Junqing (fl. 1042–1069) called the Bian Canal, “A grain road that is leveled, / By a thousand ships a day.”<sup>81</sup> Some officials, however, worried that the Bian Canal had become too efficient, and that the oblivious soldiers in the capital consumed in luxurious ease what famished peasants in the Southeast had grown with toil and hardship:

“Grain Ships,” by Shen Gou (1028–1067)

Grain ships fill the capital granaries;  
Each *zhong* [ca. 253 liters] a thousand in gold.  
The capital granaries have no reserves;  
*Grain ships come without end.*

The region’s soldiers exceed a hundred thousand;  
At the three frontiers there are even more.  
Troops have been added at imperial temples;  
*How will the Southeast bear it?*<sup>82</sup>

79 Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.13.523–524 (安都). Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 13.244. On the dependence of the capital on grain from the Southeast, cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.697–698; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 35.367; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 27.419–420.

80 Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.7.9ab (獻轉運使雷諫議二首, 其二). Jiangbei, the region “north of the Yangzi River,” is more commonly known as Huainan, the region “south of the Huai River.” On the proximity of the Southeast to the capital, cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.697–698; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 2.18a. On the speed of the Bian Canal, cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 12.310, 14.341. For similar poems addressed to departing fiscal commissioners, see Pan Lang, *Xiaoyao ji*, 1.1; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 14.174; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 3.1b–2a. For grain shipments on other waterways, see Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 35.1872; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 13.220.

81 Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1.10ab (汴渠). On the density of traffic on the Bian Canal, cf. Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 19.868; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 2.18a; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 23.8b–9a.

82 Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 3.43ab (漕舟), emphasis added. Cf. Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *xubu*.1.754–756; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 20.9a–16b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 28.317–320; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 2.11; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 23.8b–9a. Cf. also Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 26.876.

Meanwhile, the annual amount of grain shipped to the capital only increased, from 4.5 million *dan* (345,600,000 kg) in 976 to 6 million *dan* (460,800,000 kg) by 998, then to 6.5 million *dan* (499,200,000 kg) and, during the 1080s, to 7 million *dan* (537,600,000 kg).<sup>83</sup>

The regular delivery of these tons of grain required not only efficient waterways, but also predictable harvests. Therefore, the same imperial officials who dug canals, removed shoals, and built locks also repaired irrigation networks, installed waterwheels, and promoted effective farming methods.<sup>84</sup> The imperial examinations at times included questions about water control, about the costs and benefits of canals, about preparation for floods and droughts, and about the provisioning of large cities.<sup>85</sup> Fan Zhongyan urged the appointment of dedicated officials to Suzhou, Changzhou, Huzhou, and Xiuzhou, because these prefectures “have three hundred miles of fertile land—the granary of the realm.”<sup>86</sup> Wang Anshi stated bluntly that the repeated droughts in Yin County were manmade, “entirely the result of the lacking application of human labor, not of bad years.”<sup>87</sup> Su Shi assured Emperor Zhezong (r. 1085–1100) and the Empress Dowager Gao (1032–1093) that the money he requested for the restoration of West Lake would be repaid by dependable harvests and by the lasting emancipation of Hangzhou from famine relief.<sup>88</sup>

The efforts of these three men to make harvests less dependent on the changeable weather were representative of the period rather than exceptional. In the late eleventh century, Wang Pizhi reminded the readers of his *Records for Leisurely Conversations on the Banks of the Sheng* that “in past

83 See, in sequence, Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 49.675; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, xubu*.1.754–756; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 32.476–478; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 1.4ab; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 29.76b–77a; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 28.7b–8a. Cf. Quan 1946, 94–112.

84 On the technology of irrigation in rice agriculture in general, see Bray 1986, 26, 69–108. On the development of new hydraulic technologies during the Song, see Chi 1963, 134–139; Elvin 1973, 124–127; Mihelich 1979, 37–47; Needham et al. 1971, 329–344; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 43–49, 331–334, 168–191, 313–322. Mihelich (1979) similarly argues that the supply of the army, the growing cities, and the increasing population during the eleventh century required predictable harvests and hence the development of new hydraulic technologies.

85 See Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 39.15ab; Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 9.1b–2a; Chen Shunyu, *Duguan ji*, 7.4b–6b; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 28.7b–8a; Wang Anli, *Wang Weigongji*, 4.11ab; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 49.676; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggongji*, 29.6b–7a.

86 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.11.266 (上呂相公并呈中丞諮目).

87 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 75.478 (上杜學士言開河書).

88 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.865. Cf. Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.379–380.

years literati loved to talk about water control.”<sup>89</sup> Although those literati gatherings have dispersed and their conversations vanished, the collected works of the period give evidence of the commitment and skill with which officials of the period addressed irrigation.<sup>90</sup> Hu Su (996–1067), for example, commemorated in 1044 the good governance of Xu Hui (fl. 1041–1049), who drew up a map of Jinling County (present-day Changzhou City, Jiangsu province) to convince his superiors that the restoration of three neglected canals would allow farmers to use water from Lake Taihu and the Yangzi River for the irrigation of their fields and the drenching of their cattle. Having received approval, he used the equivalent of two hundred and sixty thousand laborers over three months to dig the canals.<sup>91</sup>

During the fall and summer there still was a drought. In other fields the rice did not come into grain, *but in the fields along the canals it ripened*. Luxurious, the healthy grain! Expansive, the limpid canals! Those who wield the hoe and the plow depend on them; those who use nets and traps rely on them. These oxen, those sheep: they come in droves they come. Oh! The river and the lake by their generous benefit profit the ten thousand things; they do not begrudge their benefit. Perfect indeed is he who pursues governance like this river! Taking a position from which he

89 Wang Pizhi, *Shengshui yantan lu*, 10.123 (談譚). Wang’s reminder introduces an anecdote about a literati gathering at which one man proposes to drain Liangshan Lake (in present-day Shandong province) in order to turn it into farmland. Liu Bin (1023–1089), to general hilarity, observes that the plan can only work by digging a reservoir of exactly the same size as the lake, to hold the drained water and the annual run-off from the mountains. Cf. Su Shi’s two jocular poems about an imaginary overhaul of Mirror Lake. See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 36.1940, 36.1963–1964.

90 Epitaphs of the eleventh century contain very numerous mentions of officials who restored canals, built dikes, created irrigation networks, struck wells, and prevented floods. See, for example, Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 12.14a–15a; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 65.25b; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 12.17b–18a; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.12.291, 1.15.369; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 49.7b, 50.20ab; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, buyi.11.2357; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 36.484, 37.498, 38.504–505, 38.506; Liu Kai, *Henan xiansheng ji*, 12.3b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 12.244–246, 13.261–262, 13.269–270; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 21.6ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 38.558; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.38.1240; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*, 10.49ab; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 29.69b–70a; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 14.174; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 55.830, 57.872–876; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 88.556, 94.594, 94.597; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 47.11b, 52.2ab, 60.3a, 58.14b; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 26.835–836; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 13.12b, 13.13b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 39.693–695; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 3.6b–7a. Some collected works contain examination questions about hydraulics. See Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 33.504; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 72.5b–6a.

91 See Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.425–426. On the modular nature of hydraulic labor, see Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 2.1a–11b, 2.14a–15b. Cf. Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.12b–13b; Li Jie, *Yingzao fashi*, *kanxiang*.2b–3b; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 14.8a–9b. Cf. also Ledderose 2000, 137.



may pour down relief and grasp the means to take action, what benefit couldn't he produce and which harm couldn't he remove? *Those who give up and don't lay plans do not lack strength. It is just that they do not dedicate themselves to the people.*<sup>92</sup>

Chen Xiang, appointed to the same area in 1061, needed only to look at a map of Piling Prefecture (present-day Changzhou, Jiangsu province) to imagine a network of dikes and drainage canals that would improve “thousands of acres of good land.”<sup>93</sup> Qin Guan argued that the widespread use of fertilizer and irrigation could make all farmland in the Song Empire as fertile as the rice fields in the Southeast:

Your servant once determined that the true gentleman's most effective methods of managing resources are nothing more than *the maximum exploitation of the soil and the reduction of unnecessary expenditures*. Why is this? The essence of managing resources lies in seeking the sources that bring forth and to devise ways to encourage them, and in finding the places that produce loss and to make laws to restrain them. ... At present, the smoothest and most fertile fields in the realm are said to be those around Suzhou and Hangzhou, and those in Fujian and Sichuan. *One acre in those regions produces several times the yield of an acre in other prefectures*. ... In Suzhou, Hangzhou, Fujian, and Sichuan, the land is cramped and the population is dense, but these regions invest the utmost effort in applying fertilizer and irrigation. If indeed by this utmost effort in applying fertilizer and irrigation they are able to produce several times the yield of other prefectures, even though [according to a commentary on the “Tribute of Yu” in the *Book of Documents*] their taxes rank seventh and their farmlands rank ninth [among the nine provinces], what may be achieved in the regions ranked above them? Based on this argument,

92 Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.426 (常州晉陵縣開渠港記), emphasis added. Cf. Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 28.490–491; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.426–427; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsuji*, 13.261–262; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 53.747; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 19.225–227; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.4.86; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 25.8b; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 9.10a–11b; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 19.305–306, 19.309–311; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 15.2ab, 26.8ab. See also Fan Zhen, *Dongzhai jishi*, 3.25.

93 Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 6.10b (題《毗陵郡圖》). For Chen Xiang's successful, completed irrigation projects, see Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 8.2b–5a, *fu*.4b, *fu*.8a, *fu*.11a–12a, *fu*.13a; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.379–380. For other plans and proposals, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 26.439–440; Shan E, *Wuzhong shuili shu*, *passim*; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 21.62a–67a; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 13.205–209; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 14.8a–9b.

it is evident that there is much farmland in the empire where maximum exploitation of the soil has not yet been realized.<sup>94</sup>

Emboldened by such prospects of technological mastery, some officials wrote about the mountains and forests and the rivers and marshes as material resources to be exploited, or even as adversaries to be overcome:

In my view, *all the myriad things under the sky, even things as insignificant as grasses and trees, have suddenly emerged into this world to realize their fullest potential and thereby to serve the needs of man.* It is said [in the *Xunzi*, 3rd century BCE] that, “Water and fire have essence but not life; grasses and trees have life but not knowledge; birds and animals have knowledge but not morality. Man has essence and life and knowledge, and also has morality. Therefore he is the foremost under the sky.”<sup>95</sup>

Canals led water to fields where lakes withheld it. Wells elevated water where the earth had hidden it underground.<sup>96</sup> Waterwheels lifted water where the landscape sent it down:

“Waterwheel,” by Shen Liao (1032–1085)

The mountain slope is ringed with mountain fields;  
 What good to them is water in the river?  
*A waterwheel, ten spans in the round;*  
*A flying stream, dropping from mid-sky.*

The scoops are fitted with exquisite care:  
 Moving in the stream they fill deep ladles,  
 Rising and falling with great speed,  
 Doing battle with the Yangzi River.

94 Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.15.601–602 (財用, 下), citing *Shangshu*, 6.12b; emphasis added. Cf. Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.13.522–523, I.25.831. Cf. also Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.533–534.

95 Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 6.34ab (代成甫干曾漕), citing *Xunzi*, 9.104; emphasis added. Cf. Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 7.3b. The *Xunzi* argues that the human sense of duty allows mankind to unite and work together and that good governance integrates this coordinated strength into the order of nature. It does not say that all things exist merely to serve the needs of mankind.

96 See, for example, Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 14.13b–14a; Huang Shu, *Fa tan ji*, 1.38a; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.6.32–33; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 16.182; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 40.2217–2218; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 10.2b–3b.

*It has the strength of myriad men,  
Its mighty roar collapses all the valleys.  
It doesn't ever stop, day or night;  
This beautiful spring has never run dry.*

When man has had contrivances,  
They have always led to evil.  
How good! That hermit of the Han,  
Emptied his mind, held onto simplicity.<sup>97</sup>

Mei Yaochen marveled at seeing gourds for sale in the fifth lunar month, startling evidence that human ambition could shift the seasons:

“Seeing a man Selling Calabash on the Seventh Day of the Fifth Month,”  
by Mei Yaochen

An able farmer steals upon the seasons;  
*Horse dung takes the place of sun and soil.*  
In the fourth month they plant melons there;  
In the fifth month he sells calabashes here.

A southern slope with manure enriched;  
Vigorous labor and uncommon devotion.  
If melons are late, how are calabashes early?  
Don't they share the rain and dew?

The search for profit is proper to man;  
He strives to be first, day and night.<sup>98</sup>

As a result of the reliable supply of food, farmers could seem remote, and the weather inconsequential, to those who lived in the city:

My former home looked upon a thoroughfare;  
My father's fields reached to the suburbs.  
*In this house, the wind and rain don't worry me;  
At this harvest, the scythe and flail will spare me.*

97 Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 3.63a (水車), emphasis added. Cf. Wang Ling, *Wang Lingji*, 2.67–68. Cf. also Kuhn 2009, 220–224; Needham et al. 1971, 288–296.

98 Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 22.618–619 (五月七日見賣瓠者), emphasis added.

...

I like to eat things that are fresh and sweet;  
 I blush to see the men who hoe and weed.  
 Virtuous works I pursue when I'm tired;  
 At dizzying heights I serve the elite.<sup>99</sup>

Such mastery of the environment, however, often proved illusory or temporary. Some new canals lowered the water levels in older waterways, thereby halting transport ships and disrupting irrigation works, and sometimes caused famines as a result.<sup>100</sup> Other canals consumed vast amounts of money and labor without bringing any benefit.<sup>101</sup> Su Shi wondered why the sluices installed on the Bian Canal had worked during the Tang but not during the Song.<sup>102</sup> Liu Chang (1019–1068) feared that a well in continuous use would dry up: “The well-pulley, and the well-pulley again; / Day and night it keeps on whirring.”<sup>103</sup> Debates about the containment of the Yellow River grew increasingly acrimonious as its floods grew more frequent, more erratic, and more destructive.<sup>104</sup> In spite of continuous efforts to increase production and perfect irrigation in the Southeast, the region repeatedly experienced floods, droughts, and famines.<sup>105</sup> The weather, of course, remained unpredictable and often destructive, and good harvests still depended on adequate rainfall at the right moment. In spite of his considerable expertise in hydraulics, therefore, Su Shi admitted that the maintenance of order and the leisure

99 Li Fu, *Jueshuiji*, 10.13b–14a (答吳與幾二首, 其二), emphasis added. The moral ambivalence of the poem—Li Fu's pride in his comfort and achievements juxtaposed with his shame about his leisure and softness—indicates that the phrase “the elite” (*huahao* 華豪) is deliberately ambiguous: it can mean both “the refined and talented” and “decadent bullies.” For similar sentiments about the ease of city life, see Su Zhe, *Luanchengji*, 1.9.205.

100 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 111.1689–1690; Su Zhe, *Luanchengji*, 1.37.815–816, 1.38.829, 1.40.893; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 23.1a–4b.

101 See Liu Bin, *Pengchengji*, 35.470; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 31.377; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 7.136–317; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25.390–391.

102 See Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 66.2075; Su Shi, *Dongpo zhilin*, 4.77.

103 Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 16.182 (聞轆轤).

104 See, for example, Chen Shunyu, *Duguan ji*, 7.4b–6b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 7.137–139; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 27.943; Shakeshi, *Hefang tongyi*, 1.1a–4a; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 20.268–269; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 25.604–605; Xu Ji, *Jiexiao ji*, 1.6a–11b.

105 See, for example, Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 23.398–399; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 20.9a–16b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 110.1664; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 28.360. Cf. Mihelich 1979, 250–271; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 43–48.

of officials depended in the end on timely rain. After the population of Fufeng (present-day Fengxiang, Shaanxi province) had celebrated the much-needed, abundant rain,

I brought wine up into this pavilion and forced it on my guests, saying, “What would have happened if it hadn’t rained for five days?” They said, “*If it hadn’t rained for five days, there wouldn’t have been any wheat.*” I asked, “What would have happened if it hadn’t rained for ten days?” They said, “*If it hadn’t rained for ten days, there wouldn’t have been any grain.*” If there had not been any wheat or any grain, and bad harvests had succeeded one another, lawsuits would have proliferated and banditry would have spread everywhere, and how could I then have enjoyed my leisure in this pavilion with two or three companions, even if I had wanted to? But now, Heaven has not abandoned these people, granting them rain after a period of drought, so that my companions and I can enjoy our leisure together in this pavilion. *All of this has been granted by rain.* This should be always remembered.<sup>106</sup>

And thus, the improved skills in water control among imperial officials during the Song did not end their solemn responsibility for bringing rain. By prayer and sacrifice, by upright character and good governance, officials appealed to dragons and river gods for moisture, for an end to flooding, for permission to dig canals and build dikes, and for a prosperous shipping season.<sup>107</sup>

106 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.349 (喜雨亭記), emphasis added. Cf. Zhao Xiang, *Nanyang ji*, 9.8b; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 5.82; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 13.230.

107 For examples of prayers for rain, see Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 11.2ab, 13.6a–7a; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 3.7b–8a; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 9.174–175, 22.259; Fan Zuyun, *Fan taishi ji*, 29.8b–9a; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 1.13.474, 11.2.807–808; Li Zhaoqi, *Leijing ji*, 7.1a–11b; Liu Yun, *Feichuan xiaoji*, 5ab; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 9.17a–19a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 10.156–157; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, 1.38.1239–1240; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 36.5b–6a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 18.933; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 68.2147–2148; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.7.83, III.1.1467–1468; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 14.443, 27.886–888, 29.928; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 4.46, 8.132; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 2.7b–8a, 9.9ab; Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao*, 1.2b, 3.8b–9a. For examples of prayers related to safe transit and crossings, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 39.564; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 36.1938–1939. On the influence of moral conduct on the weather, see Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 38.5b–6a; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 18.933. For examples of inaugurations of the shipping season, see Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 3.18, 15.2a, 16.2b–3a, 17.3b; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 22.600–601; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 35.367; Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 14.10a; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 19.3a. For other water-related appeals to deities, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*,

## Money and Circulation

The ships on the canals and rivers were set in motion by money. In the Song, as in the Han, imperial officials believed that the ancient kings had achieved the enduring welfare of the common people by ensuring an equitable distribution of goods. Farmers grew food and spun silk, artisans made vessels and forged tools, and merchants brought these goods into circulation.<sup>108</sup> Yu the Great (trad. r. 2205–2197 BCE) had urged the multitudes “to exchange what they had for what they had not, and to dispose of their accumulated stores. In this way all the people got grain to eat, and all the States began to come under good rule.”<sup>109</sup> Even the fiercest opponents in debates about monetary and financial policy during the eleventh century agreed that the government bore the responsibility for the welfare of the people and the circulation of goods. Wang Anshi, for example, repeatedly defended his New Laws by explaining that he had designed them in order to reestablish the universal circulation and equitable distribution achieved by the ancient kings: “then goods and money will flow back and forth, and the government’s revenues will be abundant.”<sup>110</sup> Fan Chunren, although adamant in his rejection of Wang Anshi’s methods for reform, nonetheless recognized that he and Wang shared their vision of a perfect, moral economic order.<sup>111</sup> They disagreed about the means to establish that order, not about the inherent justness and truth of the order itself.

Han-dynasty monetary theory taught Song officials that, if the government wished to promote the circulation of goods and to maintain control over prices, it must maintain a strict monopoly on the supply of money. Only by remaining the sole source of money would the government be able to control the price of goods (that is, the relationship between goods offered for sale and the prices demanded and paid for them), due to its manipulation of the amount of money in circulation, and hence of the value of currency in which prices were paid. Zhang Fangping, for example, explains that by

12.9ab; Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.2b; Hu Su, *Wengongji*, 7.88–89; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 15.765–767; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 2.5b–6a. See also Mizukoshi 2002; Sue 2001, 2003.

108 See, for example, Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.8.187–188; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 7.223; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, III.10.1689–1691.

109 *Shangshu*, 5.1b, as translated in Legge 1872, 78.

110 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 41.239 (上五事箚子). Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 70.445, 73.464–465.

111 See Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji, zouyi*.1.44a–46a. For similar visions see Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 27.281; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 7.223, 37.1044–1046; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 21.12a.

encouraging circulation, the ruler's monopoly on money ensures maximum exploitation of regional resources as well as fair prices:

Your servant has learnt that the Sage maintains his position by means of humaneness and gathers his people by means of resources [*cai* 財, “wealth”]. Therefore, *resources are the fundamental means by which emperors and kings assign the rightful place to the myriad things and promote the full maturation of all living beings*, protect the realm and reign the world, comfort the people and instill governance. Now, of all the things people use none are more important than grain and silk. Yet, when the Sage established an implement to benefit all under heaven, he created money, in order to connect abundance to want. Only then were all the things for taking care of the living and taking leave of the dead made available, and the order of the noble and the lowly made distinct; the myriad things issued and spread without cease, were bought and sold without end. *From the Discoverer of Fire to the Three Kings all ruled by the method of making money abundant or scarce* [*qingzhong zhi fa* 輕重之法, lit. “the method of light and heavy,” i.e., the adjustment of exchange value]. Because they had a penetrating understanding of the changes [in value], they ensured that the people never tired. They knew the times of Heaven and distinguished the benefits of the Earth, they perceived the strength of the people and examined the nature of things, they wielded the steelyard and the scales in order to reign all under Heaven, and tightened or relaxed [the money supply] where prices were unfair. *Only then did the manner of the hundred things between Heaven and Earth become clear, and did the control of volume and value belong to the ruler.*<sup>112</sup>

Because the size of the population, the volume of production, and the scale of trade were all increasing rapidly during the eleventh century, the government required ever more money to ensure the mobility of goods around the empire, create sufficient liquidity for the payment of taxes, and at the same

112 Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 15.181 (食貨論: 輕重), emphasis added. Cf. Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.96; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 5.111–112; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.17.7b; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji, jiyi*.747–748; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25.391–392. The classic treatise on “balancing the light and the heavy,” i.e., striking the mean between inflation and deflation, is the chapter on this subject in the *Guanzi*. See *Guanzi*, 80–81. On Han and Song monetary theory, see Chin 2014; Hartwell 1968, 70–80; Hartwell 1971, 281–282; Oberst 1996, 351–354, 381–396; von Glahn 1996, 25–39. On the centralization of a unified monetary regime during the Song, see Lamouroux 1995, 177; Lamouroux 2007, 171.

time maintain leverage over prices.<sup>113</sup> The government therefore minted more bronze coins than any previous dynasty (over one million strings per year after 1000 CE, at 770 coins per string) and yet had to supplement these with additional currencies and monetary instruments, including iron coins, stamped ingots of gold and silver, monopoly vouchers, monk ordination certificates (which, once signed, granted lifelong exemption from taxes), and paper money.<sup>114</sup> Bronze coin remained the unit of account, the chief medium of exchange, and an important store of value, and hence “the fundamental form of money” and “the most important tool of economic management at the ruler’s disposal” during the Song, even if the debasement of bronze currency by a higher lead content caused a divergence between the bronze coin as a unit of account and the bronze coin as a medium of exchange:<sup>115</sup>

Where the hundred commodities gather, one must regulate them with one kind of object. Gold and jade are heavy treasures, and this impedes their distribution; grain and cloth are essential goods, and this hastens their deterioration. Cash [i.e., bronze coin] is the only effective means to adjust the relative value of goods [*quan qingzhong* 權輕重, lit. “to balance the light and the heavy”] and to promote trade.<sup>116</sup>

Bronze coin circulated as loose cash, but also in full strings of 770 coins (for a nominal 1,000) and in short strings of 77 coins (for a nominal 100).

Just as roads and bridges stood as metaphors of the benevolent government that built them, money and finance found analogies in the reservoirs and canals that produced and conveyed them:

*Managing the resources of the empire may indeed be compared to water control. To increase the strength of dams and dikes and to flood a neighboring country is not the best method for controlling water; to impose tariffs at frontiers and markets, and to impoverish the common people*

113 See Elvin 1973, 149; Golas 2015, 207–211; Hino 1983, 466; Miyazaki 1938, 145; von Glahn 2016, 242–252. For examples of the government’s continuing search for new copper mines, see Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.17.7b–8a; Yu Jing, *Wuxiji*, 5.5b–7b.

114 See Golas 2015, 209–211; Hartwell 1967, 280–289; Hino 1983, 466–470, 475; Lamouroux 2007, 172–178, 188–189; Oberst 1996, 345–346, 379–381; von Glahn 2010, 465; L. Yang 1952, 38. Cf. Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 28.8b–9a. Ouyang Xiu mentions that the population of Hedong used bronze coins, iron coins, and silver, as well as cloth currency. See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji, juan* 115–116.

115 Von Glahn 1996, 1. See also Andreau et al. 2007, 284–288; Hartwell 1967, 280; Lamouroux 2007, 173–175; Oberst 1996, 345–346, 379–381; L. Yang 1952, 1, 4.

116 Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.17.7a (廣州廣寧監記).



is not the best method for managing wealth. Therefore, *he who excels at controlling water uses the four oceans as his reservoir; he who excels at managing resources uses heaven and earth as his revenue.*<sup>117</sup>

Because eleventh-century officials believed that money and commerce were indispensable to the common welfare, they believed that money and commerce were essentially beneficent. And because money and commerce were essentially beneficent, their workings had to conform to cosmic principles, as all that enduringly sustains life must have an immanent place in the moral cosmos. The analogies between money and water, strengthened by their physical connection, proved that money had indeed a place in the natural order.<sup>118</sup> Money resembled water because it sustained life by its versatility, ever transforming into a variety of goods and services.<sup>119</sup> Like water, too, money had a tendency to flow (*liu* 流) from a place of abundance to a place of dearth, and this continuous flow was necessary to its life-giving properties, because stagnant accumulations of money stifled economic activity just as stagnant pools of water stifled living things.

Since money shared essential characteristics with water, officials could use their experience with water management to gain insight into finance, and vice versa. In his epitaph for Xu Yuan (989–1057), for example, Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072) suggests a connection between Xu's early disregard of local strictures on water management and his later expertise in finance. Appointed to Danyang County (now Danyang City, Jiangsu province) during a drought, Xu prevented a famine by diverting water from transport canals to irrigate farmlands, adjusting the water table of Lake Lian to benefit the people, much as he later adjusted the prices of grain and salt in order to direct the flow of merchant ships to the capital and to the frontier.<sup>120</sup> Wang Anshi appointed to his first Finance Planning Commission several men who had earned a reputation for their skill in water management.<sup>121</sup>

117 Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.15.601 (財用, 下). Cf. Qin Guan's analysis of water management in Runan (Henan province). See Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.25.831. Cf. also Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 16.151; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, jiyi.747.

118 For parallel arguments under the Han dynasty, see Chin 2014, 17.

119 On the transformations of water, see Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 1.3b; Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 2.15b–16a.

120 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 32.476–477. Cf. Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 15.1a–12b; Fan Zuyü, *Fan taishi ji*, 42.13b–14b, 43.6b–7a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 78.10b–11b; Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 12.3b–4a; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 36.613–616. For a fuller treatment of these analogies, see de Pee 2018. Cf. also Liebert 1993, 152–155; Needham et al. 1971, 268–269.

121 See Higashi 1970, 304–305, 314; Mihelich 1979, 54–55, 69–70; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 228–229.

In the early decades of the Song dynasty, as the government repaired the roads and coordinated the regional currencies, the age sometimes seemed near to restoring the perfect circulation achieved by the ancient kings.<sup>122</sup> Xu Xuan (917–992) praised the late Li Hanchao (d. 977) for having transformed, in 961–963, the prefecture of Qizhou (present-day Ji'nan, Shandong province) from a rough military frontier into a harmonious civil community where prisons stood empty and storehouses were full: “Because the farming seasons were exempt from service, neglected lands were cultivated and produce was abundant; because the frontier markets were free from strife, the hundred goods were circulated and revenues were met.”<sup>123</sup> To Tian Xi (940–1003), the trade carried along the highways and canals manifested and enhanced the Great Peace established by the Song:

When we examine prosperity and wealth, then all of [eastern] Qi is a land of fish and salt, and western Shu is a province of metal and jade; southern Yue produces pearl oysters, and northern Yan raises strong horses. Now that this realm has caught the six directions within the maze of its net and squared the eight frontiers within the grid of its roads, *foreign things flow within the borders and the empire's revenues are abundant; myriad goods move through the regions and the public storehouses are rich.*<sup>124</sup>

In 1027, Hu Su conjured a similar image of a prosperous, integrated, mobile empire in his commemoration of a pound-lock at Zhenzhou, which facilitated the transport of commodities and taxes to the capital in a coordinated scheme of profit and provision:

During the Chunhua reign period [990–995 CE], traveling censors were first appointed and regional commissioners were then established, to direct the important task of responsibly exploiting the mountains and seas, and to oversee the solemn duty of punctually submitting taxes and tribute. *As the nine taxes are collected from region after region, every day the merchants pursue their profits; as the myriad ships sail stern to stem, every year the capital receives its supplies.*<sup>125</sup>

122 On the reform of the monetary system during the early decades of the Song dynasty, see Lamouroux 1995, 2007.

123 Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 25.2a (大宋推誠宣力翊戴功臣 ... 李公德政碑銘). Cf. Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 24.6a.

124 Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 21.12a (太平頌并序), emphasis added.

125 Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 35.419 (真州水閘記), emphasis added. For a translation of the passage preceding this quotation, which describes perfect circulation by merging contemporary

In the course of the eleventh century, however, the size and complexity of the expanding economy consistently defied the grasp of government officials, whose every solution appeared to generate problems of its own and failed to recover the government's leverage over its money and its monetary instruments.<sup>126</sup> From the decentralized monetary structures of the Tang and the autonomous polities of the tenth century, the Song had inherited a number of regional currencies. Although the government abolished most of those currencies in favor of a unified monetary system based on bronze coin, it maintained or modified a number of them in border regions, in order to prevent the outflow of bronze coin: iron coins and paper money in Sichuan; iron coins and monopoly vouchers (and for a while large bronze coins) in Shaanxi; and stamped silver ingots along the border with the Liao Empire.<sup>127</sup> These regional currencies, however, were supplied to the border regions in order to stimulate trade, and this trade inevitably brought the regional currencies into contact with the standard bronze coin of the interior, with which they were not convertible. The government's monetary policies thus conflicted with its economic policies: its strategy to prevent the export of bronze coin encumbered its exploitation of the salt mines in Sichuan and its provisioning of the frontier armies in Shaanxi. Moreover, the regional currencies increased the variety and complexity of local and seasonal fluctuations in prices and value.<sup>128</sup> Although such local and seasonal fluctuations had always disrupted the nominal unity of bronze currency, the regional currencies of the Song made the relations between goods and coins more abstract, and they reduced the ability of the government to use its monopoly on the issue of bronze coin to control prices and value.<sup>129</sup>

Paper money, that famous invention of the Song period, originated as a regional currency in Sichuan, first printed by merchant houses during a temporary shortage of iron cash, then adopted as a regional currency by the government, and finally issued across the empire to increase liquidity and to facilitate the circulation of money and goods.<sup>130</sup> Richard von Glahn explains

references with ancient allusions, see Chapter 2. Cf. Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.279.

126 On the growth and complexity of commerce, industry, and finance during the eleventh century, cf. Golas 1986, 3–5; Golas 2015, 139–140; Hartwell 1971, 310.

127 See Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 23.341–342. See also Hartwell 1967, 280–281, 285–289; Lamouroux 1995, 177; Lamouroux 2000, 283–284; Lamouroux 2006, 153–156.

128 See Lamouroux 2007, 172, 177–186, 198–291.

129 See Andreau et al. 2007, 291–293; von Glahn 2004, 172–177.

130 See, for example, Elvin 1973, 152–155; Hartwell 1967, 288–289; von Glahn 2006, 79–81; L. Yang 1952, 52–54.

that the introduction of paper money did not mark a radical departure in the monetary history of the empire, since paper money fit the cartalist convictions of classical monetary theory. The government stabilized its paper currency by denominating it in bronze coin, by making paper notes redeemable in coin, and by issuing every new series with a term limit of a few years, after which the government would redeem all the notes in circulation and print a new series.<sup>131</sup> The government did, however, repeatedly cause inflation by neglecting the total quantity of money in circulation, thereby demonstrating the limits of cartalism and diminishing public trust in paper money.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, as Su Shi remarked, the wide discrepancy between the exchange value and the use value of paper bills excited the ambitions of counterfeiters:

The evil of the private casting of coin begins with the declining value of cash [*qian qing* 錢輕, i.e., inflation]. Even if one commands that the value of money be [stable] like the value of gold, this will not happen. And now, in Qin and Shu [i.e., Shaanxi and Sichuan] even offering money [i.e., paper money] is used as a currency. If one can turn mud and weeds into gold and jade just by adding a certifying mark, how can one prevent the people from rushing to counterfeit them?<sup>133</sup>

The government's leverage of its money and monetary instruments was diminished not only by the complicated and unstable relationship between bronze coin and other currencies, but also, and more importantly, by limitations on the government's ability to control the quantity, quality, and circulation of bronze coin itself. In a policy essay about "Enriching the Empire," Li Gou (1009–1059) explains that the government has correctly preferred inflation to deflation (because scarcity of money creates an abundance of goods that lowers the price at which people can sell their products while making the purchase of others' products more expensive, causing much to go to waste), but that in its ambition to supply sufficient money to the people it has failed to take into account that wealthy families have hoarded good coin and that the accumulated store of coin has thus grown much larger than the

131 See von Glahn 1996, 44–47.

132 See Kuhn 2009, 234–241; Piontek 1995, 312–324; von Glahn 1996, 44–45. For some of the complications created by paper money, see Fan Zuyü, *Fan taishi ji*, 42.13b–14a; Wen Yanbo, *Luogong wenji*, 14.10b–11a.

133 Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 7.224 (關隴游民私鑄錢與江淮漕卒為盜之由). The use of paper money in funereal sacrifices preceded the use of paper money as a currency, hence Su Shi's mocking reference to paper currency as "offering money." Cf. Teiser 1993, 134.

government intended. The resulting inflation has made it attractive, on the one hand, to melt down standard coin, adulterate it, and flood the market with inferior, counterfeit cash and, on the other hand, to melt down coins to make Buddhist statues and ritual objects. To restore the government's control of the quantity and quality of its bronze coin, therefore, Li Gou advises that the government immediately confiscate all bronze statues and implements, gradually withdraw all the bad coin from circulation, and prevent the export of bronze coin by foreign merchants.<sup>134</sup> Other literati noted these same infringements on the government's monopoly on the mining of copper and the minting of coins.<sup>135</sup> In addition, the strain and the danger of transporting cash around the empire delayed the circulation of new strings of cash from the few prefectures that produced coins: "How sad that the good soil does not grow cash: / Young and old again and again are conscripted."<sup>136</sup>

The most intractable restraint on the government's leverage of its money, however, was the structural shortage of cash relative to goods and services. Despite the tenfold increase of the money supply in comparison with the Tang, money during the eleventh century remained scarce in relation to the volume of goods and services. This made it relatively easy for merchants and landowners to hoard cash during the growing season, and thereby to create artificial local cash shortages during the harvest, when these manufactured cash shortages increased the value of money and depressed the price of produce, all to the benefit of the wealthy.<sup>137</sup> The relative scarcity of cash

134 Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 16.150–152, also analyzed in Lamouroux 2007, 191–193.

135 See, for example, Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 28.8a–9a; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.20.453–454; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, *jiyi*.749–750. Cf. also Andreau et al. 2007, 265–276, 289–294; Hartwell 1967, 280–284; Lamouroux 2007, 184–186, 195–196; Miyazaki 1938, 145–146, 381–382; Oberst 1996, 359–370, 384–392. On the dynamics of counterfeiting, see also Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 36.439; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 126.1913; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 78.10b; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 17.4ab; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25.391. On the loss of coins to export, see also Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 5.111–112; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.42.938; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 26.410–413.

136 Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 9.43b–44a (道中見以索牽五六十人監理錢者). For other vignettes of coin transport, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 34.503–504; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 8.4a. According to Wang Yucheng, there were five mints in 999–1000, at Poyang, Hangzhou, Jianyang, Xunyang, and Jiangzhou. Liu Yan mentions in an examination question that fifty years later, there were still only five mints. See Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.17.8a; Liu Yan, *Longyun ji*, 28.8b. On mints, see also Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.9b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.5b–7b; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25.392. On the danger of coin transport, cf. Lamouroux 2007, 176–177.

137 On cash shortages and the extent of monetization, see Golas 2015, 207–209; Lamouroux 2007, 189–190, 193–194; Oberst 1996, 381; von Glahn 2004, 162–177; von Glahn 2016, 235. Christian Lamouroux (2007, 176–177) observes that it is not always clear whether regions lacked money or refused to use it because it was inconvenient or dangerous.

further disadvantaged the common people by making the medium of payment itself a commodity, which they had to purchase at a price that exceeded face value. Whereas merchants and urban populations habitually used money to make purchases and to pay taxes, farmers in the eleventh century appear to have had much less access to cash and to have used it mainly to pay part of their taxes and levies (supplemented by payments in kind) and to buy monopoly goods. This sharp divide between cities and the countryside, between urban populations and farmers, became an important argument against the New Laws of Wang Anshi, which endeavored to improve the efficiency of revenue collection and government expenditure by increasing liquidity and by monetizing tax payments and labor service.<sup>138</sup> Although Wang's opponents did at times select or misrepresent the facts they cited in their arguments, the disagreement in this case appears to concern the relevance of the economic conditions of farmers, rather than the conditions themselves, which therefore are likely to have been characterized accurately. In one of his protests against the Labor Service Exemption levy, Sima Guang (1019–1086) explains the circumstances of the countryside in plain terms:

Since antiquity, farmers have had nothing more than silk, grain, and labor. Whatever they supplied to the government in taxes or service that did not come from these three sources, they always took from their own bodies, and thus their means were never exhausted. But now the court has established a law that says, "I will not use your labor, but hand me your money and I shall hire people myself." *This completely ignores that for farmers it is more difficult to pay money than to provide labor. Why?* Cash is not minted by the people; it all comes from the government. Even the wealth of prosperous farming households consists only of a house and land, grain and silk, oxen and tools, mulberry trees and cudrania leaves. They never have several hundred strings of cash stored away.<sup>139</sup>

Su Zhe (1039–1112) similarly argues that the farmers have always grown grain and produced silk, and that the government has always supplied money to facilitate trade.

Hence, before the Xining period [1068–1078, i.e., before the New Laws] the people used rice, wheat, cloth, and silk to pay the Double Tax. Even

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Smith 2009, 435–446.

<sup>139</sup> Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 49.9b–10a (乞罷免役錢依舊差役劄子), emphasis added. Cf. Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 3.52. Cf. also Miyazaki 1938.

miscellaneous additional levies were commuted into grain and silk. *They were probably never paid in cash.* Cash entered government coffers only through revenue from taxes on tea, salt, and liquor. *Yet even during that period the prefectures of the Southeast still suffered from a lack of cash that made money expensive and goods cheap, and caused all the disasters of cash shortages.*<sup>140</sup>

Due to this shortage of cash, money had a price as well as a value, and this made it very difficult for the government to use the money supply to control the price of goods.<sup>141</sup> The government was very far from the thaumaturgic achievement of making all things convertible into bronze coin, according to Liu Bin (1023–1089):

*How can the myriad things be all turned into bronze?*

The crucible of yin and yang, the achievement of creation.

To mint a myriad myriad of coins, solid and large:

Then standard coin will be sufficient, and the people will prosper.<sup>142</sup>

The perfect circulation of goods that Song officials envisioned also proved difficult to realize, and the variety of money and monetary instruments sometimes hindered this circulation rather than promoting it. Money certainly had set in motion the barrows on the country roads, the carts on the bridges, the freighted boats on the rivers, and the thousand-ton ships on the canals and the ocean:<sup>143</sup>

“On the Bian Canal in Spring I Look out over Some Ten Miles of Grain Ships,” by Song Xiang (996–1066)

The swirling billows of the spring cover gullies below the cliff;

*Ten thousand ships sail stem to stern to supply the Central Province.*

140 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.38.839 (乞借常平錢買上供及諸州軍糧狀), emphasis added. Cf. Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 1.1a–2b, 4.8b–11a; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.35.762–763; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25.392–393. Ouyang Xiu mentions that cash shortages were already common in the Southeast around 1043. See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 100.534–535. On the “disasters of cash shortages,” see Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.96.

141 Cf. Oberst 1996, 354.

142 Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 8.96 (關西行), emphasis added.

143 The thousand-ton ships described by Zhang Shunmin were as big as three-bay structures, had to be boarded by means of a ladder, and could carry twenty million strings of cash or a thousand US ton of rice (12,000 *dan*, or 921,600 kg). See Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*, 8.4a. For other vignettes of large ships, see Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 23.388; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong ji*, 14.8a.

Restraining the Huai and reining in the ocean for limitless profit;  
In vain it surges and rushes, this muddy stream.<sup>144</sup>

But the convergence of these vehicles and vessels in the ports and cities of the empire often resulted in confusion and litigation. When Su Song complained about the continuous, disorderly supplementation of the legal code by long, ad hoc regulations, he cited as an example a recent addendum that prohibited the River Transport Bureau in the capital and in Shandong from commandeering newly built ships from the Southeast, an addendum written in language barely intelligible to officials, let alone to the soldiers who carried out their orders.<sup>145</sup> Su Xun (1009–1066) explained that long-distance trade brought together construction materials cut according to divergent regional length measures and staple foods measured by different volumes, and that laxity and deception had forced contemporary laws to become increasingly specific and complicated.<sup>146</sup>

The laws of antiquity were few and simple; the laws of today are many and complicated. ... *The laws of antiquity were like a prescription manual:* they explained the general outline but left the adjustment of the dosage to the doctors, so that they would examine each individual illness and act according to their own insights. *The laws of today are like selling sandals:* there must be large ones, and medium ones, and small ones, to set everything in the realm on its proper footing.<sup>147</sup>

On behalf of a Mr. Lu, Qiang Zhi (1022–1076) wrote a memorial expressing his gratitude for the trust placed in Mr. Lu by his appointment as prefect of Sizhou (present Xuyi, Jiangsu province), at the confluence of the Bian Canal and the Huai River, where “the perplexity of boats and carts coming and going never lets up for a day” and where “customs are poor and people like to litigate.”<sup>148</sup> Shen Gua (1029–1093) defended the renovation of the Level

144 Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 15.156 (汴渠春望漕舟數十里), emphasis added. Cf. Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 8.162–163, 9.176; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 7.7ab; Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 16.220; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 22.78b; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 9.102; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 2.64; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu, yishi*.499–500; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 8.205, 9.216, 9.228; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 10.171; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 32.2b; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 27.483. Cf. also Elvin 1973, 137–144; Schottenhammer 2015, 450–454; Shiba 1968, 4–13.

145 See Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 18.251–252.

146 See Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 5.115–116.

147 Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 5.114–115 (申法), emphasis added.

148 Qiang Zhi, *Cibu ji*, 16.220 (代泗州廬郎中謝到表).



with the Mountains Hall, a retreat for prefects of Yangzhou (now Yangzhou, Jiangsu province), by the long-distance trade that imposed an unremitting burden on those officials:

Of all the boats and carts from the South and the North that day and night supply the capital, seven out of ten in the entire realm pass through [Yangzhou]. Even though the position is always filled with prominent men, *when travelers arrive from the four directions, the prefect is inevitably confused by all the languages and faces*. Every day they return to fill the courtroom, and the prefect must decide the cases from the entire prefecture, without losing his composure and often without taking a break. He finishes his tasks completely, because if he doesn't, it will be a disaster from which he will not be able to recover.<sup>149</sup>

In Hangzhou, too, “where the boats and carts from all the realm come together, ... notables crowd the office; travelers fill the gate. Lawsuits come in every variety; people arrive from all directions. Sincerity and deception have numerous distinctions; arrested suspects stand in scattered groups. On the stairs to the gate, on the steps to the doors: rows of shoulders, series of feet.”<sup>150</sup> In Guangzhou, “the great merchants and foreign traders prevailed by their wealth, and because their origins lay in other countries, they would cross the ocean and disappear as soon as they knew the officials would trouble them.”<sup>151</sup> But in the circuits adjoining the capital, too, “there are over a hundred cities; there are many myriads of people. There are customs as distinct as [those of] Qi and Lu, Chu and Zheng [i.e., Shandong, the South, and Henan]; there are products as diverse as mulberry and hemp, fish and rice. The revenues from tribute and taxes differ greatly in quantity and kind.”<sup>152</sup> Officials also frequently complained that the risks and costs of long-distance trade led merchants and artisans alike to neglect needful staples, which yielded modest returns, in favor of needless luxuries, which brought large profits. Such trade in rare articles and unseasonal products not only broke sumptuary regulations, but also constrained proper circulation.<sup>153</sup>

149 Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 21.67ab (揚州重修平山堂記), emphasis added. On the history and cultural importance of Level with the Mountains Pavilion, see Meyer-Fong 2003, 128–161.

150 Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, II.19.120 (故朝請郎直秘閣 ... 胡公行狀).

151 Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 25.23b (張中允墓誌銘). Cf. Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 8.21ab. On the administration of maritime trade in Guangzhou, see D. Heng 2008.

152 Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 19.264 (太府少卿王子淵可權京西轉運使 ...).

153 See, for example, Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 27.281. See also de Pee 2010, 171–176. In addition, officials criticized laws that they perceived to obstruct proper circulation. See Fan Zhongyan,

The main impediment to a healthy circulation of goods and money, however, was the war economy. The founding emperors of the Song came to power by warfare and expanded their territory by warfare.<sup>154</sup> They raised troops and revenue to attack the Liao Empire, then to defend against it. From the beginning, therefore, the Song court built roads, dug canals, and planned irrigation networks chiefly to provision the armies at the capital and on the frontier. It minted coins and devised monetary instruments to pay for these armies: the mints generated government revenue, provided the population with a medium of payment for taxes and levies, and generated the liquidity necessary to keep goods and services in motion.<sup>155</sup> The founding emperors chose Kaifeng as their capital, because among all northern cities only Kaifeng had the roads and waterways to provision a standing army of hundreds of thousands of soldiers:

After the present dynasty avenged the lapses of the Five Dynasties, it stationed all the troops of the realm at the capital. *The number of names entered into the registers reportedly reached more than one million. For all but a tiny fraction, however, the provision of clothing and food for the troops depends on county magistrates.* These troops, moreover, are not like prefectural soldiers, who are maintained directly by farmers. If the dynasty had not located its capital in a province that connects the four cardinal points and gives access to the five directions, it could not have fed the empire's troops.<sup>156</sup>

Some currencies and monetary instruments existed solely for the purpose of military provision, defense, and appeasement, such as the stamped silver ingots along the border with the Liao Empire and the vouchers for salt and tea used to pay the suppliers of the armies along the frontier.<sup>157</sup> As Christian Lamouroux writes, in spite of its successful concentration of administrative,

*Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.549; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 86.1263; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 48.1404–1406.

154 Cf. Lorge 2005, 2–4, 17–35; Lorge 2011, 227–241; Lorge 2015.

155 See Deng and Zheng 2015; W. Liu 2015, 49–50 and *passim*; von Glahn 2020, 18–19.

156 Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.13.523 (安都), emphasis added. Cf. above, pp. 80–81, 180–181. Cf. also Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 3.16b–17a, 3.29ab; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 10.9a–10b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 60.875–876; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 41.4b–5b; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 20.266–268; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.38.839–840; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 15.187–188, *fu*.798. Cf. also Miyazaki 1938, 140–141.

157 On the establishment and reform of fiscal and financial institutions during the early decades of the Song, see Lamouroux 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006.

financial, and military authority in a centralized civil government, the Song in practice was forced to sustain “a veritable ‘war economy.’”<sup>158</sup>

The costs of maintaining this army continued to rise in the course of the eleventh century, especially after war broke out with the newly proclaimed Xia Empire, from 1038 to 1045. At that time, Zhang Fangping reminded Emperor Renzong (r. 1022–1063) that his ancestor Taizu (r. 960–976) had defeated most of the rival polities and frightened bandits and barbarians with an army of fewer than 150,000 men; that Emperor Taizong (r. 976–997) had an army of 400,000 troops when he completed the conquest and was saving resources in preparation for an assault against the Liao; and that Emperor Zhenzong (r. 997–1022) had initially built up the army to 500,000 soldiers, but that he had diminished the burden on the people “after the Khitan requested peaceful relations” in 1005. Since 1038, however, the government had raised an army of more than a million men at a cost it could not possibly sustain, as it consumed the entirety of the empire’s reserves and revenues, and cast the people into destitution and despair.<sup>159</sup> In an earlier memorial, Zhang had already warned that officials during the mid–1030s did not understand that the rising government debt incurred by the issue of monopoly vouchers for tea and salt resulted from the urgency of provisioning the frontier armies, not from the system of vouchers itself:

If we closely examine the causes, [it becomes evident that] the system itself in fact isn’t flawed, but that the circumstances make it so. If troops were disposed with better counsel, expenditures on the frontier could be reduced. *Once expenditures on the frontier are reduced, engrossers will not be able to take advantage of [military] crises to usurp [the government’s] financial leverage*, and this will restore the control over exchange values to the authorities.<sup>160</sup>

158 See Lamouroux 2006, 130–132 (quotation at 132). Cf. Golas 1986, 5–8; Hino 1983, 476; Lamouroux 2003, 17; Smith 2009, 347–348.

159 Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 23.336–337 (再上國計事). Cf. Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 18.3a–4a; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *xubu*.1.754–756; Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 14.5a; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 22.250–251; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 46.645–652; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 23.1b–12a; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 26.335–337; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 9.271–273; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 10.117–125; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 1.14; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 24.353–355, *fu*.798. Cf. also Golas 1986, 5–10; Golas 2015, 148; Hino 1983, 479–483; Lamouroux 2003, 17, 101–102; Lamouroux 2007, 172; Smith 1991, 8; Smith 2009, 347–348; S. Wang 1982, 32–38.

160 Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 23.335 (論國計出納事), emphasis added. Cf. Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 23.345–352. Cf. also Lamouroux 2006.

Expenditures on the army, however, continued to increase, until they consumed 83 percent of the government budget in 1065.<sup>161</sup> Discussions about the proper means to maintain the army while at the same reducing expenses and restoring proper circulation, dominated the political debates of the period, which intensified during the reforms of 1043–1044 and the New Laws of 1069–1085. Their failure to overcome this financial crisis gradually convinced literati that they lacked the understanding to revive the perfect governance of antiquity. It was therefore the debates about finance, and specifically the debates about the maintenance of the large standing army, that caused the intellectual crisis of the 1080s and 1090s.

### Intellectual Confidence and Economic Reforms

During the 1030s and 1040s, however, officials were confident that they would be able to balance the regional currencies, regain the leverage over money and monetary instruments, improve the efficiency of revenue collection, and eliminate the government debt that had begun to accrue during the reign of Emperor Renzong. The local fluctuations in the value of money might confuse them, and the incessant litigation by traveling merchants might fatigue them, but behind this confounding perplexity in the streets and in the courtroom they intuited a simple, enduring pattern. It was the same pattern that the ancient kings had made visible in governance and in ritual, and the same pattern that Kongzi (“Confucius”) had sought to preserve by editing the classical canon when the Zhou kingdom broke apart into warring states. Literati in the early decades of the eleventh century believed that they had approached nearer to the correct understanding of the canon than any generation since Kongzi, and hence had hopes that in their lifetime they might see the restoration of the Way of the ancients, and the permanent, peaceful alignment of all human affairs with the immanent pattern of the moral cosmos.<sup>162</sup>

The intellectual confidence in the eleventh century derived in important part from a critical re-examination of the transmitted text of the canon, necessitated by the court’s commitment to printing authoritative editions of canonical texts for use by candidates in the imperial examinations. Already in the final decades of the tenth century, philologists such as Xu Xuan and Liu

<sup>161</sup> See Smith 1991, 8.

<sup>162</sup> See, for example, Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 250; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 18.251–252; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.19.3b–4a.

Kai (947–1000) had disparaged the scholarship of prior centuries and urged the restoration of the true characters and correct texts of antiquity.<sup>163</sup> Shi Jie (1005–1045) proposed to his teacher Sun Fu (992–1057) that the recovery of genuine learning and writing would make it appear “truly as if we were back in the Three Dynasties and the Han, having leapt exceeding far beyond the Tang, so that this sacred Way, wide and straight, lead us to Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wen, King Wu, the Duke of Zhou, and Kongzi.”<sup>164</sup> In 1055, Ouyang Xiu explicated the connection between such efforts and the moral learning expected from examination candidates:

Your minister perceives that the court in recent years has amended the curricula for the tribute presentations [i.e., the examinations], so that they may serve as a means for selecting scholars, and has established schools for learning, so as to give aid to the methods for nurturing scholars. These students, however, have not yet attained to perfection in their essays or to blamelessness in their conduct, and therefore they do not meet the court’s intent of producing worthies and urging goodness, and do not possess the manner necessary to transform the people and to perfect customs. Your minister humbly proposes that the foundation upon which the scholar establishes himself is the Six Classics. Yet since the violent Qin [Empire, 221–206 BCE] burnt the books, the Way of the Sages has been cut off. ... Your minister therefore wishes to request a special edict addressed to renowned classicists and educational officials, *commanding them to examine all the sub-commentaries on the Nine Classics and to remove every citation from occult and apocryphal texts [inserted by scholars since the Han dynasty], so that students will not be led astray by strange and heterodox phrases*. Then, the meaning of the canon will lie clear before them, unsullied by contradictions. This will require very little effort, yet it will yield great improvement.<sup>165</sup>

These philologists endeavored not only to recover the original text of the classical canon, but also to restore to the present the plain moral writing of antiquity. This effort, begun by Han Yu (768–824) and Liu Zongyuan (773–819) during the Tang, was taken up in the Song by Liu Kai, who named

163 See Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.1a–3b; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 2.8b–9a. Cf. Wang Gui, *Huayang ji*, 47.11b–12a; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.19.4a; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.2b–3a; Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, preface, 2b.

164 Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 15.182. Cf. Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 18.209.

165 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 112.1707 (論刪去《九經正義》中讖緯笱子), emphasis added. Cf. Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.1b.

himself after Han Yu (Jiānyu, “shouldering [Han] Yu”) and Liu Zongyuan (Hedong, Liu Zongyuan’s birthplace and epithet) before changing his given name to Kai (“to open”) to signify his confidence that he would “open the path toward the Way of the ancients.”<sup>166</sup> According to Han Qi (1008–1075) and Fan Zhongyan, Yin Shu (1001–1047) became the crucial figure in the revival of Ancient Prose during the Song: the generations after Liu Kai had become distracted by their preparations for the competitive examinations until Yin Shu, who “already at a young age had a lofty understanding and did not measure himself by his contemporaries,” developed a powerful, solemn style based on his studies of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Ouyang Xiu “was greatly shaken” by Yin Shu, “and from that moment the writing of the world transformed at once to become ancient.”<sup>167</sup>

In their efforts to reconstruct the canon and to revive its language, these men sought assistance and confirmation in the unchanged material remains of antiquity. Ouyang Xiu began in 1045 to collect rubbings of inscriptions on metal and stone in order to preserve the words and the calligraphy of past centuries.<sup>168</sup> When he published them in 1063 in his *Record of Collecting Antiquities* (cf. Chapter 2), he wrote a colophon in which he expressed regret that Xie Jiāng (994–1039) and Yin Shu, the two men who had improved his writing in Luoyang during the early 1030s, were not alive to share his emotion at the completion of the book.<sup>169</sup> But even before he started collecting rubbings in the brambles of neglected graveyards, Ouyang Xiu urged the student Zhang Fei in 1033 to embody the Way of the ancients as well as to express it in writing:

The gentleman approaches learning by setting himself upon practicing the Way. To practice the Way, one must seek to understand antiquity, because *only when one knows antiquity and achieves a clear understanding of the Way can one walk it in person, implement it in affairs, and display it by manifesting it in writing, as a testimony for later generations*. This

166 See Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 2.1b–8b, 5.13b–16a. Cf. Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, Siku quanshu preface, 1a–2a, 1000 preface, 1ab, 4.7ab, 11.3ab.

167 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.8.183 (尹師魯《河南集》序). Cf. Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 47.1a–6b, 50.7b; Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 28.12b. Cf. also Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 27.305; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 1043 preface, 1ab, 2.10a–11a, 3.1a–3a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 73.1056–1057; Qisong, *Tanjin wenji*, 8.1a; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 1051 preface, 250, 4.39–40, 13.165; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.23.1432–1433; Wu Zeli, *Beihu ji*, 5.6a–7a; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, preface.1ab.

168 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 42.599–600. For the text of the *Record of Collecting Antiquities*, see Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2061–143.2324. On the *Record of Collecting Antiquities*, see also Egan 2006, 7–59; Sena 2019, 29–64.

169 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2061.

Way is the same Way that the students of the Duke of Zhou, Kongzi, and Mengzi [“Mencius,” d. 289 BCE] have always trodden, and this writing is the same writing that the Six Classics record and that has been held up as a testimony until the present day.<sup>170</sup>

True understanding of the ancient classics, in other words, would naturally manifest itself in an ancient manner of writing as well as in the embodied practice of virtuous conduct and correct ritual. Embodied practice would in turn enhance the understanding of the ancient classics by giving access to the intentions of the ancient sages, and thereby to ancient knowledge that had been lost by the obliteration of precious texts.

The restoration of ancient ritual and ancient manners therefore became part of the exegetical hermeneutics of those committed to the revival of Ancient Prose.<sup>171</sup> Fan Zhongyan, for example, praised Tian Xi for his efforts to revive the community wine-drinking ceremony and the imperial plowing ritual, and for teaching imperial subjects and the emperor alike to regulate their bodies by means of canonical ritual.<sup>172</sup> Song Qi tells that Feng Yuan (975–1037) turned the people of his hometown to virtue by “dressing for his daily affairs in a wide robe with broad sleeves, and making it a habit to walk with a measured step, as though he were receiving an important guest or offering a solemn sacrifice.”<sup>173</sup> Yu Jing (1000–1064) recounts how Zu Wuze (1006–1085)—who, like Yu Jing, was a student of Ancient Prose under Mu Xiu (979–1032)—in 1048 governed the people of Haizhou (present-day Lianyungang City, Jiangsu province) by canonical ritual and an ancient manner, after having built a proper Altar of Soil and Grain with a mound and steps, trees and gates, a hall and authorized implements, “according with the present and based on antiquity, all founded on ritual.”<sup>174</sup> Han Qi combined ancient ritual and “current customs that are difficult to discard” to devise a protocol for family temples, whose construction had been permitted by imperial edict in 1041.<sup>175</sup> Wen Yanbo (1006–1097) was the first to build such

170 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 67.978 (與張秀才菜第二書), emphasis added.

171 For a more extensive discussion of canonical hermeneutics and ritual archaism, see de Pee 2007, 21–27, 45–72.

172 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.13.317–321; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, *muzhiming*.1a–5a. Cf. Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 2.1a–9a, 14.10b–11a, 21.3a–6a. Cf. also Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *zouyi*.2.615, *xubu*.2.788.

173 Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 62.835–836.

174 Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 5.9a–10a (海州社稷壇記).

175 Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 22.8b–9a (《韓氏參用古今家祭式》序). Cf. Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 19.234–235.

a temple, in 1056 in Luoyang, based on the plan of a family temple from the Tang dynasty that he had examined in Chang'an in 1054.<sup>176</sup>

By restoring ancient ritual, by mastering ancient writing, and by embodying the ancient canon, these literati hoped to assimilate the penetrating wisdom that had enabled the ancient kings to manifest the moral pattern of the cosmos in language and script, in buildings and institutions, in civilization and governance. To quote Ouyang Xiu once more:

The classicist models himself on the Sage. *The Way of the Sage is straight and simple.* Therefore, when a classicist finds that the Way has become entangled, he extends it, in order to penetrate the pattern of the world, in order to exhaust the transformations of yin and yang, of heaven and earth, of man and ghost, of all affairs and beings, as well as all the great relations of man—between ruler and minister, between father and son, between auspicious rites and somber rites, and between life and death. *Because the Six Classics could not explain the entirety of these matters,* the seventy disciples [of Kongzi] and the followers of Meng Ke [i.e., Mengzi], Xun [Qing, i.e., Xunzi, d. 238 BCE], and Yang [Xiong, 53 BCE–18 CE] all offered their nicest discriminations, and yet none of them could exhaust them. Kongzi truly loved learning, and he explicated what he perceived to be the Way since the period of Yao and Shun, the prior period apparently being less known to him and not in accord with the Way. *Yet isn't it possible that even he did not attain to every particular?* The learning of the classicist is doubtless farsighted and imposing, and he labors hard, and yet it is certain that he does not attain to every particular.<sup>177</sup>

Sima Guang, a later master of Ancient Prose, held up Hu Taichu (fl. 1023–1049) as the model of the true classicist. Hu had vehemently denied that the fine writers of the Han dynasty, such as Gongsun Hong (200–121 BCE), Xiao Wangzhi (106–141 BCE), and Wang Yu (d. 5 BCE), had been classicists.

In contrast, when he himself read the books of the former kings, he did not parse every sentence and period, *but always sought the pattern,* and that was all. When he had found this pattern, he did not idly recite it as a false boast to others, *but he must tread it and practice it with his own body*

176 See Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 79.9a–12b. On this temple, see also de Pee 2009, 95–96.

177 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 41.594 (《韻總》序), emphasis added. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 129.1970. Cf. also Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.1a–2a.



*and in his own community.* If he could not extend it beyond himself, it would not shine forth, and if it did not shine forth, the Way of the former kings would remain overgrown.<sup>178</sup>

Sima Guang himself argued that nothing could exist outside this pattern, because “if this thing exists, it must be part of this pattern; if it is not part of this pattern, this thing does not exist.”<sup>179</sup>

The proponents of Ancient Prose therefore did not confine their quest for this cosmic moral pattern to the sacred canon and ancient ritual but expected to find it also in the heavens and the landscape. When Zu Wuze, a student of Sun Fu and Mu Xiu, served in Yichun Prefecture (now Yichun City, Jiangxi) in 1053–1055, he took advantage of his leisure to contemplate “the pattern of living things”:

“Serving as the Hermit Prefect of Yichun, Seventh Poem of Ten,” by Zu Wuze

Serving as a hermit prefect in Yichun,  
I receive few visitors in this mountain town.  
*In the quiet I espy the pattern of living things;*  
*Out of doors I feed on the harmony of heaven.*

In the warmth of spring I seek a flowering vale;  
In the cool of night I delight in moonlit waves.  
What son of man will these billows meet?  
Labor and leisure—what things are they?<sup>180</sup>

The confidence among literati of the 1030s and 1040s that they had come near to grasping this pattern is most apparent in the new kind of official whom they eulogized in epitaphs: the official whose profound moral learning had enabled him to solve a variety of practical problems, whether it be the construction of irrigation networks or the adjustment of local finance, the resolution of protracted litigation or the arrest of an elusive criminal.<sup>181</sup>

178 Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 64.2b (顏太初《雜文》序), emphasis added. Cf. Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 15.3b–4a, 15.13a.

179 Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 74.11b (無怪).

180 Zu Wuze, *Longxue wenji*, 3.4a (吏隱宜春郡詩十首, 其七), emphasis added. Cf. Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 16.1a–2a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 71.10a–11a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 10.159; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong wenji*, 3.6b–7a.

181 Although Tang officials no doubt had practical accomplishments, it does not appear that these were foregrounded in their epitaphs. Bai Juyi's fame as a poet, for example, reached beyond

Such men excited the admiration of their peers, because the array of their achievements offered proof that all things and actions shared a common pattern, and that this pattern could be known. In his epitaph for Yin Shu, for example, Han Qi tells that Yin as a youth had been “intelligent and delighted in learning, and had a penetrating understanding of everything.” This penetrating understanding manifested itself not only in his efforts to “correct the fashion of the moment and to promote the dominance of Ancient Prose” (which eventually “caused the writing of Our Song Dynasty to leap across the Tang and the Han, to reach the Three Dynasties”), but also in his unshakable commitment to moral conduct and in his military accomplishments during the war against the Xia Empire.<sup>182</sup>

Li Shiheng (959–1032), according to the epitaph composed for him by Fan Zhongyan, managed the finances of the government during the 1020s with such knowledge and skill that “both at court and in the provinces everybody admitted his penetrating understanding.” But earlier in his career Li Shiheng had demonstrated a similarly comprehensive command of other areas of experience and expertise: he had saved four men from the consequences of their false confessions to murder; he had plotted a daring strategy to discourage and defeat a large-scale mutiny in Sichuan; he had predicted the failure of a more active role of the government in the provision of the western frontier, generated an enormous profit by his efficient management of the liquor monopoly, and simultaneously broken the power of engrossing families and reduced government expenditure by buying silk directly from farmers; he had prevented a disastrous flood of the Yellow River in Hebei and Hedong; and throughout his career had shown keen judgment in assessing character and talent.<sup>183</sup>

Cheng Lin (d. 1056), eulogized in an epitaph by Ouyang Xiu, possessed a similarly broad talent, exercised with unflinching discrimination and stern

the borders of the Tang Empire and he restored the wells and the West Lake of Hangzhou, but his epitaph, written by Li Shangyin, represents him in the main as a political figure, tried by the factional tribulations at court. See Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*, 8.467–475. For Bai Juyi’s hydraulic works in Hangzhou, see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyiji*, 23.513, 68.1431–1433. For other examples of hydraulic expertise during the Tang, see Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 1322, 1580; Jia Dao, *Jia Langxian Changjiangji*, 7.3b; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxiji*, 2.26–28. For discussions of the solution of difficult legal cases, see Li Guan, *Li Yuanbin wenji*, 1.10–11; Ouyang Zhan, *Ouyang Xingzhou wenji*, 6.62a–63a. For examples of natural observation, see Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, 2707–2708 (a treatise on the origin of clouds); Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, II.9.570–571 (a lifetime of botanical study in the canon, in gardens, and in mountains); Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuanji*, 23.618–619 (Li Wei’s expedition to gather knowledge about the South), 32.835–836 (a letter about stalactites).

182 See Han Qi, *Anyangji*, 47.1b–7b (故崇信軍節度副使 ... 尹公墓表), quotations at 47.1b, 47.5a.

183 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.13.304–310 (東染院使種君墓誌銘), quotation at I.13.205. Cf. Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 26.1ab. Cf. also Hartwell 1971, 281.

resolve: he forced Khitan emissaries in the capital to obey protocol; determined that a breach in the dike of the Yellow River at Huazhou could be repaired; dismissed rumors of an imminent mutiny in Sichuan and made inquiries among the people to ascertain that they would not be incited to riot by the execution of a wizard; handled the oppressive case load of Kaifeng Prefecture with expedience; commissioned drawings of the path of a palace fire in order to exculpate a seamstress who had falsely confessed to having caused it; possessed as State Finance Commissioner such comprehensive knowledge of revenues and expenditures that “not even the smallest sum could be taken without justification”; and proved an able strategist against the Xia Empire, with exhaustive knowledge of the geography of the border region.<sup>184</sup> From the 1030s forward, literati composed epitaphs and records of conduct for dozens of such gifted men—men gifted not with multiple talents, but with a single talent that gave them complete mastery of every area of knowledge and skill, “the ability to respond to the continuous transformation of the myriad things.”<sup>185</sup>

This confidence in the imminent recovery of ancient wisdom informed the comprehensive attempt at political reform in 1043–1044, an attempt carried out by the men who appear in the pages above: men who studied philology and epigraphy, who wrote Ancient Prose, who believed that moral learning granted penetrating wisdom, and who had themselves given evidence of such wisdom by planning hydraulic works and winning military victories. Between May 3 and May 24, 1043, Emperor Renzong appointed Fu Bi, Fan Zhongyan, and Han Qi as Military Affairs Vice-Commissioners,

184 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 31.462–466 (鎮安軍節度使 ... 程公墓誌銘), quotation at 31.464.

185 Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 9.11b (虛齋記). For additional examples of such gifted men, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 39.712–713, 40.725–726; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji, fu*.1a–22a (“Whenever [Chen Xiang] took up matters that pertained to the principles of governance at court or the sustenance of people in the provinces, he always sought to discover techniques of the sort that could be used as a model”: 先生祠堂記, *fu*.21b); Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 15.1a–12b; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 42.4b–11a, 42.13b–15b, 43.5a–9b; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 29.7a–11a, 29.30a–37a; Hu Su, *Wengong ji*, 36.435–439; Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 33.1a–6b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji, buyi*.11.2356–2358; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 2.39a–40a; Liu Bin, *Pengcheng ji*, 35.469–480; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 53.637–640; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 33.491–493, 35.520–522, 38.554–557; Shen Gua, *Changxing ji*, 29.75a–78a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 78.9a–11b; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 53.798–807; Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji*, 8.19a–26a; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 91.574–576; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji, fu*.797–801; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 36.612–616, 37.625–629, 40.731–735; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 19.9a–12b, 21.6b–9a. For a translation of one such epitaph, see de Pee 2018, 175–177.

and Ouyang Xiu, Yu Jing, and Cai Xiang as Remonstrance Officials.<sup>186</sup> Shi Jie, Su Shunqin (1008–1048), Tian Kuang (1005–1063), and Yin Shu were also part of the group.

The emperor had sought out Fan Zhongyan and Han Qi because of their military successes against the Xia Empire on the northwestern frontier, but when he gave them permission to submit practical solutions for current emergencies, Fan Zhongyan wrote instead a proposal for a thorough rearrangement of the political order. In the preamble to his ten-point memorial, Fan explains that the political order is always deteriorating, as “the laws are abandoned and the regulations daily diminished, as imperial rewards become incommensurate and tax revenues disproportionate.” Only the sage emperors Yao and Shun avoided such deterioration, because

Yao and Shun “were able to penetrate these transformations, so that the people never tired.” The *Book of Changes* says, “When it is exhausted, it transforms. When it transforms, it aligns. When it aligns, it lasts.” This means that when the pattern of the realm is exhausted or blocked, one must ponder the Way of transformation and alignment. If one is able to transform and align [the pattern of the realm], one will achieve a lasting order.<sup>187</sup>

Although Fan Zhongyan concedes that “my wisdom cannot match that of others and my skills are not aligned with antiquity,” he nonetheless presumes to “approximate the Way of the rulers of former eras and seek the accomplishments of the founders of the present dynasty, to select from them what it is possible to implement, and to itemize them in this memorial.”<sup>188</sup>

The memorial insists foremost on the appointment and promotion of talent. In his first five points, Fan Zhongyan complains that the central government is replete with officials who have achieved nothing and who disregard the public good; that men without adequate qualifications accede by heredity to positions that should be reserved for accomplished scholars or deserving officials; that the imperial examinations emphasize flowery composition instead of canonical learning; that the court by its negligent

186 See Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 1.7. Cf. Smith 2015, 93–95.

187 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.524 (答手詔條陳十事), citing *Zhouyi*, 8.5a, 8.6a; emphasis added.

188 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.524 (答手詔條陳十事). Fan Zhongyan had expressed similar ideas in a memorial submitted in 1025. See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 1.7.199–207.

appointments shows contempt for the posts of county magistrate and prefect; and that the government injures the motivation as well as the integrity of its officials by paying them inconsistent or inadequate salaries. Fan Zhongyan proposes therefore to demote men without achievements, to restrict hereditary appointments (and to evaluate the men who receive them), to emphasize the canon and the Way in the examinations, to appoint capable officials to local posts, and to pay adequate salaries. These measures—supported by reliable recommendations, rigorous evaluations, and clear standards for promotion and demotion—will cultivate and retain men of talent, “men taught in the enterprise of management and aid, and selected for their talent in management and aid,” men capable of assisting the ruler in “aligning the realm with the patterned order.”<sup>189</sup> He urges that the court give immediate consideration to

those among the officials who possess elevated talent and extraordinary accomplishments and have received many recommendations, or who have submitted unusual strategies or exemplary counsel that the Emperor has accepted with implicit trust. Moreover, if among local officials there are men who have achieved a reputation for good governance and have improved customs; or men who have demonstrated skill in discerning the deep grudges that underlie unresolved lawsuits; or who by the time of their fifth evaluation have never been demoted or sued; or who by their exhortation and instruction of farmers and silk producers have greatly obtained exquisite results; or if there is a man who in his duties in the storehouses of the capital has demonstrated an ability to remedy major losses and thereby saved tens of thousands in expenditures, it will be incumbent upon the responsible administrative unit to report this in a memorial to the throne, to be discussed at a meeting of the Department of State Affairs.<sup>190</sup>

Fan Zhongyan envisioned, in other words, an officialdom staffed by talented men such as those he and his colleagues had commemorated in their epitaphs. The latter five points of his memorial propose measures to alleviate the plight of the population: the improvement of agriculture by the creation of dikes, polders, and reservoirs; the reinstatement of self-sustaining garrisons in frontier regions; the reduction of labor service

189 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *zouyi*.1.529, *zouyi*.1.531 (答手詔條陳十事). Cf. Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.9.219–221, I.10.237–239.

190 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *zouyi*.1.525–526 (答手詔條陳十事).

demanded from the rural population; the extension of imperial amnesties to include the forgiveness of debts; and the strict enforcement of imperial edicts.<sup>191</sup>

Fan Zhongyan's associates shared his confidence that the ills of the empire could be precisely diagnosed and that men of talent could cure them and restore the empire to health. Ouyang Xiu warns that in the present crisis of the empire "the selection of officials is foremost."<sup>192</sup> He particularly recommends that the emperor make better use of Han Qi and Fan Zhongyan, because "their talent and understanding exceed those of normal individuals."<sup>193</sup> Cai Xiang likewise urges Emperor Renzong to take the fullest advantage of Han Qi and Fan Zhongyan, even proposing that the emperor appoint Fan Zhongyan to replace Wang Juzheng (d. 1060) as grand counselor, "at this time when it is urgent to use talent."<sup>194</sup> Like Fan Zhongyan, moreover, Ouyang Xiu and Cai Xiang believed that talented men such as Han Qi and Fan Zhongyan could help Emperor Renzong perceive a coherent pattern in the multiple crises that beset and confused him: "Your Majesty's mind grows more worried every day; the empire's situation becomes more dire each year. Therefore I say that Your Majesty exerts his mind, but does not know where to seek the essence of achieving order."<sup>195</sup> By their superior understanding, talented men would be able to detect the underlying causes of the crises and thereby devise a solution:

The Tibetans have turned treacherous, raising troops and raiding the frontier. The generals sent and the armies mustered have repeatedly done battle but every time have met defeat. Grain transport and tax collection have exhausted the population. The Northerners [i.e., the Liao Empire] are taking advantage of the situation and are spying on our strengths and weaknesses. They sent an embassy [in 1042] to demand territory, causing the capital to shake with fear. Fortunately, an increase in gifts has purchased temporary respite. The people within the four seas are crying out in anguish, as worries grow day after day. How will we face the disaster that is coming?

191 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.523–540. Cf. Bol 1992, 166–172; Bol 2015, 674–680; J. Liu 1957, 113–119; Smith 2015, 93–95, 102–104, 131–133; Smith 2016, 154–170.

192 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 98.1505 (論按察官吏劄子). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 46.651–652.

193 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 97.1492 (論韓琦范仲淹乞賜召對事劄子). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 97.1494–1495, 97.1498.

194 Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 17.322 (再論王居正).

195 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 46.646 (準詔言事上書).

*Yet, there is still hope if loyal and worthy men be held close. If by good fortune such men should be promoted, they may join forces and take rigorous action to resolve this wearying crisis. ... Since the realm today suffers many ills, I request leave to use illness as a metaphor. When the body is at ease, it should be sustained as is proper, and there is no illness. When an illness resides in the skin, a doctor can eliminate it quickly and the illness will be eased. When these conditions no longer obtain and the illness has settled in the body, an able doctor can still cure it by swift action. The illness of the empire has already reached this stage. If during this curable stage Your Majesty chooses able doctors, and if Your Majesty trusts these doctors without reservation and accepts their ministrations, not only will they cure the illness, but they will grant the people longevity. If however at this moment able doctors are prevented from exhausting their skills, the illness of the realm will grow more severe, and even a doctor with the miraculous ability of a He or a Bian will be hard put to find a quick solution.*<sup>196</sup>

It is precisely this identity of the body politic and the body organic that enables talented men to solve a wide variety of political and material problems. Because good governance assigns mankind to its proper place in the cosmic order, the cosmic order and bodily health are at the same time the object, the template, and the sign of good governance.<sup>197</sup> Cai Xiang thus introduces the metaphor of illness not as a simple simile, but as an analogy rooted in an organic unity of the body politic and the body material, as an analogy capable of producing new knowledge and new insight. The same immanent metaphor of the body politic informs Fan Zhongyan's ten-point memorial. "Yao and Shun were able to penetrate these transformations, so that the people never tired," he writes in the preamble, citing the *Book of Changes*. Throughout the memorial, Fan cites the illness, the exhaustion, and the unease of the people as evidence of poor governance, and promises

196 Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 18.334–335 (乞用韓琦范仲淹), emphasis added. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 46.650; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 9.99–101.

197 See, for example, Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 28.14ab; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, II.2.478–479; Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 54.9b–10a, 55.1a–3b, 55.5a–8a; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 6.79; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 31.369, 42.495; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 33.8b–9a; Song Xiang, *Yuanxian ji*, 16.165–169; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 8.227; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 14.178. The emperor's body was the physical manifestation of the body politic. See Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 18.8b–11b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 21.244; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 40.2a–10a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 47.737–739. For similar ideas in Europe, see Mirowski 1989, 125–127, 138, 150–192.

that his measures will spare the people's strength and increase it.<sup>198</sup> The sixth item, "Promote agriculture and sericulture" elaborates the identity of the body politic and the body material in detail:

I have read in the *Book of Documents* that, "Virtue consists only in good governance, and governance consists in nourishing the people."<sup>199</sup> This means that the virtue of the Sage consists only in good governance, and that *the essence of good governance lies merely in nourishing the people*. Governance that nourishes the people must first concentrate on farming. Once farming is properly governed, there will be sufficient clothing and food. Once clothing and food are sufficient, the people will take care of their bodies. Once the people take care of their bodies, they will fear punishment. Once they fear punishment, banditry and theft will cease, and there will be no more disasters or chaos. Therefore, *the virtuous power of the Sage manifests in good governance; the moral transformation of the world grows from farmers' acres.*<sup>200</sup>

Fan explains that the present neglect of agriculture and sericulture harms both the body material and the body politic, because the shortage of rice and silk drives up prices for the people as well as for the government. He estimates that restoring the dikes and polders of the Kingdom of Wu and Yue would reduce the price of rice to a tenth of the current cost, which "below will cause fewer famines, and above will make grain purchases cheaper."<sup>201</sup> He proposes that knowledgeable officials should compile a manual on hydraulics to distribute to fiscal commissioners and to all newly appointed prefects and magistrates: "This is governance that nourishes the people, and the foundation for enriching the realm."<sup>202</sup> For the same reasons, the reformers created institutions to improve medical instruction and to protect public health. Disturbed that

198 For similar ideas about the simultaneous exhaustion of the body politic and the body material, see Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 2.11; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 19.259; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 15.183–189; Zhao Bian, *Zhao Qingxian gong wenji*, 3.2a–3a.

199 *Shangshu*, 4.4b.

200 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.533 (答手詔條陳十事), emphasis added. In a summary of his ten-point memorial, Fan Zhongyan refers specifically to the body politic: "Some of my words have addressed small details, but these have very great consequences for the body politic" (*er yu guoti shen da 而於國體甚大*). Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.540 (再進前所陳十事). See also Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, I.9.212–219, II.2.478–479, *xubu*.1.754–756.

201 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.534 (答手詔條陳十事).

202 Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.1.534 (答手詔條陳十事). On this measure, cf. J. Liu 1957, 116–117; Mihelich 1979, 11–12, 233–237; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 207–211.



Kaifeng's dense urban population of one million depended on a mere thousand doctors, and those of uncertain ability, Fan Zhongyan proposed a system of medical instruction and certification, and established in 1044 an Imperial Medical Service, charitable hospitals, and a regulated drug market.<sup>203</sup>

The reforms of 1043–1044 may thus be understood as an attempt to promote men who were capable of comprehending the entirety of the empire as a living body, and who would assist the reformers in restoring this body to health—improving its circulation and nourishing its strength, preventing the dissipation of its resources and protecting it from foreign attacks. Learned in the canon and the Way, these men would know to anticipate the continuous transformations of all things and to align the affairs of the realm with their pattern. The canals they dug would at the same time irrigate fields and float ships, raise crops and supply markets, ease the burdens of the people and increase the revenue of the government. The polders they made would simultaneously provide new land to farmers and manifest the beneficent order of government, simultaneously feed the cities and supply the army. The talent that distinguished these men partook of this same metaphorical order. Commonly written *cai* 材 (“timber”) rather than *cai* 才 (“talent”), talent was understood to possess the same properties as trees and wood. Not only was talent innate and physical, and therefore to a large extent hereditary, but it was straight and strong, it could be grown and cultivated, it could be assessed and measured by a skilled eye, it could be fashioned into “a boat to carry the Way” or into “the pillars and beams of the realm.”<sup>204</sup> Talent therefore not only gave men insight into the natural order, but placed them within it and connected them to it by a physical affinity.<sup>205</sup>

The reputation of Fan Zhongyan's reforms, however, derives more from the newness of their ideology and from the fame of their proponents than from any enduring accomplishments. Although Shi Jie exulted that “there

203 See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, zouyi*.2.641–642; Goldschmidt 2009, 46–50, 58–60. Cf. Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25, 389. Cf. also Boyanton 2015, 65; Hinrichs 2013, 99–102. For similar developments in eighteenth-century Europe, see Foucault 1980 (1976).

204 See, for example, Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 9.7a–8a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 4.69–70, 64.926–927; Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.14.551–553; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 64.402–403; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 12.228–232.

205 The common designation of the imperial examinations as a “meritocracy” ignores this particular epistemology and ontology of “talent.” The understanding of examination candidates as the “straight timber of humanity” explains not only why students were represented as a form of local tribute (*gong* 貢)—selected by local officials and offered up to the court—but also why repeated success within the same family was perceived as evidence of the reliable judgment of examiners, and why hereditary appointments were not in principle incompatible with recruitment through competitive examinations.

has never been such an exquisite selection of right men, such a large number of right men, such a rapid promotion of right men,” and although Cai Xiang writes that after the appointment of Han Qi and Fan Zhongyan “literati jubilated at court and commoners rejoiced in the streets,” the reformers were divided between the Bureau of Military Affairs and the Remonstrance Bureau, and were excluded from the emperor’s daily deliberations with the grand councilors.<sup>206</sup> Ouyang Xiu berated the emperor for failing to consult with Fan Zhongyan and Han Qi even about the war against the Xia Empire, although this was the acknowledged area of their expertise.<sup>207</sup> Cai Xiang repeatedly beseeched the emperor to appoint Fan Zhongyan as grand councilor.<sup>208</sup> In 1044, Ouyang Xiu lamented that more than half a year after Fan had submitted his ten-point proposal “some of it was ignored and not implemented, some of it was implemented but not pursued, and some of it was implemented but has not yet produced clear effects.”<sup>209</sup> Soon after, Emperor Renzong dismissed Fan Zhongyan, Han Qi, and Fu Bi, giving credence to their opponents in the more powerful organs of the central government, who accused them of factionalism.<sup>210</sup> Yu Jing and Yin Shu resigned from the central government in protest, insisting that they be exiled along with Fan Zhongyan.<sup>211</sup> Most of Fan Zhongyan’s proposed reforms were abolished by the end of 1044. Yet, as Peter Bol writes, the attempt by Fan and his associates in the Ancient Prose movement “to translate a particular style of learning ... into an effective political program” had set a precedent.<sup>212</sup>

Although the admirers of Fan Zhongyan in time became the most formidable critics of Wang Anshi, the New Laws enacted by Wang Anshi between 1069 and 1076 shared the intellectual confidence of the reforms of 1043–1044 and replicated some of their particular measures.<sup>213</sup> When Wang

206 Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 1.7 (慶歷聖德頌); Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 18.334 (乞用韓琦范仲淹).

207 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 97.1492. Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 97.1494–1495, 97.1498.

208 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 17.321–322, 25.423–424. See also Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 98.1510, 100.1536.

209 Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 104.1585 (論內出手詔六條箚子). Cf. Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 101.1553–1554.

210 See, for example, Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 107.1626–1628; Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 19.1b.

211 See Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 40.728; Yin Shu, *Henan xiansheng wenji*, 19.1b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, *zouyi*.1.2b–4a.

212 Bol 2015, 675. Cf. Hartman 2021, 19.

213 See Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 39.218–226, 41.237–239. On the general program of the New Laws of Wang Anshi, see also Bol 1992, 225–233, 247–250; Bol 1997, 43; Bol 2001, 120–126; Bol 2015, 682–688; J. Liu 1959, 1–7 and *passim*; Smith 2009.

Anshi first outlined his program of reforms, to Emperor Renzong in 1058, he offered to assist his ruler in “perfecting the talent of the realm,” because only talented men would be able to perceive the transformations wrought by time and to model the realm on the intent of the ancient kings:<sup>214</sup>

Your Majesty possesses a reverent and humble virtue, and a sage and brilliant talent, as well as a humane intent toward His subjects and a loving empathy toward all creatures. If Your Majesty applies Himself with sincere intent, how could there be any endeavor Your Majesty could not complete, any wish Your Majesty could not fulfill? *And yet I maintain that if Your Majesty wished to change and reform the affairs of the realm so as to conform them to the intent of the former kings, the current situation would not allow it. Why is this? Because at present there is insufficient talent in the realm. ...* At present, there are very few men who can implement the laws of the court throughout a circuit of a thousand miles, who understand the delays and processes to such an extent that they can make all people carry out their duties. Meanwhile, there are innumerable men who are untalented, careless, or venal. How, then, can one discuss the intent of the former kings and its transformation to the present time?<sup>215</sup>

Like Fan Zhongyan, Wang Anshi warned the emperor that barbarians threatened at the borders and that rebels attacked in the interior, that customs had deteriorated and that resources were depleted, and that the empire would perish unless the present crisis were averted. Like Fan Zhongyan, Wang Anshi believed that lasting peace and prosperity could be achieved only by a restoration of the order of the ancient kings, and that a restoration of the order of the ancient kings required the appointment of talented men. Wang Anshi therefore advised, again like Fan Zhongyan, to emphasize the canon and moral learning in the imperial examinations and to submit all officials to strict evaluations, whether they had been recruited through the examinations or appointed by heredity. Wang Anshi also proposed to increase revenue by creating polders in the Southeast, and he established medical schools and public pharmacies to promote public health.<sup>216</sup>

214 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 39.226 (上仁宗皇帝言事書). Cf. Bol 1992, 217, 225–233; Bol 2001, 120–121; Bol 2015, 682–683. On the similarities between the reforms of 1043–1044 and the New Laws, cf. Hartman 2021, 45.

215 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 39.218 (上仁宗皇帝言事書), emphasis added. Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 41.239, 74.468.

216 On polders, see Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.1ab, 19.3b–20a; Shan E, *Wuzhong shuili shu*, 4, 6, 9; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.35.760–765; Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*, 3.5ab. Cf. Higashi 1970,

The New Laws differed from the reforms of 1043–1044, however, in Wang Anshi's emphasis on "aligning the resources of the realm" (*li tianxia zhi cai* 理天下之財) and in his power to implement the reforms he proposed.<sup>217</sup> Since the Xia Empire had invaded the Song in 1040, military expenses had increased until in 1065 they consumed 83 percent of the government budget. The cost of maintaining the hundreds of thousands of troops stationed around the capital and on the frontier resulted in a structural deficit that was redeemed only by occasional gifts from the Imperial Treasury. Wang Anshi was convinced that the Song Empire possessed all the resources it required to supply its needs, and that the structural deficit of recent decades resulted, not from insufficient wealth, but from an inefficient extraction and improper use of the empire's ample resources. He found justification in antiquity for his preoccupation with finance: "To improve our laws, then, and to select officials who will execute them, so as to align the resources of the realm! Even in high antiquity, Yao and Shun could not but make this their first priority. How much more should we, in this confounded latter age!"<sup>218</sup> With the support of Emperor Shenzong, Wang enacted a comprehensive series of radical reforms in government structure and economic extraction, designed to place resources in the hands of those who needed them by the means most profitable (or least costly) to the government.

Under the Green Sprouts Law (1069), the government supplied agricultural loans to assist farmers and to usurp at the same time as government revenue the interest that would otherwise enrich private lenders.<sup>219</sup> The Law on Farmland and Water Control (1069) provided for the reclamation of millions of acres of farmland, which would increase government revenue both by lowering the price of grain and by increasing the number of tax-paying

304–314; Mihelich 1979, 48–118; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 205–206, 211–236, 267–270; Smith 2009, 393. On public pharmacies, see Goldschmidt 2009, 124–128; Goldschmidt 2019; Okanishi 1958, 509–510. Cf. Boyanton 2015, 65; Hinrichs 2013, 99–102. In 1049, Wang Anshi had inscribed on a stele a medical compendium promulgated by Emperor Renzong, intended to remedy southern diseases. See Okanishi 1958, 936.

217 Cf. Bol 1997, 43; Hino 1983, 485–486; J. Liu 1959, 48–52, 109–113; Smith 2016. For comprehensive discussions of the New Laws, see Bol 1992, 247–250; J. Liu 1959; Golas 2015, 150–151, 170–179; Kuhn 2009, 55–58; Smith 2009; von Glahn 2016, 236–242.

218 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 82.522 (度支副使廳壁題名記). Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 6.147–148; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 70.445. Cf. also Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 45.6ab, 46.3ab. From passages such as this, it is evident that Wang Anshi's reforms should be called the "New Laws," not the "New Policies." Wang does not ask the emperor to change his policies but to enact new laws, so as to conform the institutions of the Song Empire to those of antiquity. The introduction to his memorial of 1058 is especially clear about this. See Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 41.227.

219 See Smith 2009, 394–400, 414–419.

farmers.<sup>220</sup> The Service Exemption Law (1071) replaced labor service with a levy, so that the government could pay soldiers to carry out efficient construction projects, instead of relying on less capable, less reliable *corvée* laborers who would be more productively employed in the fields.<sup>221</sup> The Market Exchange Law (1072) established the government as a wholesaler to merchants in the capital, ending the monopolies of great merchant houses and thereby restoring important leverage over monetary instruments and government debt.<sup>222</sup> The Tea and Horse Agency (1074) traded Sichuanese tea directly for Tibetan horses, instead of buying them with the proceeds from the sale of tea monopolies.<sup>223</sup> Other laws created the physical and institutional infrastructure to implement these reforms. A new examination curriculum (1070) would mold talent for imperial service.<sup>224</sup> The Court of Agricultural Supervision (1070), an autonomous organization connected to the Imperial Treasury instead of the central government, centralized all fiscal policy.<sup>225</sup> A Mutual Security system (1073) allowed the mobilization of the population for military service and for labor.<sup>226</sup> In 1074, for the first and only time, the government compiled a complete “synthesis” (*kuaiji* 會計) of all its revenues and expenditures, conjoined to the evaluations of all its personnel.<sup>227</sup> And by the 1080s, the government minted some 5 million strings of cash per year to create the liquidity required to monetize taxes, service labor, and the provision of the army.

The scope and ambition of these reforms, their radical conception and their rapid implementation, are intelligible only by the intellectual confidence of the period. Because Wang Anshi was certain that he understood the meaning of the canon, he was confident that his reforms accorded with the intent of the ancient kings, and because he was confident that his reforms accorded with the intent of the ancient kings, he was convinced that they would succeed, as the empire would naturally tend toward the

220 See Mihelich 1979, 51–118; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 206–207.

221 See J. Liu 1959, 98–109; Golas 2015, 174–175; Oberst 1996, 382–384; Smith 2009, 419–429. Jiren Feng (2012, 61–107) mentions that during the New Laws the government was particularly active in the compilation of comprehensive building manuals.

222 See Golas 2015, 179; Hartwell 1988, 65–72; Lamouroux 2002, 202–207; Lamouroux 2006; Lamouroux 2007, 197–202; Oberst 1996, 290–292; Smith 2009, 403–407, 429–432; von Glahn 2004, 163–166.

223 See Smith 1991.

224 See Bol 1997, 40–44.

225 See Lamouroux 2003, 112–120; Lamouroux 2006, 168–169.

226 See Smith 2009, 407–415, 427–429.

227 See Lamouroux 2003, 51–62; Oberst 1996, 490–492.

perfect order of high antiquity.<sup>228</sup> Comparisons between the New Laws and twentieth-century political campaigns have tended to present Wang Anshi's reforms as an early instance of later tendencies, thereby making them falsely familiar and hiding their extraordinary ambition. If Wang Anshi had not trusted that he was reviving the order of the ancient sages, how might he have conceived that such radical measures and such massive mobilization would succeed? He intended to increase the size of the government by half, to build schools across the empire to teach a standard curriculum, to monetize a large share of all labor and goods, to replace lenders and brokers with government agencies, and to train local militias to become a more effective fighting force than mercenary armies. The commission of Jia Dan (fl. 1057–1086) in 1072, which ordered him to muster in Suzhou the equivalent of two million men and to build 1,300 miles of canals and 30,000 square miles of polders in five years, in other times would have required the dedicated attention of a large part of the government.<sup>229</sup> But Wang Anshi ordered the poldering of the Lake Taihu region as only one of “10,793 water-control and land reclamation projects around the empire” that reclaimed “a total of 361,178 *qing* 88 *mu* (approximately 38,829,779 acres) of agricultural land” between 1070 and 1076.<sup>230</sup> Wang Anshi knew full well that his ambition exceeded all convention. Only fifteen years earlier, he had written to Emperor Renzong that “there are very few men who can implement the laws of the court throughout a circuit of a thousand miles.”<sup>231</sup>

It is not certain to what extent the New Laws succeeded. Prominent men who had initially supported Wang Anshi, including Ouyang Xiu, turned against him when they found that the reforms caused harm where they should provide relief, and when they discovered that Wang Anshi dismissed their criticism as slander.<sup>232</sup> Because later generations blamed Wang Anshi's reforms for weakening the empire and for hastening its defeat, they did not transmit writings that defended the New Laws but preserved the protests

228 See, for example, Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 40.1013, 41.1031–1033; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 9.147. Cf. Bol 1997, 40–43; Bol 2001, 113–114, 123–126; Bol 2009, 245–251; Bol 2015, 682–689; J. Liu 1959, 40–48, 114.

229 See Fan Chengda, *Wujun zhi*, 19.3b–20a. Cf. Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*, 3.5ab. See also Lamouroux 1995, 174; Mihelich 1979, 74–106; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 224–270.

230 Smith 2009, 393.

231 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 39.218 (上仁宗皇帝言事書). On the uncommon speed of the implementation of the New Laws, and the attendant difficulties, see, for example, Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 16.14ab, *zouyi*.1.18b–20b (1069); Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 24.370 (1070). Cf. Golas 2015, 152.

232 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 109.1653–1654. Cf. Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 24.6b–7a; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 38.1077; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 15.237–238, 15.248–249.

of his critics.<sup>233</sup> An occasional composition still remembers Wang's reforms as a success:

*Myriad matters submitted to his arrangement;  
A thousand generations will celebrate his achievements.  
The country's resources he aligned to bring prosperity.  
The people's strength he calculated to demand a trifle.*

Benevolence spread widely and farmers had no shortages;  
Goods moved efficiently and service was not burdensome.  
By protecting the soldiers he secured their watchful defense;  
By paying the officials he ended their insatiate greed.<sup>234</sup>

Hua Zhen (fl. 1079) believed that Wang Anshi had succeeded in molding the talent of the age: "During the Xining and Yuanfeng reigns [i.e., between 1068 and 1085], abundant virtue manifested at the top, supported by true classicists. Extraordinary men emerged in numbers, resulting in a profusion of scholars, singularly lofty and unusually accomplished, and they filled the court."<sup>235</sup>

The present record, however, is dominated by extensive, unrelenting criticism. According to Su Zhe:

Since the Green Sprouts Law was implemented, the farmers have had no money to spare; since the Mutual Security Law was implemented, the farmers have had no strength to spare. Since the Service Exemption Law was implemented, officials and commoners have both been miserable; since the Market Exchange Law was implemented, merchants and traders have all been suffering. *Above, the officials suffer from exhaustion, frustrated that the laws are impossible to implement; below, the masses sigh in misery, hoping that the laws are soon to change.* ... Since Your Majesty acceded to the throne, Your Majesty has never realized His hopes of establishing order. Your Majesty intended to equal the lofty peace of Yao and Shun, but has pursued instead the shallow expedience of the Han and the Tang.<sup>236</sup>

233 Cf. Bol 2015, 711–712; Hartman 2021, 33, 90–93; J. Liu 1959, 11–13.

234 Wei Xiang, *Qiantang ji*, 5.42ab (過金陵上僕射王舒公). The second line of the second stanza praises the success of the Transport and Distribution Law of 1069 and the Service Exemption Law of 1071.

235 Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 23.11a (上湖南提刑安學士書). Cf. Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, 2.5ab, 8.8b–9a.

236 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.35.771 (自齊州回論時事書), emphasis added.

Bi Zhongyou (1047–1121) explained that the Green Sprouts loans had been designed to protect poor farmers against usurious lenders and predatory landlords, but that officials and clerks at the local level preferred to lend money to wealthy households, because poor farmers were rarely able to repay their loans. Thus, the government's pursuit of profit (especially after it increased the interest rate from 20 percent to 30 percent) contravened the intention of the law. As farmers sank into debt, the wealthy bought the farmers' land with money lent to them by the government.<sup>237</sup>

The Service Exemption Law, which replaced the obligation to perform labor for the government with a payment in money, further improved the advantage of the wealthy and worsened the plight of the poor. Because farmers did not habitually use money, they had to buy money in order to pay the new levy. By increasing the demand for money at the time of the harvest, the law exacerbated the deflationary pressure already common during that period, when the abundance of goods raised the value of currency and merchants and wealthy families hoarded cash in order to lower prices even further. To pay the levy, farmers were thus forced to sell part of their produce—at a very low price—in addition to the grain they already paid to the government in taxes, leaving them both destitute and hungry. Nor did the government benefit from the levy. Because the government spent far less on infrastructural projects than it collected in levies, it withdrew millions of strings of cash from circulation. As the strings of cash piled up in government warehouses, money became so scarce that trade came to a standstill and the government was barely able to supply the capital or the frontier.<sup>238</sup>

The Mutual Security Law organized the population in local militias in order to protect communities against thieves and bandits. By 1075, however, the government used these militias to collect taxes, to replace mercenary troops, and to perform labor service.<sup>239</sup> Finding that they now had to perform

237 See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 5.6a–9a. Cf. Han Qi, *Han Weigong ji*, 17.242–244, 18.245–253; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 3.48; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 3.12a–13b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 94.1405–1406, 114.1730–1733; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 42.3b–4b, 44.3a–6a, 57.16a; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.35.763–764, II.12.1282; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 20.1a–3b; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 6.1a–16b. Cf. Higashi 1970, 308.

238 See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 5.10a–12a; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 3.49, 3.52, 3.56–60, 5.97–99; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 1.1a–2b; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 42.4ab, 57.16ab; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.35.773–776, I.38.839–840; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 25.392–395; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 6.1a–10b. Cf. Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 1.9b; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 8.404. Cf. also Hartwell 1968, 79; Smith 2009, 435–445; S. Wang 1982, 47–54.

239 See Smith 2009, 407–415, 427–429.



the labor and the military service they had paid to avoid, the population seethed with anger:

Ever since the Tang recruited expeditionary forces and levied grain and silk from its farming population to supply these forces with clothing and provisions, farmers have doubtless been oppressed already. *But now that the government still collects taxes in grain and silk, and in addition requires that the people twice in their life abandon their plough and their mulberry trees in order to join battle formations, how will they bear it? ...* Robbing them of their food and clothing will deprive them of their livelihood: this will drive the people to become robbers. Instructing every household in warfare and encouraging them with official rewards: this will teach the people to become robbers. And dismissing the men who arrest robbers: this will free the people to become robbers. Do policies such as these really bring profit to the empire?<sup>240</sup>

The opponents of the New Laws also condemned the inequity of the Equitable Transport Law, the Market Exchange Law, and the Guild Exemption Tax, but these laws offended them especially by their indecorousness. Critics expressed sympathy for the merchant houses put out of business by the Market Exchange Law, for the water carriers and hairdressers who protested the Guild Exemption Tax, and for the tea growers in Sichuan impoverished by the low prices set by the Tea and Horse Agency.<sup>241</sup> But they decried most of all the sight of imperial officials competing for profit with merchants, and with each other, in the streets of the capital and along the waterways of the empire.<sup>242</sup>

240 Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 57.16b (遺表), emphasis added. Cf. Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 42.4b–5a. Cf. also Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 5.9a–10a; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 4.1a–2a; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 21.4b–6a, 22.1ab. According to Lü Nangong, the Mutual Security System was implemented without adequate knowledge of local geography and tried to fix into place a society that had become intrinsically mobile. See Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 4.3b–4a.

241 For criticism of the Equitable Transport Law, see Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, *zouyi*.44a–46a. On the effects of the Market Exchange Law, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 16.26b–27b; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 2.9a–15b; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 57.16b–17a. For the protests against the Guild Exemption Tax, see Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 1.8a–9a. On the effects of the tea monopsony, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 16.20b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 5.107–109; Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, 1.4a–23b, 3.1a–12a; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 25.729–742.

242 See Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, *zouyi*.44a–46a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 57.16b; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.37.822, I.38.837; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 20.3b–5a.

Modern scholarship has often referred to the opponents of the New Laws as “conservatives” because they rejected the radical reforms by which Wang Anshi sought to restructure the government and the economy. This designation, however, not only obscures that Wang Anshi intended by his reforms to restore the government of the ancient kings (taking the canonical *Offices of the Zhou* [*Zhou guan*] as his model), but also that his opponents had a thorough understanding of the changed economy and had themselves proposed active economic measures. Around the time of Wang Anshi’s appointment as assistant civil councilor in 1069, for example, Su Zhe impressed upon Emperor Shenzong that “among the crises of the present age, none is more urgent than the lack of resources,” and that “resources are the fate of the empire, and the foundation of all the myriad affairs.”<sup>243</sup> During the reversal of the New Laws in 1086, Su Zhe proposed to revive the stagnant economy by ordering fiscal commissioners to stock government warehouses with large reserves of grain and weapons. This would at the same time prepare the government for future famines and “set money in motion, stimulate the four classes, and circulate the hundred commodities.”<sup>244</sup> A few decades earlier, Ouyang Xiu had argued that the government had reduced the revenue from its monopolies by trying to take all the profit. He advised that the government should instead follow the example of successful merchants, who understood the importance of circulation and therefore allowed small traders to earn a profit, in order to increase their own.<sup>245</sup> Some of Wang Anshi’s opponents moreover agreed with him that the government should test examination candidates for specific skills and particular talents, including their understanding of finance, and that the government should design specialized careers for such particular talents, with longer appointments.<sup>246</sup>

243 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.21.462 (上皇帝書). Cf. Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, III.6.1531, III.6.1532. Cf. also Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 16.138; Qin Guan, *Huaihai jijianzhu*, I.15.593–594; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 15.181–183, 24.356, 25.377–378.

244 Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.38.840 (乞借常平錢買上供及諸州軍糧狀).

245 See Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 45.642–643. Cf. Lamouroux 2002, 196–197. On the common grasp of economic matters by Song officials, cf. Golas 1986, 34–40; Golas 2015, 141–142; Oberst 1996, 393–396.

246 See Qin Guan, *Huaihai jijianzhu*, I.14.551–553, I.15.580–581; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 53.12a–13b; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 8.248–249; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 13.5a–8b, 17.2b–4b. Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 39.224–225. Although Fan Zhongyan believed in universal talent, he also recommended men with specialized skills for specific posts. See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *zouyi*.2.615–637.

## Intellectual Crisis and Withdrawal from the City

The debates about the New Laws caused a profound intellectual crisis, not because the reformers and their opponents differed in their fundamental assumptions, but because they shared them. Leading officials on both sides agreed that the classical canon offered an accurate account of the perfect order of the ancient kings, that the perfect order of the ancient kings could be restored in the present, and that the superior learning of the Song Empire had brought it closer to the restoration of this perfect order than any period since the Zhou dynasty. They agreed that the profusion of people and things in their time had made the immanent pattern of the moral Way more difficult to perceive, but they also agreed that talented men with true learning would be able to discover this pattern and devise policies to manifest it in government. They even agreed that Wang Anshi, an eminent scholar with a splendid reputation, might be the man to accomplish the restoration of ancient governance.<sup>247</sup>

The intellectual crisis began when Wang's reforms did not produce immediate results.<sup>248</sup> Because Wang had designed his reforms as a comprehensive set of laws that would return the Song Empire to the ancient order, he argued that the merit of his laws would become apparent only after they had all been implemented. His critics, alarmed by reports about adverse results and natural disasters, began to worry that Wang's laws did not accord with the intent of the ancient kings.<sup>249</sup> Wang insisted that officials and commoners opposed his reforms because they were beholden to erroneous conventions, and that this delayed the success of his laws; his opponents cited the protests as evidence that the reforms were flawed and that they should be changed or abolished before they caused irreversible damage. The delayed effect of the New Laws—the inevitable result of their ambition—required that supporters and opponents demonstrate the merit of their arguments solely by exegetical proof or by historical analogy. This they could not do. Although all agreed that effective policy must be based on canonical truth, none could submit incontrovertible proof that a given policy accorded with the

<sup>247</sup> See, for example, Liu Zhi, *Zhongsuji*, 4.86–87.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Golas 2015, 152.

<sup>249</sup> On the deviation from antiquity, see Feng Shan, *Anyue ji*, 8.1a–2a. For reports about protests, unrest, and upheaval, see Liu Zhi, *Zhongsuji*, 3.49, 3.56–60, *fu*.645; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 56.1700; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, III.4.2527. For reports of deteriorating customs, see Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 8.13b; Peng Ruli, *Poyang ji*, 12.22a; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 29.433–436. For reports on corruption and abuse during the implementation of the New Laws, see Lü Tao, *Jingde ji*, *passim*; Qin Guan, *Huathai ji jianzhu*, 1.15.593; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.43.949–950, 1.43.963–966.

canon or replicated ancient practice. In the absence of concrete results, they lacked the means to convince their opponents. Having always boasted that their learning was solid and practical (*shi* 實), classicists were dismayed to discover that its standards were in fact subjective.

Because Wang Anshi purposed by his New Laws to increase revenue, economic policy became the main subject of contention. Once again, all agreed on the substance of the matter, namely that the government must assume an active role in the economy, regulating prices in order to ensure the circulation of goods and the sufficiency of the people. The reformers and their opponents disagreed, however, about the scope that the government should give to merchants.<sup>250</sup> Wang Anshi argued that the great merchant houses had acquired too much influence. Because the government relied on these houses to supply the frontier and to relieve emergencies, and because it recompensed them with vouchers for the most profitable monopoly goods, the government not only gave away a substantial share of its revenues, but it lost control of its debt and compromised its leverage over its monetary instruments.<sup>251</sup> Wang therefore replaced the merchant houses with government agencies, to take sole charge of profitable monopolies, of the shipment of tribute grain, and of the wholesale of goods in the capital. Wang's opponents objected that the reforms *increased* inefficiency and loss of revenue instead of diminishing them, as the absolute monopolies of the new government agencies encouraged corruption, unreasonable levies, and arbitrary prices. They agreed with Wang that the merchant houses encroached upon government revenue—due to the profits they took and due to the labor wasted on the luxury goods they sold—but they argued that the incentive of profit made merchants more efficient, and more willing to take risks, than the government agencies created by Wang Anshi, and that the profits earned by merchants cost the government less in revenue than did the maintenance of Wang Anshi's new fiscal bureaucracy.<sup>252</sup> Whereas Wang Anshi held that only government regulations could ensure efficient circulation and fair prices, his opponents

250 Cf. Golas 1986, 10–11; Lamouroux 2006, 167–172; Smith 2009, 387–389.

251 See Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 70.445. Cf. Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 70.443–445. Li Gou, who supported the reforms of 1043–1044, made similar arguments. See Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 8.90. Cf. also Smith 1991, 144–148; Smith 2009.

252 See, for example, Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 35.983–984; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.35.760–765, I.35.771–776, I.36.785–790, I.37.822, II.12.1282–1283, III.8.1554–1555; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji, jiyi*.746. Cf. Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji, xubu*.755; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 7.16b–17a; Qin Guan, *Huaihai jijianzhu*, I.15.593; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 86.1263, 112.1700–1702; Zhu Changwen, *Lepu yugao*, 5.7a. Su Zhe accused Wang Anshi of wanting to crush the rich. See Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, III.8.1555. Cf. also Golas 1986; Hymes 1993; Lamouroux 2002, 196–207; Lamouroux 2006, 167–172; Oberst 1996, 277–300, 484–488.

believed that the government could not improve upon the workings of supply and demand, which they regarded as natural processes analogous to the flow of water and the circulation of vital essences through the human body.<sup>253</sup>

Because these adversaries could not resolve their debates by exegetical interpretations or by historical arguments, they resorted to reasoning by analogy. Since the Yellow River had changed course in 1048, officials had debated whether the river should be allowed to run its new northern course through Hebei or whether it should be restored to its former eastern course.<sup>254</sup> This debate gained new currency under the New Laws and their aftermath, as a proxy for debates about the role of the government in the economy. Although the arguments of the reformers survive only in summaries by their opponents, it appears that they advocated returning the Yellow River to its former course because the Song Empire possessed the resources and the technological means to do so.<sup>255</sup> Their opponents argued that the powerful river would breach whatever obstacles would be put in the way of its natural fall, and that the government should spend its resources on accommodating the new course of the river rather than creating another series of disasters in efforts to change it.<sup>256</sup> As the debates continued unresolved into the late 1080s, Fan Chunren explicated in a memorial to the throne the parallels between the arguments for returning the Yellow River to its former course and the misleading arguments and forcible policies of Wang Anshi's reforms:

Under our dynasty, through the reign of Emperor Renzong [i.e., from 960 to 1063], the realm was untroubled and the common people lived in joyful peace. Although Yuanhao [i.e., Emperor Jingzong of the Xia dynasty, r. 1032–1048] on one occasion rose up in rebellion, the only consequence was

253 See de Pee 2018.

254 On these debates, see L. Zhang 2016, 144–187.

255 According to a 1078 stele inscription, restoring the Yellow River to its former course had the advantage that it could make use of existing dikes. See Lü Zuqian, *Huangchao wenjian*, 76.14ab. On the loss of the writings of supporters of the New Laws, cf. Bol 2015, 711–712; Hartman 2015, 25. For the wider context of this selective transmission, see Hartman 1998, 59–146; Hartman 2006, 517–564; Hartman 2021.

256 See, for example, Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 13.25a–28a; Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 26.10a–11b; Chen Shunyu, *Duguan ji*, 7.4b–6b; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 15.11a; Fan Zuyü, *Fan taishi ji*, 16.7b–17.17b, 39.6a, 44.10a–12b; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 23.1a–24.2b; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 7.137–139; Lü Zuqian, *Huangchao wenjian*, 76.14ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 109.1642–1653; Qin Guan, *Huaihui ji jianzhu*, I.36.1159; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 29.823–826; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.45.996–998, II.12.1284–1295, II.23.1428–1429. See also the examination questions about the changed course of the Yellow River, in Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 9.1ab; Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 46.2ab; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 7.211–212; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.20.454–455, II.14.1320–1321.

that Shaanxi experienced some difficulty in paying its taxes. Never did the four quarters experience scarcity, nor did the common people ever utter a sigh of sorrow. *But after Wang Anshi gave easy credence to the words of petty men, he persuaded the late emperor to change the laws and statutes, and then the court teemed with men who took advantage of the opportunity to wreak havoc.* Having taken charge of military strategy, they went so far as to persuade the Emperor to raise troops against the foreign enemy [i.e., against the Xia Empire, in 1081–1083], and many commoners suffered as a result. Because the late Emperor acted with sage perspicacity, he insisted on careful consideration, but the petty men had come to power by misleading rhetoric and outright deception, and continued to deceive the court after they had taken control of the government. When they argued to change the laws and statutes, they said, “*Such understanding between ruler and minister occurs only once in a thousand years. This moment cannot be wasted.*” When they argued to raise troops against the foreign enemy, they said again, “*We shall be assisted by the Khitan [in the attack against the Xia Empire]. This moment cannot be wasted.*” When I recently served in the central government [i.e., in the previous year, in 1088], I witnessed how those who want to return the Great River to its former course are again saying, “*The impetus of the river is to flow eastward. The present change is probably not permanent. The moment cannot be wasted.*” Given the precedents for this mode of reasoning, I deeply fear these words.<sup>257</sup>

The contrived policies of Wang Anshi, in other words, had thwarted the moral order established by the founding emperors. By mendacious appeals to passing opportunities, Wang and his supporters had won a hollow fame and undeserved rewards for themselves, while placing the empire in danger and inflicting sorrow on the people. Those who advocated returning the Yellow River to its former course not only invoked the false rhetoric of Wang Anshi, but also repeated his general perversion of the natural order. Resisting the impetuous force of the Yellow River by ill-conceived dams and dikes was as wasteful, and as futile, as the replacement of profit-seeking merchants with government agencies. Although the Yellow River in its northern course would still flood its banks, these floods would be minor compared to another change of course that would inevitably follow the restoration of the old riverbed, and the government would not have misspent its resources on attempts to contain the river. Reliance on merchants, similarly, would lead

<sup>257</sup> Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, *zouyi*.2.43ab (又論回河利害), emphasis added. Cf. Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, *zouyi*.1.45a–47a, *zouyi*.2.39a–42b, *zouyi*.2.47b–48b.

to spillage, but the flow of money and goods set in motion by a difference in price would move more quickly and more efficiently than goods and money moved by government regulations, and the government would have saved itself the cost of maintaining a cumbersome fiscal bureaucracy. But the use of the Yellow River as an object lesson in finance appears to have shifted the locus of the financial debates rather than resolving them. According to Su Zhe, factionalist strife during the late 1080s and early 1090s became consolidated around two political issues: the western frontier and the course of the Yellow River.<sup>258</sup>

Even heavenly omens could no longer settle these debates. Opponents of the New Laws blamed Wang Anshi for the droughts, the failed harvests, and the famines that began soon after Wang came to power.<sup>259</sup> Zheng Xia initially had a high regard for Wang Anshi and had repeatedly prevailed on him to amend his laws, but as the reforms proceeded he had become more critical, and Wang had become less receptive to remonstrance.<sup>260</sup> In May 1073, Zheng Xia was so alarmed by the miserable state of refugees arriving at the Easeful Supremacy Gate of Kaifeng that he commissioned a painter to portray them, that he might warn Emperor Shenzong of the desperation among his subjects. In the memorial he submitted with the painted scroll, Zheng Xia argued that the locust plague of the previous autumn, the lack of rain from the autumn to the present spring, the steep rise in the price of grain, and the spreading famine proved that Shenzong's officials did not share the emperor's concern for the people or for the Way of the ancients. He presented the scroll as evidence that his warning was not based on hearsay, but on direct observation.<sup>261</sup> The painted scenes of human misery reportedly so shook Emperor Shenzong that he could not sleep and resolved to suspend several of the New Laws the next morning. Several days later, it started raining.

This, at last, appeared to offer objective proof that Wang Anshi's reforms had disrupted the natural order. Emperor Shenzong dismissed Wang a week later. But the Emperor replaced Wang Anshi with another proponent of the New Laws, and the reforms remained in place. Zheng Xia himself, moreover, was demoted after Wang's supporters dismissed his report as inaccurate and

258 See Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.13.1304. Cf. Su Zhe, *Longchuan lüezhi*, 7.40–45.

259 See Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 4.75, fu.645; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 45.1a–9b; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 29.433–436; Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 1.14a–16b, 9.30b. Cf. McDermott and Shiba 2015, 340.

260 See Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 6.1a–16b, 10.1a–2b. On Wang Anshi's increasing intolerance, cf. Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 57.17a; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.12.1283.

261 See Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 1.1a–4b. Cf. Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 1.14a–16b. See also Wei Tai, *Dongxuan bilu*, 5.52.

condemned the surreptitious manner of its submission.<sup>262</sup> The next year, after another prolonged drought, Emperor Shenzong managed to make it rain, by the devout prayers of his officials as well as his own. In response to this good success, he ordered his officials to offer up prayers of gratitude to local deities and to recommend efficacious deities to the court for awards of aristocratic titles. As Sue Takashi explains, temple plaques with honorary titles had previously been bestowed at the rate of one per year, to deities closely associated with the imperial court. In 1075, however, the court awarded thirty-six plaques to local deities, mostly to dragon gods and to gods of mountains and rivers in the South. Thereafter, Emperor Shenzong, and later Emperor Huizong (r. 1100–1125), continued granting aristocratic titles and temple plaques to deities who supported the New Laws, whether by bringing rain or by defeating rebels. By attributing the gift of rain to willful deities, the court of Shenzong pre-empted criticism such as that of Zheng Xia, which explained rain and drought as the mechanical responses of a moral Heaven.<sup>263</sup> Factional strife had reached beyond the human realm to divide Heaven from the gods.

Thus was the intellectual confidence of the early eleventh century defeated. None had succeeded in comprehending the immanent moral pattern that would align the present with the past, much less in translating this pattern into policies that could return the Song Empire to the perfect order of the ancient sages. As policies continued to produce uncertain success and contradictory reports instead of instantaneous transformation and universal acclaim, factional debate escalated with ever less likelihood of reconciliation. Because the disputed results of the New Laws had revealed that the truth of a man's understanding was known only to himself, the reformers and their opponents accused each other especially of disingenuousness.<sup>264</sup> When officials in the provinces wrote that a law had failed and caused disaster, reformers dismissed their reports as fabrications; when officials reported that a law had succeeded and won support, opponents rejected their accounts as partisan flattery.<sup>265</sup> A man praised by one side as uncommonly talented, the other side called dangerously clever.<sup>266</sup> Both sides warned the emperor

262 See Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji*, 1.4b–8a, 10.8a–10a.

263 See Sue 2001, 2003. See also Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 9.18a.

264 See, for example, Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.43.962–965.

265 Cf. Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 6.4a–5a; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji, zouyi*.2.16b–17b; Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 10.5b–8a; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji, fu*.644–648; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 57.15a–19a; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, 1.43.962–965.

266 See, for example, Chen Shidao, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 10.21b–22a; Liu Zhi, *Zhongsu ji*, 3.50–51. On lacking standards for the judgment of talent see, for example, Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.21a; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 21.507.



that his own enlightened wisdom ill equipped him to distinguish truth from appearance, true learning from clever pretense, righteous insistence from willful deception, an alliance of loyal officials from a faction of selfish men.<sup>267</sup>

Aware that these unprovable recriminations posed a structural threat to learning and truth, some sought to establish political arguments on a new foundation. Fan Chunren, a son of Fan Zhongyan, warned that factionalist tautology had put the empire at risk:

*I suspect that the rise of factions is the result of our tendency to distinguish between those who are different from us and those who are similar. Those who are similar to me, I call upright men. Those who are different from me, I suspect of belonging to an evil faction. Because I despise those who are different from me, words that sting my conscience are unlikely to reach me; because I favor those who are similar to me, falsehoods that meet my preconceptions grow daily more familiar. In the end, nobody will know truth from fabrication, and the stupid will be placed above the wise. This is a certain cause of disaster for the empire.*<sup>268</sup>

Fan Chunren and his friend Bi Zhongyou proposed a style of argument that admitted the weaknesses in one's own position and the strengths in the reasoning of one's opponent. Bi Zhongyou criticized the one-sidedness of memorials submitted to Emperor Shenzong, which had either extolled the benefits of the New Laws without mentioning their costs, or condemned their costs without acknowledging their benefits.<sup>269</sup> Although Bi himself criticized the New Laws, he did so by a dispassionate analysis of their internal contradictions, rather than by appeal to disputed facts or partisan emotion. He argued, for example, that if the purpose of the Green Sprouts had been

267 See, for example, Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji, zouyi*.2.16b–17b; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 36.7a–8b; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 13.4b–8a. Cf. Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.13.539–547; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 9.271–272; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 35.586–588. Although this argument may appear to resemble the arguments made by Ari Daniel Levine in *Divided by a Common Language*, it is in fact diametrically opposed to them. Because Levine examines the language of Northern Song factionalism only in a political context, as represented in memorials and in historical chronicles, he neglects the broader intellectual context of the moral and philosophical discourse on petty men and superior men, as represented in collected works and notebooks (*biji*), and thereby misses the profound intellectual crisis caused by the factionalist debates, which is linear rather than circular. See Levine 2008, 17–18. Cf. Hartman 2010, 147–150.

268 Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji, zouyi*.2.37b (論不宜分辨黨人有傷仁化), emphasis added. Also translated in Levine 2008, 102.

269 See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 1.4a–5a.

to benefit the poor, the government should not have charged interest on its loans, especially because the poor already paid high taxes and performed compulsory labor (see above).<sup>270</sup> In a long memorial about plans to reform the examinations, Bi Zhongyou likewise faulted his colleagues for arguing only one side of the question: “The advantages and disadvantages of examinations that test literary composition and examinations that test canonical learning have by no means been determined. Yet each side hides the weaknesses of its own preferred form and expounds its strengths. As a result, neither side trusts the other, and there is no settled agreement.”<sup>271</sup> Weighing the arguments on both sides, Bi Zhongyou argued that the canonical examination degraded the canon instead of elevating it, because it encouraged the study of the canon as a means to a profitable career. The literary examination, by comparison, was both less useful and less harmful. It moreover demanded more extensive preparation from the candidate and allowed more objective evaluation by the examiner. Because “worthiness and ability cannot be established by the examinations,” Bi Zhongyou recommended that the imperial examinations should emphasize literary composition, which had already produced many eminent officials, and that the court should encourage and patronize canonical learning outside the context of the examinations.<sup>272</sup> By balanced arguments and paradoxical conclusions such as these, Bi Zhongyou presented a compelling alternative to the tautological reasoning and predictable assertions of his peers.

Many others, however, despaired of improving political debate and instead sought stability and certainty in the management of their estate, in the governance of their family, and in the cultivation of their moral nature.

*When recent generations discussed creating order, they refused to discuss anything other than restoring the governance of the Three Dynasties. Although such discussions were admirable, under the present conditions they should not be conducted with excessive haste. Therefore, those with a keen understanding of affairs argued that whatever did not suit the times would become vain and useless, and would only harm society.*<sup>273</sup>

270 See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitaiji*, 5.6a–9a. Cf. Bi Zhongyou, *Xitaiji*, 5.9a–12a, where Bi argues that the Service Exemption levy caused little difficulty to wealthy families but inflicted much distress on poor families, with the result that poor families went bankrupt, wealthy families bought their land, and the government lost tens of thousands in revenue.

271 Bi Zhongyou, *Xitaiji*, 1.1b (理會科場奏狀).

272 See Bi Zhongyou, *Xitaiji*, 1.1a–11a (理會科場奏狀), quotation at 1.5b. Cf. Bi Zhongyou, *Xitaiji*, 5.2b–4b. Cf. also Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 13.6b–8b.

273 Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 5.14a (答人問政書), emphasis added. Cf. Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 9.4b–5a.

Starting in the 1070s, officials resigned their posts and students refused to take the examinations, turning their attention instead to local affairs. “Since I don’t want fame or fortune, I retire to solitary joy; / Because we can’t tell truth from error, I hope for quiet sleep,” wrote Zu Wuze when Wang Anshi demoted him to a lowly post in Luoyang.<sup>274</sup> Cheng Hao (1032–1085), who served under Wang Anshi on the Finance Planning Commission, soon thereafter retired in protest against the New Laws, first to care for his aging parents, then to teach with his brother Cheng Yi (1033–1107): “He lived in Luoyang for almost ten years, and with his younger brother, Master Yichuan [i.e., Cheng Yi], improved his learning at home and turned his hometown to virtue.”<sup>275</sup> Cheng Yi elaborated a fundamental ideological justification for this retirement from government and the concentration upon the self. If history had shown, writes Peter Bol,

that having the right political foundation could not preserve morality, *then the restoration of morality depended on learning as something independent of politics*. Cheng [Yi] no longer was concerned with how to make politics serve moral ends; he was asking how individuals could become moral. ... In the eyes of [Ancient Prose] writers and [New Laws] officials, the ultimate justification for government was its ability to increase the well-being of all the populace, by investing in local improvements, organizing society, and spreading education, and training the literati to serve [as] officials. But it was the cosmologists [i.e., Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, Zhang Zai] and Cheng Yi who provided the philosophical basis for the idea that literati could be socially responsible and gain moral authority irrespective of who was in power.<sup>276</sup>

Even without such a radical justification, literati during the latter decades of the eleventh century and the early decades of the twelfth century resolved to improve their community instead of serving in the government. Hu Yuan (d. 1110) built a simple dwelling, acquired a few acres of farmland, and told his wife and children that “in antiquity, people had a stable source of income.

274 Zu Wuze, *Longxue wenji*, 2.12b (請王安石乞分司西京避讒而去因以述懷).

275 Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 37.22a (明道先生哀詞). On Cheng Hao’s appointment to the Finance Planning Commission, see Higashi 1970, 306–309; Okazaki and Ikeda 1943, 215; Mihelich 1979, 52–64. So many reputable men removed to Luoyang by exile or retirement that the luminaries joked that Luoyang, the secondary capital, had in fact become a second capital. See Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, *fulu*.332; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 9.115a, 12.21b, 14.59a, 17.91a; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 15.8a. Cf. Freeman 1974.

276 Bol 2015, 720, 726, emphasis added. Cf. Bol 2015, 698–708. Cf. also Bol 1992, 253, 300–327; Bol 2001, 110–115.

Gentlemen therefore did not depend on a salary.” His sons recognized his “subtle discernment and far-sighted consideration” when the men who had recommended them fell from grace and they lost their positions.<sup>277</sup> Fu Siqi (ca. 1024–1100) declined to return to office after mourning his mother, and instead dedicated himself to the moral improvement of his hometown. He oversaw emergency repairs to neglected dikes to save the town from flooding by the Yellow River in 1077, and he restored the memory of the Han-dynasty classicist Ma Rong (fl. 148 CE) by repairing his shrine and performing an archaic sacrifice.<sup>278</sup> Zhu Changwen compiled a gazetteer of his native Suzhou; Xie Yi wrote a preface to an anthology of poems about the landscape of Linchuan (present-day Fuzhou, Jiangxi province).<sup>279</sup> Wang Anshi himself, in the poems he wrote in retirement at Mount Zhongshan, reflected extensively on his life and on his moral character, but made no reference to his former power or to his former preoccupation with monetizing economic relations.<sup>280</sup>

Just as epitaphs from the mid-eleventh century give evidence of the intellectual confidence of the period, epitaphs of the late-eleventh century offer proof of a turn away from active government and toward moral cultivation. Whereas the earlier writers demonstrated the learning and virtue of eminent men by recounting their remarkable achievements in practical administration, later authors reduced careers to mere lists of appointments and instead presented detailed accounts of the moral character of the deceased.<sup>281</sup> Qin Guan noted this change in priorities even among active officials. He praised Emperor Zhezong (r. 1085–1100) for having reversed the excesses of the New Laws, but warned that literati had become reluctant to discuss finance: “The literati have now bent to the other side, conducting themselves with loftiness and utter strictness, and they do not wish to discuss again matters of resources and profit.”<sup>282</sup>

As literati withdrew from practical government, they also lost interest in the city. In earlier decades, cities had stimulated literati to see and think in new ways. Walking among urban crowds, they tried to see themselves as others

277 See You Zuo, *You Zhishan ji*, 4.6a (宣義胡公墓誌銘).

278 See Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 29.5b–9a.

279 See Zhu Changwen, *Wujun tujing xuji*; Xie Yi, *Xitang ji*, 7.3a.

280 See, for example, Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, juan 1–4.

281 See, for example, Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 19.39a–41a; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, juan 25; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, juan 13–15; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, juan 75–79; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 53.798–807; Xie Yi, *Xitang ji*, 10.5a–12a; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 44.601; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong wenji*, juan 34–36.

282 Qin Guan, *Huaihai ji jianzhu*, I.15.593 (財用, 上).

might see them, and to see others as they saw themselves. Rummaging in the markets and stores, they considered how the objects they bought represented their individual taste and their individual character, and considered to what extent their own learning and their own talent were commodities. Contemplating the busy streets and teeming waterways, they wondered how they might discern the moral pattern that informed the confusing movement of people, goods, and money on which depended the prosperity of the empire and its subjects. After the irreconcilable debates about the New Laws had defeated their hopes of discovering the moral pattern in urban traffic, and their ambition of returning the mobile empire to the ancient order, they found that cities reminded them of their failures and that urban traffic inhibited their moral cultivation. They complained that the noise interrupted their studies, that the dust clouded their vision, that the competition unsettled their mood.<sup>283</sup> Their new notions of the individual and the self, which they had discovered in the metropolis, they took with them into their studios and into provincial retirement for quiet contemplation. They hoped to discover the pattern of all things within their own moral nature.<sup>284</sup> The unmediated experience of enlightenment would provide the moral certainty that political reform withheld, and confirm the absolute values that urban life endangered.

## Conclusion

By the middle of the eleventh century, the exploitation of nature by man had progressed to such an extent that Zheng Xie (1022–1072) could imagine that human prosperity required environmental degradation:

The living things grown by Heaven alternate with man in their abundance and decline. *Whenever the realm has been long at peace, the population greatly proliferates and destroys living things by depriving them of rest.* In

283 See Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 5.3b–4a, 16.5a–6b; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 1.1a–2b, 3.17b, 6.6a; Shen Liao, *Yunchao bian*, 1.23ab, 2.36b–37a, 8.79a–80b; Xie Yi, *Xitang ji*, 7.9b–10b; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong wenji*, 12.6b.

284 See Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, esp. 5.14a–15b, 6.1a–2b; Li Zhaoqi, *Lejing ji*, 11.1a–5a; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, *passim*; Zou Hao, *Daoxiang xiansheng Zou Zhonggong wenji*, 4.15a, 5.1ab, 5.5b, 12.6b, 28.9a. Others withdrew into Buddhist contemplation, including Su Shi, Su Zhe, and Wang Anshi himself. See Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, *juan* 38–45; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.13.1313, III.3.1499, III.9.1557–1558; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, *juan* 1–5. Cf. Daoqian, *Canliaozi shiji*, 6.5b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian quanji*, I.26.696. Cf. also Barnhart 1994; Bol 2015, 711–726.

earlier times, there were plentiful fish in Han Creek. Whatever fish could not be sold was thrown back into the river. But nowadays wealth has filled all kettles and there is nothing left. This is because there aren't enough rivers and marshes to be fished. In earlier times, there was plentiful timber in the Southern Mountains. Everyone could find firewood there. But nowadays people fight each other in the bracken. This is because there aren't enough forested mountains to be cut. In earlier times, there was plentiful rice in Yunmeng Marsh. Neighboring villages did not dispute one another. But nowadays they come with contracts, yet get nothing. This is because there isn't enough farmland to feed everyone. Therefore, the sages of antiquity raised living things by proper means and harvested living things at proper times. ... Man and living things sustained one another instead of exhausting one another. Later generations lost this method, and *as a result living things and man prosper in turn and decline in turn.*<sup>285</sup>

The southern empires of the tenth century cut rainforests, terraced hills, dug canals, and created polders in order to feed their cities and their armies. The Song inherited this infrastructure and expanded it, as the imperial family increased, the government grew, the standing armies proliferated, cities expanded, and the population of the empire surpassed a hundred million. The imperial officials of the Song oversaw the construction of dams and dikes, sluices and locks, polders and watermills, roads and bridges, irrigation networks and transport canals. They endeavored to make agriculture more prolific and transport more efficient, and to make both more predictable. Regional specialization in agriculture and industry proved their success, as regions across considerable distances came to depend on each other for rice and textiles, for tea and timber. This circulation of produce and manufactured goods was enabled by the minting of unprecedented numbers of coins and the creation of new monetary instruments, which imperial officials also oversaw. Although the money was to a very large extent fiscal—issued to buy supplies for the court, the government, and the army, and returned as tax payments—it set in motion an economy of unprecedented size and complexity.

Officials endeavored to understand the workings of this economy, so that they might stabilize prices and ensure sufficiency, “for the ease of the people” and for the good of the realm. The new economy manifested itself in the cities, where local products, long-distance trade, and government coin converged. From city walls and towers, officials observed the movement of

285 Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 17.16b–17a (虎說), emphasis added.

people, goods, and money along the waterways, through the gates, and into the streets of their county seats and prefectural capitals. In their courtrooms, they handled cases about breaches of contract, commercial fraud, devalued currency, loans and investments, interest and securities. They intuited that a unifying pattern hid within this apparent chaos, the same pattern that had been discerned by the ancient kings, effected in ancient governance, and inscribed in the ancient canon. Starting in the 1030s and 1040s, epitaphs celebrated men who appeared to have grasped this pattern: men who increased the flow of money as easily as they improved the flow of canals, men who lowered rising prices as expertly as they drained rising waters.

At the level of the central government, however, such successes proved elusive. The State Finance Committee acquired power and prestige, staffed by officials with a sharp understanding of money and the economy, but it could not eliminate the deficits created by the maintenance of a million troops around the capital and along the frontier. From the reforms of 1043–1044 through the New Laws of 1069–1085 and after, officials made ambitious efforts to extract and circulate the resources of the realm. They introduced new monetary instruments, found new sources of revenue, compiled comprehensive records of revenues and expenses, and attempted to regain leverage over currencies and monopolies. The renowned classicist Wang Anshi led the most ambitious, most radical of these reforms. His New Laws restructured the government and the economy so as to exploit the resources of the realm to the fullest and to retain them under the control of government agencies, from the purchase of tea and the shipment of grain to the mobilization of labor and the creation of polders. The New Laws succeeded in increasing government revenue, but they did not solve the structural deficit, and they failed to “align the resources of the realm” into a new, stable pattern that accorded with “the intent of the ancient kings.”

The literati of the eleventh century thus failed in their effort to reduce the prolific economy of their time to a simple, immanent pattern. Although the extant writings of these literati exhibit substantial disagreements about economic policy, they all insisted that the economic order should be equitable. They agreed that the government must protect the livelihood of the people, so that all could contribute in health and security to a complementary economic order, and that the government must ensure the circulation of goods, so that all could purchase what they required at affordable prices.<sup>286</sup> The complementarity of this order—with its mutual

286 See, for example, Li Gou, *Li Gouji*, 8.90–91; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 39.464–465; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 12.130, 19.231; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 82.521; Wang Yucheng,

dependence and mutual sustenance of farmers, artisans, merchants, and officials—suggested analogies with closed systems such as irrigation networks and the human body.<sup>287</sup> Such analogies aided understanding, but they also limited the scope of economic thought. The opponents of the New Laws believed that resources were finite, so that an increased allocation of resources to one sector required the reduction of expenditure in another. But even the supporters of the New Laws, although aware that the value of the economy could be increased by a more intense circulation of goods and money, sought to raise revenue and eliminate the deficit instead of, for example, using public debt to increase the volume of the economy.

This does not mean that other conceptions of the economy did not exist. Because no writings by merchants survive from the eleventh century—no accounting ledgers, no business correspondence, no diaries or treatises or contracts—nothing is known directly about their strategies or conceptions. It is possible that they pursued profit at the expense of others, that they did not perceive commerce to be part of a mutually sustaining order, and that what officials condemned as selfish and immoral strategies gave merchants an advantage over the government.<sup>288</sup> It is even possible that literati used such strategies themselves, since they were wealthy men, from families that held extensive investments in land as well as in commercial ventures.<sup>289</sup> Mira Ann Mihelich mentions, for example, that Lou Shou (1090–1162) invested one million cash in the reclamation of some seventy-one acres of land after he retired from the Fujian Superintendancy of Merchant Shipping, and Robert Hymes remarks that literati, in their defense of private interests, often became redoubtable opponents of prefects and magistrates.<sup>290</sup> Local officials, however, rarely mention the names of the powerful families that opposed them, and the collected works of literati omit nearly all reference to the strategies by which they acquired and protected their wealth.<sup>291</sup> The inadequacy of the economic measures of the eleventh century should

*Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.16.7b–8b; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 24.6a, 25.2a; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 14.178–180, 15.184–185.

287 Cf. Lamouroux 2003, 97–99. Cf. also Mirowski 1989, 142–143, 147–154, on the “lineametric stage in value theory.”

288 Cf. Smith 2009, 390; Smith 2016, 163.

289 Cf. Golas 1986, 17–19; Golas 2015, 213; Hymes 2015, 652; G. Liang 1997, 388–391.

290 See Mihelich 1979, 256–262; Hymes 2015, 646–649.

291 Cf. Golas 1986, 37–38; Lamouroux 2002, 183–184; Lamouroux 2003, 18–19; McDermott 1984, 13–15; Twitchett 1968, 63–64. The collected works of Fan Zhongyan offer a rare exception to the reticence about financial management, as they preserve his regulations for the charitable estate he established as well as some letters about lands and buildings, addressed to his brothers. See Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, *chidu*.1.651–654, *xubu*.2.797–799.



therefore be understood, not as evidence of a “Chinese” failure to understand the changed economy, but more specifically as evidence that imperial officials found themselves unable to frame this changed economy within the classicist discourse of their memorials and to align it with their ambition of restoring the perfect governance of the ancient kings.

In England and France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, according to Joel Kaye, “the distinction between natural order and market order created great tension within an intellectual culture whose habit was to unify and synthesize. The tension grew as the power and position of the market in society grew, until, by the late thirteenth century, it was the conception of the *natural* order that began to give way.”<sup>292</sup> The texts that survive from the Song dynasty show the opposite tendency. To the literati of the early eleventh century, technical expertise and canonical scholarship appeared to reinforce each other. Men with a penetrating understanding of the ancient canon built effective defense works and protected cities from violent floods. Natural observation and archaeological inquiry recovered ancient knowledge and improved canonical scholarship. Printing, during the Tang used mostly for ephemera, was used by literati during the tenth and eleventh centuries to present their philological theories to critical peers, and to share the knowledge they had gathered during their travels, about agricultural techniques, about botanical properties, about technological discoveries, about geological formations.<sup>293</sup> Improved transport and extensive documentation provided the government with detailed information.<sup>294</sup> This progressive perfection of learning and knowledge gave hopes that the Song would “leap across the Tang and the Han, to reach the Three Dynasties.”

Economy and finance, however, defied these advances in knowledge. The court searched in vain for officials who could solve its financial problems. The regular movements within the city—the flow of traffic, the circulation of goods and money—suggested that economic activity was animated by the same processes as the living bodies that it fed, but literati could not penetrate its pattern. The city resisted the moral order that literati attempted to impose on it, and instead drew them into the relative values of fashion and competitive consumption. Rather than taking the relative values of the metropolis as a new model of knowledge, however, literati abandoned the metropolis as a realm of uncertainty and illusion, and retreated to provincial

292 Kaye 1998, 14, emphasis in the original.

293 See de Pee 2017b.

294 See, for example, Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 48.6a–7b; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 18.1ab. Cf. Hartman 2015; Lamouroux 2003.

towns and the countryside in order to discover absolute moral knowledge within themselves. Their attempts to grasp the city for themselves had yielded new notions of the self and the individual, which they retained in their retreat. But their attempts to grasp the city as a whole had failed, and they left that city to be written by others—in pseudonymous texts that delighted in frivolous consumption and competitive display.



# Conclusion: The City Remergent

## Abstract

The eleventh-century drainage system of Ganzhou, Jiangxi province, offers a figure for the main arguments of *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis*. As the likely creation of prefect Liu Yi (1017-1086), it instances the intersection of classical exegesis, civil engineering, and public health in the learning and governance of eleventh-century literati, and the perception of urban populations as both body physical and body politic. As a supremely effective drainage system, moreover, it stands as a reminder of the non-linearity of history and modernity. By preserving the historical connection between the text and the city, this intellectual history of the city demonstrates that defining elements of the cultural expression of modernity could exist and did exist in a non-industrial society.

**Keywords:** Song dynasty; urban history; comparative history; modernity; civil engineering; Liu Yi

Torrential rain and flash floods have caused £1.9 billion of damage in China. Nearly forty people were killed this week alone in a series of landslides. But the 100,000 residents of the ancient city of Ganzhou, in Jiangxi province, are safe and dry, thanks to two drains built during the Song dynasty (960–1279), which proved far more effective than modern sewer systems at coping with the downpour.

*The Telegraph*, July 14, 2010<sup>1</sup>

During the summer of 2010, as torrential rains set much of south and southeast China under water, the streets of Ganzhou, Jiangxi province,

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Moore, "900-Year-Old Song Dynasty Drains Save Chinese City from Deadly Floods," *The Telegraph*, July 14, 2010.

remained dry. Even on June 21, when the city received nearly ten centimeters of rain, the shops remained open and drivers did not need to fear that their car would submerge in rising waters. Curious journalists discovered what the residents of Ganzhou had long known: that an extensive system of brick culverts distributed the rainwater to wells and ponds and drained the excess into the Gong River. Local experts told the journalists that the culverts were built in the eleventh century, by a prefect named Liu Yi (1017–1086).<sup>2</sup>

That Liu Yi built the drainage system of Ganzhou is not certain, but it is very likely. Liu Yi served as prefect of Ganzhou during the New Laws, from 1072 to April 1074.<sup>3</sup> A few years before, he had investigated the polders and waterways of the Southeast as a member of Wang Anshi's (1021–1086) Finance Planning Commission, and as Assistant Director of Waterways had prevented a flood by persuading the court to open the floodgate at Yang Bridge instead of at Changchengkou (north of present-day Xushui, Hebei province).<sup>4</sup> His aptitude for hydraulics had been remarked upon early by the renowned Hu Yuan (993–1059). As a boy in the family school in Fuzhou, Fujian, Liu Yi had been "serious and solitary, and insistent on discovering the meaning of the books he read," but Hu Yuan taught him that one must cultivate the Way in practical application as well as in learning and conduct. Hu Yuan therefore discussed subjects such as "the disposal of troops and the governance of people, water control and mathematics. He once praised Liu Yi for his skill in water management."<sup>5</sup> Hu Yuan's lessons are evident in an inscription that Liu Yi wrote on a wall in the Temple of Yu in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, in 1050. The inscription bewails the parched land, the barren mountains, and the failed harvests that Liu had observed during his travels in the region. He decries the famines in the area as evidence that the people had rejected "the lessons of the sages and worthies" who had taught them to prevent floods and droughts by digging channels and ditches.<sup>6</sup> In an early appointment as Magistrate of Qushan (near present-day Lianyungang City, Jiangsu province), he accordingly "created reservoirs and

2 This story was first reported by the *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo qingnian bao*) on July 14, 2010. Other newspapers took up the story in the following days and weeks, in reports and opinion pieces, often to criticize the ineptitude of contemporary urban planners. In the *China Culture Daily* of July 16, 2010, for example, Zhao Guangrui asked, "Where is today's Prefect Liu?"

3 See Z. Li 2001, 374.

4 See Toghto, *Song shi*, 334.10729. Cf. Toghto, *Song shi*, 95.2353, 95.2364.

5 Wang Cheng, *Dongdu shilüe*, 86.3a (劉彝); Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 2a.18. Cf. Toghto, *Song shi*, 334.10729; Zeng and Liu, *Quan Song wen*, 1044.219–220.

6 Lü Zuqian, *Huangchao wenjian*, 30.16ab (題禹廟壁).

taught agricultural techniques,” as part of his effort to “pursue everything that could benefit the people.”<sup>7</sup> Cheng Hao (1032–1085), who had served with Liu Yi on the Finance Planning Commission in 1068, remembered him in 1079 as an official who had “achieved merit by means of water management projects” in all of his appointments.<sup>8</sup> The historian Li Tao (1115–1184) wrote that, among the disciples of Hu Yuan, Liu Yi “apparently was the one who built drains and ditches, and he is still famous for his efforts in water management.”<sup>9</sup>

When Liu Yi took up his post as prefect of Ganzhou (then called Qianzhou), “Jiangxi was just suffering a famine, and many people abandoned children by the roadside. Liu posted placards along the thoroughfares, calling on the people to take in these children.” By awarding daily rations of rice from the prefectural granary to people who adopted the foundlings, he ensured their survival.<sup>10</sup> He moreover determined to “rectify customs.” Offended by the locals’ respect for shamans and by their veneration of ghosts, he “indicted 3,700 illicit shamans, forcing them to change their occupation to medicine.”<sup>11</sup> In order to teach the shamans the rudiments of medicine and pharmacology, he composed *Methods for Rectifying Customs* (*Zheng su fa*, ca. 1072).<sup>12</sup> In addition, he published *Three Injunctions* (*San quan*, ca. 1072), in which he denounced not only shamanic practice, but also female infanticide and litigiousness.<sup>13</sup> Sources from the Song dynasty do not mention the drainage system of Ganzhou; entries about the drainage system in the local gazetteers of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912) dynasties admit that “it isn’t known when it was first built,” and that the construction of the system was attributed to Liu Yi only by tradition.<sup>14</sup> The biography of Liu Yi in the 1621 *Gazetteer of Ganzhou Prefecture*, however, credits Liu Yi with the creation of twelve portholes:

Previously, because the prefectural seat is bordered by water on three sides, the city would be quickly inundated when assaulted by violent waters. Liu Yi created twelve portholes. Depending on the level of the

7 Toghto, *Song shi*, 334.10729 (劉彝).

8 Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 2a.18. Cf. Zeng and Liu, *Quan Song wen*, 4666.262.

9 Zeng and Liu, *Quan Song wen*, 4666.262 (新修四齋集).

10 Wei Tai, *Dongxuan bilu*, 9.101.

11 Toghto, *Song shi*, 334.10729 (劉彝).

12 See Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, 13.8b; Toghto, *Song shi*, 334.10729. Cf. Hinrichs 2015, 31–32.

13 See Yu Wenlong and Xie Zhao, *Ganzhou fuzhi*, 11.6a.

14 Yu Wenlong and Xie Zhao, *Ganzhou fuzhi*, 2.13a (福壽二溝).

river, the portholes could be opened or closed. This promptly put an end to the floods. Because of Liu Yi's skills in water management, the court appointed him Assistant Director of Waterways.<sup>15</sup>

The portholes evidently ended flooding in Ganzhou not by raising a new barrier to the Gong and Zhang rivers, but by draining water that had entered the city through the gates and other vulnerable spots. Maps of the drainage system in the gazetteers of 1621 and 1873 do not identify all twelve portholes, but the portholes they include are all connected to the drains. The likelihood that Liu Yi built the culverts as well as the portholes is increased by his close friendship with Chen Xiang (1017–1080), who restored the wells of Hangzhou in the year Liu Yi arrived in Ganzhou. Liu Yi himself described Chen Xiang's efforts in Hangzhou, in an inscription he composed for Chen Xiang's shrine in 1085:

Hangzhou borders on the ocean. Its soil is saline and its water undrinkable. The several hundred thousand residents rely on the wells in the city and in the mountains to supply their daily needs. Along the neglected trajectories created by Li Changyuan [i.e., by Li Bi (722–789), in the early 780s] my lord built stone culverts and then linked bamboo pipes to draw water from West Lake and fill the six wells, distributed across the neighborhoods. The entire city thus had enough water to draw from the wells, and the people received the benefits from this.<sup>16</sup>

The drainage system that defied modern engineers, therefore, was probably designed by a man who took his lessons from Yu the Great (trad. r. 2255–2205 BCE). The present age may perceive a contradiction between Liu Yi's classical scholarship and his hydraulic expertise, between his care for the people's welfare and his disparagement of their customs, but the drainage system is emblematic of Liu Yi's career and convictions, diverting modern perceptions of his endeavors just as his culverts, reservoirs, and portholes distribute rain and floodwaters. Like the pound-locks and the

15 Yu Wenlong and Xie Zhao, *Ganzhou fuzhi*, 11.6a (劉彝). Liu Yi was appointed Assistant Director of Waterways twice, first in the early 1070s and again in 1086. Liu Yi's creation of the portholes is mentioned in two earlier Ming sources as well, but in a garbled form. See Xie Jin, *Yongle dadian*, 8093.1a; Dong Tianxi, *Ganzhou fuzhi*, 8.2b–3a. The first of these, the *Yongle Encyclopedia* (*Yongle dadian*, 1407), cites a gazetteer, now lost, entitled *Maps, Accounts, and Records of Ganzhou Prefecture* (*Ganzhoufu tujing zhi*).

16 Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, fu.21ab (先生祠堂記). Cf. Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 11.379–380. On Li Bi's tenure in Hangzhou, see Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 130.3622.

self-supporting bridges of the eleventh century, the drains and ponds of Ganzhou were both the product of benevolent governance and its sign. Because the culverts not only drained excess water but also maintained the water level in the wells and reservoirs, they protected the city against floods as well as against droughts. They sustained the body physical and thereby nurtured the body politic. In the city above, Liu Yi saved the lives of abandoned infants and taught drug therapy and acupuncture to former shamans, while below the streets his system of culverts distributed water to wells and drained the excess. Since at least the Ming dynasty, the two main channels of the drainage system have been known as the Blessing Drain and the Longevity Drain, allegedly because their courses trace the seal-script characters for *fu* 福 and *shou* 壽, but one does not have to resort to morphology to perceive the semiotics of the system.<sup>17</sup> The drainage system of Ganzhou turned the city into a living organism that replicated and sustained the life aboveground.

Although Liu Yi had criticized the New Laws, he shared Wang Anshi's (and Fan Zhongyan's) concern with irrigation systems and public health, as well as Wang's conviction that correct moral learning taught practical abilities. Wang Anshi recommended Liu Yi in 1069 for his "brilliant perception and his pervasive intelligence, his talent in management and aid."<sup>18</sup> Liu Yi wrote commentaries on the seven classics and planned canals to drain the Yellow River.<sup>19</sup> His charity toward the foundlings of Ganzhou brought forth "sweet dew, auspicious lotuses, and auspicious grain."<sup>20</sup> Rather than disarticulating and distorting Liu Yi's accomplishments in order to fit them into present categories and narratives ("a relatively advanced and scientific urban drainage system"), one can use their coherence and integrity to understand the inadequacy of absolute periodization and the analytical terms associated with it.<sup>21</sup>

The writing of the city during the eleventh century can serve the same function. Scholars have debated for almost a century whether the prefectural seats and market towns of the Song Empire could compare to the autonomous cities of medieval Europe or, conversely, whether the Song Empire may have been the first modern period in world history. An

17 See Chu Jingxin, *Ganxian zhi*, 49.4.74a; Yu Wenlong and Xie Zhao, *Ganzhou fuzhi*, 2.13a–14a.

18 Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 40.236 (舉屯田員外郎劉彝狀). Chen Xiang, similarly, wrote in 1051 to a superior that Liu Yi "in his governance and in his learning penetrates to the very essence." Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 7.2b (與兩浙安撫陳舍人薦士書).

19 See Toghto, *Song shi*, 334.10729; Xu Song, *Song huiyao jigao, fangyu* 17.7599–7600.

20 Yu Wenlong and Xie Zhao, *Ganzhou fuzhi*, 11.6a (劉彝).

21 *China Youth Daily*, July 14, 2010, citing Wan Younan, curator at the Ganzhou City Museum.



analysis of the manner in which eleventh-century literati represented their experience of the metropolis, however, demonstrates that the cities of the Song Empire defy the universalized, linear timeline of European modernity. In their philological and technological discoveries, made in their attempt to recover the wisdom of antiquity, eleventh-century literati resembled the humanists of fifteenth-century Italy. In their use of hydraulics and medicine to understand finance, they resembled the physiocrats of eighteenth-century France. In their reflections on the relationship between the individual and the crowd, in their taste for stories of detection, in their apprehension about the hold of commodities on the self, and in their delight in manipulating boundaries between nature and artifice, and between naturalist representation and subjective perception, they resembled the writers and painters of nineteenth-century London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. The imperial government in the eleventh century issued the world's first fiduciary paper money, but paper currency was abolished during the Ming dynasty. Philologists of the Qing dynasty cited with approval the epigraphists of the eleventh century but found little to admire in the scholarship of subsequent centuries.

Efforts to fit the cities of the Middle Period into a universal, linear history of modernity, therefore, have necessarily distorted the narratives and categories of the sources. By reconstructing the physical layout of Middle-Period cities and by interpreting the resulting conjectural spaces in social-scientific terms, historians have hoped to present a timeless, objective analysis of those cities. By their materialist method, however, they have severed the historical connection between the text and the city, and they have thereby produced the opposite of what they intended: a series of timely, subjective histories, in which the nature of Middle-Period cities has changed according to personal biases and the political considerations of the moment. The preservation of the historical connection between the text and the city, by contrast, allows the past to resist the impositions of the present—just as Liu Yi's drainage system continues to disperse anachronistic assumptions along with pouring rain. The historical parallels and historical connections between the cities of the Song Empire and the cities of nineteenth-century Europe demonstrate not that the Song Empire was modern, but that defining elements of the cultural expression of modernity (such as the notion of the self and the foregrounding of subjective perception in painting) could exist and did exist in a non-industrial society and, therefore, that European modernity was not the product of a singular, exceptional trajectory.

## The Middle-Period City in History

In the eleventh century, the commercial streetscape emerged into writing under the brushes of men such as Liu Yi: men dedicated to the revival of Ancient Prose, men convinced of the truth of classical learning, men hopeful of the restoration of ancient governance. Just as these literati devised irrigation systems and monetary instruments in order to return the Song Empire to perfect antiquity, so they changed the literary topography of inherited genres and created new genres in order to contain the burgeoning city within the bounds of moral learning. Like Honoré de Balzac's novelistic experiments in the *Human Comedy*, the literary innovations of eleventh-century literati were driven by a conservative intent.

The literati of the ninth century, like their predecessors, had written the urban streetscape in the past tense, in poems about their adolescence and in memoirs about cities destroyed. Chang'an stood at the center of their literary geography as it stood at the center of literary production, but the city itself they represented not as a populous metropolis of large markets and busy trade, but as a cosmic center of political power and perfect landscape. When literati wished to reflect on what distinguished them as individuals, they did not step into the street to confront the crowd but withdrew into their gardens or rode into the suburbs, to rediscover their predilections along winding paths and among flowering trees. Even streetscapes, when they appear in poems of the ninth century, are revealed by the tangled branches and blossoming bowers that overhang them. Only seasonal festivals sometimes suspend the strictures on commerce and on literature to set a festive throng or a few market stalls on the page. The annual cycle of festivals also structured commemorations of life in the capital after its destruction, the timely customs and seasonal celebrations reminding the reader that the former capital had stood at the center of civilization, at the center of time.

Far from severing the city from the rhythms of nature, literati of the eleventh century extended those rhythms, from trees blossoming by the roadside to the traffic flowing through the avenues, from the annual cycle of festivals to the daily pattern of life. Whereas literati in the ninth century had gazed from their provincial posts and places of exile toward the capital at Chang'an, literati in the eleventh century looked outward from the capital at Kaifeng to the prosperous cities that provisioned the government and the army, and as they looked outward across the multi-centered empire, they also looked down onto the myriad rooftops and into the streets. In these streets, they discovered a beauty particular to the city,

and in these streets they placed themselves, pondering what distinguished them as individuals from the crowd and how their value—the value of their friendship, their connoisseurship, their writing, their talent—related to the price of commodities. In these streets, also, they considered the movement of people, goods, and money, in hopes of discerning in the apparent chaos of selfish dealings a cosmic pattern of sustaining benevolence. In the collected works of the eleventh century, in other words, the city emerges as a place for thought as well as an object of thought. Just as Balzac in his novels instanced the transformation of social relations into money in order to promote the harmonious dignity of provincial society over the vicious illusions of Parisian life, so proponents of Ancient Prose in the eleventh century considered themselves in relationship to anonymous crowds and anonymous commodities in order to regain possession of themselves as subjects, beholden to the absolute values of moral learning, in defiance of the fluctuating prices and changing fashions of the metropolis.<sup>22</sup>

Instead of gaining mastery of commodities, however, commodities gained mastery over them, drawing them into regimes of relative value that encompassed their writing, their talent, and even their language of absolute values as things of fashion. Nor did the proponents of Ancient Prose succeed in discovering the cosmic pattern within the circulation of goods and money, or in circumscribing the urban economy within the classical language of moral learning. It was even the debates about economic policy, during the New Laws of Wang Anshi, that defeated the intellectual optimism of the 1030s and 1040s. The factious debates of the 1070s and 1080s revealed not only that learning was yet inadequate to return the Song Empire to the perfect order of antiquity, but that the exegetical tradition lacked an accepted method by which to establish whether a given policy accorded with the intent of the ancient kings. Unable to contain the relative values and economic complexity of the metropolis within classical discourse, literati abandoned the city as a place for thought and determined instead to seek absolute values within themselves, and to discover the principles of governance in the management of their families and their communities. The famous urban descriptions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—the *Dream of Splendor in the Eastern Capital*, the *Splendid Scenery of the Capital*—do not attempt to conform metropolitan life to a moral pattern but instead delight in sumptuary display, and in their avid lists of commodities admit

22 This notion of objectification as a means of re-subjectification derives from Reeh 2004.

the inadequacy of writing to the representation of urban experience and the defeat of words by things.<sup>23</sup>

By changing the geography of the genres they inherited from the ninth century, literati in the eleventh century made the city available on the written page, as an object of thought for themselves as well as for the present historian. In the collected works of the eleventh century, the city manifests a tension within the Ancient Prose movement, between innovation and conservatism, between literary play and moral seriousness, between the pursuit of individual distinction and the cultivation of a shared ideology—a tension that accounts for the different mien in which the same men appear in chapters 2 and 3 of this book. Whereas literary play turns the city into a site of contrast and competition, moral inquiry treats urban life as a coherent whole. The flow of goods, the circulation of money, and the pulse of life, better visible in the city than in the countryside, exhibit the prosperity of the body physical and the health of the body politic. By sustaining these two bodies, the roads and waterways, the storehouses and hospitals likewise operate simultaneously as physical infrastructure and as metaphors, as the instruments of governance and as its sign: reservoirs that bathe the people in imperial benevolence, waterways that wash away the people's cares, bridges that convey the people's gratitude, roads that lighten the burdens of carters and porters, avenues that encourage the mobility of rich and poor alike, officials who minister to the people like doctors.<sup>24</sup> A history that preserves the historical connection between the text and the city necessarily replicates this convergence of technologies and discourses on the metropolis, and thereby juxtaposes aspects of eleventh-century history that modern disciplines would divide, such as canonical exegesis and civil engineering, financial reform and public health, literary innovation and monetary policy. By such preservation and replication, the city that emerged into writing in the eleventh century may re-emerge into present-day academic prose.

The preservation of the historical connection between the text and the city requires, paradoxically, an initial recognition of the separateness of writing from urban life. Materialist approaches to urban history, by taking

23 See de Pee 2017a, 203. The use of lists to convey the profusion of commodities also has its equivalent in nineteenth-century French literature, for example in Émile Zola's novel *Le Ventre de Paris*.

24 See, in sequence, Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 30.865; Hu Su, *Wengongji*, 35.426; Zheng Xia, *Xitangji*, 9.40ab; Su Song, *Su Wei gong wenji*, 19.259; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 2.9b–10b; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, 1.10.10a. Cf. Chao Buzhi, *Jibei Chao xiansheng jilei ji*, 8.12ab; Fan Zuyu, *Fan taishi ji*, 27.6ab; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 5.78–79; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 2.9b; Su Xun, *Jiayou ji jianzhu*, 1.2.

writing for granted, simultaneously overestimate and underestimate the text. By reading texts as documents rather than as representations, such approaches assume that a complete corpus of texts from the period would have allowed a full reconstruction of its cities, and that the incomplete knowledge of those cities is due to the fragmentary state of the transmitted texts. The separation of literary development from urban development, by contrast, allows the recognition that the act of writing performs a subjective, ideological operation on the urban environment, selective by its nature rather than by accident.<sup>25</sup> Literati of the ninth century did not perceive the living streetscape as a suitable topic for literature, and they wrote of courtesans and merchants only in the past tense, in reflections on times irretrievable. Literati in the eleventh century raised the living streetscape to representation, not because the streetscape had changed, but because they hoped by their writing to understand and to contain the developments that had begun in the cities of the eighth and ninth centuries. The city emerged into writing by a deliberate reorientation of literary genres, not by a material change in the cities themselves.

Because the collected works of literati preserve the most direct representations of urban experience, and because these collected works were published as models of literary accomplishment and moral conviction, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* recovers urban history as literary history and as intellectual history. Eleventh-century literati wrote the city in competition with their peers, to demonstrate their originality by an inventive treatment of a new subject, and in competition with merchants and nobles, to claim for themselves a privileged place in the city and to prove that a sustainable urban economy must conform to an immanent moral pattern. Their literary and ideological efforts reveal the city in the eleventh century as a place for new ways of seeing and thinking. Literati discovered in the opulence, the populousness, and the activity of the city a beauty that complemented and equaled the beauty of the rural landscape. They took pleasure in the artifice and illusions of the city, such as its tall buildings and the food shipped in from remote regions, the night markets lit by lanterns and the daytime streets darkened by dust. Some tried to replicate in their compositions the horizontality and simultaneity of the city, where an imperial official lived next to a pancake vendor and a gate on a roaring thoroughfare gave onto a silent courtyard. The spreading urban crowd raised profound questions about individuality and identity, as literati realized that others might feel as distinct from the crowd as they themselves did, and that others might find them as

25 Cf. Newman 2007; Williams 1973.

indistinguishable from the masses as they themselves found others. Similarly, literati reflected that by distinguishing themselves through the purchase of commodities, they became the attributes of these commodities as much as the commodities became attributes of theirs. The stupendous scale of daily provisioning drew their attention to the extensive infrastructure that sustained the growing cities, from the ships and storehouses in the capital, to the roads and canals in the provinces, to the river ports and market towns, to the irrigation networks and watermills in the countryside. This literary and intellectual history of the city may not provide a detailed panorama of urban life, but it proves beyond doubt that the cities of the Song Empire were distinct from the countryside, and that it is meaningless to hold them below the cities of medieval Europe.

This literary and intellectual history of the city contributes moreover to the economic history and to the general intellectual history of the eleventh century. The officials who governed the cities of the eleventh century as magistrates and prefects and fiscal commissioners were bewildered by the volume of trade, by the complexity of the transactions, by the detail of the litigation. They took comfort, however, in the knowledge that some of their peers by their dedication to classical learning had penetrated the pattern that informed the flow of goods and the circulation of money, allowing them to apply their skill in building canals to the prevention of deflation, and their experience in floating currencies to the improvement of public health. This proved that money and commerce, although devised by man, functioned in accordance with the cosmic order, and that the city, where money and commerce converged, could be understood by analogy with hydraulic systems and the human body. The great attempts at political and economic reform, in 1043–1044 and in 1069–1085, set out to recruit men who possessed this universal talent, so that they might assist in the restoration of the government of the ancient kings, in which mankind would attain its proper place in the cosmic order and the pattern inherent in all things would lie revealed.

The hopes of this restoration of antiquity were defeated by the failure of the economic measures. Neither the supporters of the New Laws nor their opponents proved capable of “aligning the resources of the empire” (*li tianxia zhi cai* 理天下之財), that is, of conforming the economy to the immanent moral pattern (*li* 理). In the latter decades of the eleventh century, literati in their treatises and in their letters continue their certainty in moral learning, but in their memorials they sound shrill and frustrated, incapable of convincing their opponents of what they believe to be obviously true. Rather than abandoning their moral learning and their political economy of equitable

distribution, they withdraw from the streets and markets of the city to seek absolute values within themselves and within their families. Epitaphs of the 1080s and 1090s begin to omit the practical accomplishments of deceased officials and to concentrate instead on their moral character. This failure of the economic reforms of the eleventh century does not mean that “the Chinese,” or even the literati, were defeated by the urban economy, for many merchants and many literati earned large profits by trade and investments. It means that in the writings that survive from the eleventh century, literati were unable to contain the city within the strictures of classical writing and to conform the economy to the pattern of the cosmic order. They lost the Way in the city.

This intellectual history of the city, although it draws comparisons with representations of the city in European history, does not identify the place of the cities of the Song Empire along the linear timeline of European modernity. Instead, it demonstrates that European modernity is neither singular nor exceptional. Not only did defining elements of European modernity exist in cities of the Song Empire—such as the notion of a self and paintings that foreground artifice and subjective perception—in a context that was not otherwise modern, but the cultural expression of European modernity derived substantially from the metropolitan culture that had developed in East Asia since the eleventh century, whether it be the interiors of Siegfried Bing (1838–1905), the paintings of Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), the dresses of Paul Poiret (1879–1944), the poetry of Ezra Pound (1885–1972), the ceramics of Bernard Leach (1887–1979), or the chairs of Hans Wegner (1914–2007).<sup>26</sup> Materialist histories of Middle-Period cities have overlooked such contradictions, not only because they have generally disregarded cultural expression in favor of political organization and economic activity, but especially because they have relied on methods and categories of the social sciences that are the product and the means of the universalization of European modernity.<sup>27</sup> The materialist disregard of Middle-Period discourses on the city has therefore resulted, not in objectivity and progress, but in tautology and repetition, and in a series of histories of the political present, from the imperialist narratives of an “Oriental” modernity in the 1930s to the present “analytical frameworks with Chinese characteristics.”<sup>28</sup>

26 On the foregrounding of artifice and subjectivity as a defining characteristic of modernist painting see, for example, T. Clark 1985, 10, 21; Collier 1985, 26–31; Hannoosh 1987, 181–183; Rubin 2008, 12–14, 45–46, 189–193; Timms 1985, 3–4.

27 See Frank 1998, 1–31. On the relative neglect of cultural history in urban histories of the Middle Period, cf. De Weerd 2013, 307; Y. He 2014, 85; F. Liu 2011, 24–25.

28 Y. He 2014, 83.

The individual trajectories and subjective perceptions in the collected works of the eleventh century may prohibit a detailed reconstruction of Middle-Period cities, but in their incompleteness and subjectivity they preserve a direct connection between the text and the city, between the present and the past. The solid historicity of their literary geography resists the tautologies of the present and reveals instead the importance of the city in the intellectual history of the eleventh century, first as a place of aspiration and intellectual optimism, then as a place of frustration and intellectual defeat. The poems about individuals in the crowd, the prefaces about commodities and the self, the landscape paintings that offered refuge from the crowded streets, and the ratiocinating judges who solved crimes in the anonymous metropolis do not prove that the Song was modern, but suggest instead that important elements of modernity and modernism were a function of the increased size of the cities of nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>29</sup> In the teeming cities of London and Paris, St. Petersburg and Berlin, the art of the East Asian metropolis became intelligible for the first time. Thus, Siegfried Kracauer—a *flâneur* like Honoré de Balzac and Walter Benjamin—in 1927 recognized in “old Chinese landscape paintings” the reduction of nature that reveals to mankind its own essence:

Thus, in old Chinese landscape paintings the trees, ponds, and mountains are rendered only as sparse ornamental signs drawn in ink. The organic center has been removed and the remaining unconnected parts are composed according to laws that are not those of nature but laws given by a knowledge of truth, which, as always, is a function of its time.<sup>30</sup>

29 Cf. Edward Soja's (2000, 4) notion of synekism, that is, “the developmental impetus that derives from densely settled habitats and the stimulus of urban conglomeration.” Cf. also Hymes 2015, 664; Newman 2007, 3–7 (“If what we term *modernity* is to be found in the early modern city and its cultural remains perhaps ... how *modernity* is conceptualized needs to be rethought,” 7, emphases in the original). On landscape paintings as refuge from the heat, noise, and dust of the metropolis, see Chao Yuezhi, *Songshan wenji*, 4.5ab; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, II.15.1327–1329; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 5.47, 18.206, 28.327; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.668, 23.673–674; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, I.16.379–380, III.3.1507; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 29.713–714, 29.716; Yang Jie, *Wuwei ji*, 4.1b. On landscape painting as a modern genre see, for example, T. Clark 1985, 148–168; Gelley 1993; Williams 1973, 124–132.

30 Kracauer 1963, 60, as translated in Kracauer 1995, 83. Cf. Benjamin 1938.





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In the eleventh century, the cities of the Song Empire (960-1279) emerged into writing. Literati in prior centuries had looked away from crowded streets, but literati in the eleventh century found beauty in towering buildings and busy harbors. Their purpose in writing the city was ideological. On the written page, they tried to establish a distinction that eluded them in the avenues and to discern an immanent pattern in the bewildering movement of people, goods, and money. By the end of the eleventh century, however, they recognized that they had failed in their efforts. They had lost the Way in the city. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in Middle-Period China, 800-1100* reveals the central place of urban life in the history of the eleventh century. Important developments in literary innovation and monetary policy, in canonical exegesis and civil engineering, in financial reform and public health, converge in this book as they converged in the cities of the Song Empire.

**Christian de Pee** is Professor of History at the University of Michigan. He is the author of *The Writing of Weddings in Middle-Period China: Text and Ritual Practice in the Eighth through Fourteenth Centuries* and a co-editor of *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and the Southern Song (1127-1179)*.

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