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Author(s): Stephen Owen

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The Manuscript Legacy of the Tang: The Case of Literature

STEPHEN OWEN

Harvard University

TANG dynasty literature can never be fully separated from the question of how we happen to have what we have. Changes in taste and canon are important, but those changes are constrained by what survives, as much as they earlier shaped what has survived. Our “Tang” does not look like the choices and preferences of any particular moment in the Tang dynasty itself; nor do we have the luxury of looking at Tang literature as a whole and making up our own minds. The closer one looks, the more one finds that the survival of Tang literature is a conjunction of historical accident and the period taste of the ninth and tenth centuries.¹ Our knowledge of the Tang comes filtered through the peculiarities of manuscript circulation and the turbulence of a single era, the near century between the Huang Chao Rebellion and the final assemblage of the largest regional libraries in the Song capital at Bianjing (modern Kaifeng) that took place right

¹ The “period taste of the ninth and tenth centuries” was, of course various and is difficult to define in simple terms. Nevertheless, we can see its traces. For example, a clear preference for regulated verse poets of the late eighth century is evident in the extant anthologies and in critical works such as Zhang Wei’s 張為 *Shiren zhuke tu* 詩人主客圖, from around the turn of the tenth century. The works of ninth-century poets have been preserved rather well, often in independent editions rather than in editions reconstituted from anthology sources. At the same time men in this period showed little interest in many poets of the “High Tang,” who had been important in their own day and would be much admired in later ages. The poems of High Tang poets such as Chang Jian 常建, Cui Hao 崔顥, Qiju Qian 綦毋潛, Cui Guofu 崔國輔, and Zu Yong 祖詠 have survived only in modest selections, preserved primarily in anthology sources.

after the conquest of the Southern Tang in 976. So many texts have survived that we are perhaps disinclined to question the processes by which they survived; however, there are so many cases in which writers we now consider important survived by a tenuous but traceable thread that it is worthwhile reexamining how some things were lost and some preserved. If we often find that Tang critical judgments do not match the writer's existing works, those judgments may have been based on versions no longer extant. Modern Chinese scholarship meticulously cites early bibliographies and existing editions with their lineages; but it rarely touches on the difficult question of the manuscript tradition as it survived in the early Northern Song. I like the term flotsam and jetsam, the remainder of a shipwreck; it is an apt metaphor.

Following Huang Chao's occupation of Chang'an early in 881, the city was repeatedly sacked—by Huang Chao's followers, by the city mob, and later by the loyalist forces that retook the city. The great imperial library, along with large private and temple holdings, was gone in a city left in ruins. The wars before and after this event devastated much of China. This period, lasting until the situation gradually stabilized in the mid-tenth century, wreaked havoc on the manuscript legacy of the Tang. So many manuscripts had been in circulation throughout China that a vast amount survived; the problem lay in what works survived and the form in which they survived. Texts that were popular, texts that people copied or paid to have copied, survived; but late ninth- and tenth-century taste did not necessarily favor what later bibliophiles and curators of culture saw as the "literary heritage." The works of even popular authors often survived only as selections. The loss of works, once preserved complete only in the imperial library and perhaps in a few great collections, was stunning. Losing works was sometimes merely losing track of works, not knowing where the best and most complete versions could be found. But if those versions were not found before they rotted away, burned in a library fire, or were reused on the verso as ledgers by the pragmatic descendants of bibliophiles, they too were lost.

BUILDING THE SONG LIBRARY

The regional states that rose from the ruins of Tang China must have built their own book collections out of provincial libraries and perhaps out of private and temple holdings as well. We know next

to nothing about provincial libraries in the Tang, except that in the eyes of the new Song Dynasty the libraries of Jingnan 荆南, the Latter Shu 後蜀, and the Southern Tang 南唐 were especially prized—even though these collections were no larger than those of some great private bibliophiles in the Tang. The Dunhuang trove was but one temple library in an independent Han Chinese principality, and it suggests not only the richness of the material that once existed but also something of the vagaries of library holdings.² It is true that Dunhuang has added immeasurably to our understanding of Tang literature; but it is useful to pose the alternative question: what if all we had of Tang literature was what had been found in the Dunhuang library? Gao Shi 高適 (ca. 700–765) would clearly be the most prominent Tang poet, followed by Wang Fanzhi 王梵志 (the *Brahmacārīn* Wang).³ It is true that the interests of a temple library were different from those of the library of a regional state with imperial pretensions, but the regional state libraries were built out of provincial libraries, collections that had addressed local needs and had not been intended to represent the Tang literary heritage—until local dynasts came to see themselves as conservators of the Tang heritage.

At the beginning of his Panizzi Lectures, “The Lost Books of Medieval China,” Glen Dudbridge gives an excellent overview of how the Song imperial library was built from the modest library of a regional

² The Dunhuang trove, sealed around 1035, contains texts dating back to the fifth century; most of the manuscripts, however, are from the ninth and tenth centuries. Extensive reproduction of manuscripts, especially of large works, depends on large scriptoria. Buddhist venues had a great advantage in preserving manuscripts in that every great monastery complex had a scriptorium. The central government had a scriptorium. We can assume that provincial and prefectural governments had scriptoria commensurate with their practical needs; however, the huge manuscript compilations and relatively large collections evident in the legacy of the imperial library catalog required a large scriptorium for preservation and dissemination. Provincial libraries probably lacked the scribal resources to reproduce the famous large compendia whose loss we now lament. That the mid-seventh-century court compilation *Wenguan cilin* 文館詞林 in 1,000 scrolls was preserved partially in Japan but not in China is probably the result of imperial foreign policy, which tapped the imperial scriptorium for purposes of cultural diplomacy. Prefectural and provincial libraries had neither the motive nor the resources to reproduce such texts. In *Wenyuan yinghua* we often do not find Tang works of then recognized cultural importance; at the same time we do find copious representation of examination poems and *fu*, as well as standard bureaucratic prose forms. This seems to represent the motives of provincial libraries, which were to help students preparing for the examination and to provide models for civil servants to participate in political life.

³ Wang Fanzhi, by legend a seventh-century lay Buddhist devotee, was the name to which several, rather different sets of popular poems were attached in the Dunhuang materials.

state with somewhere between 10,000 and 13,000 scrolls, to which the Song added 13,000 scrolls that it took from the Shu Kingdom, the uncertain holdings of Jingnan and the other conquered states, and 20,000 scrolls from the Southern Tang. Dudbridge estimates holdings of the imperial library to have been 40,000 scrolls (excluding duplicates), which were used in the great compilation projects of the 970s and 980s.⁴ Sources differ on the sizes of the regional libraries, but the aggregate number (including duplicates) of the Song imperial library holdings after acquiring the regional libraries is given as 80,000.⁵ A half century later the *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目 (General catalog for the Institute for the Veneration of Literature), compiled between 1034 and 1042, had only just over 30,000, including many large works by Song authors, which would have been presented after the completion of *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (The flower of the park of letters). These 30,000 scrolls include the 3,500 scrolls of the so-called “four big books” (*si da shu* 四大書): *Wenyuan yinghua*, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, and *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜. We face the perennial problem of Chinese bibliography: how do we account for the difference in numbers? One possible explanation might be the palace fire of 1015, in which many books perished. The best explanation, however, would seem to be that Dudbridge’s estimate is wrong due to one simple fact: libraries have mostly the same books.⁶ The larger numbers we see in

⁴ Glen Dudbridge, *The Lost Books of Medieval China* (London: The British Library, 2000), p. 2. I use the term “scroll” here for *juan* 卷. When I am certain I am dealing with printed works, I use the romanized term “*juan*.” Some late tenth-century books may have been printed, but the vast majority is in manuscript. The manuscript books may have been in scrolls, but many were probably in the increasingly popular folded scroll, often called “butterfly books,” the precursors of print format.

⁵ See *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑿長編 (1957; rpt., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p. 422, and *Shishi leiyuan* 實事類苑 (*Huangchao leiyuan* 皇朝類苑), Siku quanshu edition [hereafter SKQS], 31.5b. Dudbridge’s estimate of 40,000 different works, less duplicates, may be based on the assumption that the imperial library kept only one set of duplicates; it seems more likely that it kept everything it had, distributed in the three branches of the library. In addition to the sources cited by Dudbridge, there are other sources that claim the Southern Tang library was larger than 20,000 scrolls. An estimate of over 20,000 scrolls comes from the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, p. 422. The *Shishi leiyuan*, SKQS, 2.7a, puts the Southern Tang library at 30,000. In *Jingding Jiankang zhi* 景定建康志, SKQS, 33.1b, Zhou Yinghe 周應合 claims that there were 60,000 scrolls taken from the Southern Tang library, but this is a thirteenth-century source, and the figure seems inflated.

⁶ The numbers of works recovered during the Song dynasty from the libraries of the regional states more likely come from inventories rather than from bibliographical lists of distinct works. It is, moreover, quite likely that these regional libraries themselves contained duplicates. The history

the initial formation of the Song library represent an “inventory,” not a catalog of distinct titles as we find in the later *Chongwen zongmu*. The conquering Song armies did not come with a resident bibliographer familiar with the collection in Bianjing who chose needed titles (there is no indication that the library in Bianjing had a catalog at the time); they packed up the books of the conquered kingdoms, sent them off to Bianjing, and celebrated the size of their acquisitions. In other words, if one adds Bianjing’s 10,000 scrolls, Chengdu’s 13,000, and Jinling’s 20,000, one gets 20,000 scrolls of distinct titles, plus several thousand scrolls that were in other regional collections but not in the Southern Tang collection. Equally significant in adding titles to the new Song library was the search for rare books, undertaken by Taizong’s edict of 984.⁷ This yielded only 1,228 scrolls that were not in the existing imperial collection.⁸ Dudbridge eloquently describes the sense of loss underlying this enterprise, comparing early Song book possessions with older catalogs, with loss as a perennial trope in Chinese bibliography.

Let us then generously estimate the imperial library of the 980s as holding about 25,000 scrolls of distinct titles.⁹ Taking a major library fire into consideration, this figure, along with large early Song contributions, would give us roughly the 35,000 scrolls of distinct titles that we find half a century later in the *Chongwen zongmu*. Let us add another fact. Most of the books in the imperial libraries were not literature. In the “Bibliography” of the *Sui shu* just over 7 percent of the items belonged to the literature section (*jibu* 集部). The *Xin Tang shu* “Bibliography”

of Chinese textual conservation in the age of manuscript culture has many cases when violent upheavals drastically reduced very large collections of books in imperial libraries. Actual loss was due to the fact that many books in such libraries were rare books—often the only copy. Subsequent attempts to rebuild an imperial library were done primarily by acquiring texts that were in general circulation. When the government asked, as it often did, for donations of rarer books, it assembled such books in a central place, thus inadvertently making the literary heritage vulnerable to loss, as occurred in the 1015 fire in the Song imperial libraries.

⁷ The compilation of the 721 catalog is discussed in Dennis Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History Under the Tang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 231–32. This was the book list used in the “Jingji zhi” 經籍志 of the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書. In other words, when the Song library was being constituted there was apparently no extant bibliography for literary writings of the preceding two and a half centuries.

⁸ *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, p. 178.

⁹ If this seems too modest a figure, we should keep in mind that after the destruction caused by the Huang Chao Rebellion, the Tang court was able to rebuild the collection to only somewhat over 20,000 scrolls, which in the subsequent troubles shrank to only 18,000 scrolls. *Jiu Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 46.1962.

fares better with just under 23 percent in the *jibu* or 5,750 scrolls (about the same percentage as in the 721 catalog). We must, however, keep in mind that a significant proportion of those works are pre-Tang, and the sizes of pre-An Lushan collections were large and apparently copied from earlier bibliographies. To know the actual holdings of the library, the *Chongwen zongmu* is by far the most reliable source.¹⁰ The *Chongwen zongmu* lists, by my count, approximately 2,000 scrolls of Tang individual literary collections (full collections, poetry collections, *fu* collections, and prose collections in various forms). The anthologies are also a significant source, but there are many large anthologies where we cannot tell if it is a Song or Tang compilation. Let us then presume in the *jibu* between 3,000 and 4,000 scrolls of Tang individual collections and anthologies compiled before the 980s; that is, at most 16 percent of the collection. If we add the literary collections stretching back to the middle of the Liang (material that would also be included in *Wenyuan yinghua*), that figure will not significantly increase.

This rough figure of three to four thousand scrolls of Tang literary writing in the imperial library in the 980s is meant to serve as the background of a question I will pose later: what was the *Wenyuan yinghua* in its one thousand scrolls? One thing should be obvious from the outset: an “anthology” of a thousand scrolls represented a considerable proportion of the literary holdings in the Song imperial library of the 980s. In fact, “anthology” is the wrong word; from the way it was apparently compiled, *Wenyuan yinghua* was what might be called the “epitome” of the largest collection of Tang and Five Dynasties literary manuscripts of the time. Just as Song Taizong lamented the loss of books when he compared his library to the old catalogs, we lament the loss of the Tang books whose names are preserved in Song catalogs. A substantial portion of those books, evenly represented, may still exist, with the individual literary works that comprised them scattered among the various categories of *Wenyuan yinghua*.

Let me provide some essential background for thinking of manuscript culture as it was received in the early Song; then give a few pieces of anecdotal evidence for the state of textual preservation of Tang lit-

¹⁰ The history of the *Chongwen zongmu* itself is complicated. It was once an annotated bibliography in sixty scrolls, and we dearly wish we still had all the annotations, some of which have, however, been supplied from other sources. Unfortunately these are largely not in the *jibu*. The essential booklist, however, seems basically intact, which is how we use it here.

erature in the first part of the Northern Song to suggest the nature of many of the texts in circulation; and finally return to *Wenyuan yinghua*, to consider it not simply as the gold-mine of Tang literature that it is, but as an “epitome” of the *jibu* in the imperial library.

MANUSCRIPTS OF LITERARY WORKS

The transmission of Tang literature was quite different from many other kinds of textual transmission. The government oversaw the textual integrity of the Confucian Classics, the Histories, and the institutional compendia, as the Tang had done. Texts of the Classics were sometimes imperfect, but such was the nature of learning in the Classics that scholars were disposed to note variants as errors and to compare texts. The Buddhist and Daoist churches oversaw their respective canons with varying degrees of textual care. Serious scholarship was done on the *Wen xuan* 文選 and *Chuci* 楚辭, but before the Song there was no scholarship on Tang literature. In the Tang there were initial editions of a writer’s works; anthologies, even serious ones (though these are now lost); and a few commentaries such as Zhang Tingfang’s 張庭芳 mid-eighth-century annotation of Li Jiao’s 李嶠 (646–715) *Baiyong* 百詠 (though we suppose that this was for purposes of compositional pedagogy rather than to explicate Li Jiao’s poems). Among anthologies, Gu Tao’s 顧陶 mid-ninth-century *Tangshi leixuan* 唐詩類選 suggests a scholarly scrupulousness in refusing to anthologize a poet before a full edition of his works was in circulation (although this is the *only* case in the Tang where fair judgment was linked to the possession of a complete collection); this anthology survived into the Song, but only its prefaces survive today. There was, however, no actual Tang literary scholarship on Tang literature, nor was there a general sense of constraints on the exact reproduction of texts. Because many texts in the *Wenyuan yinghua* were preserved in other venues, we know the textual problems of that compendium in its present form; we do not have grounds for similar worries about texts of the stories in *Taiping guangji* because there are few extant complete texts against which to measure them.

In her important article “Book Culture and Textual Transmission in Song China,” Susan Cherniack takes us to the last part of the eleventh century, when readers of a scholarly bent expressed a strong nostalgia for the manuscript and claims of its superiority to printed books, both

for reading and accuracy.¹¹ This was indeed an age of literary scholarship, to a degree that had no parallel in the Tang. A meticulous scholar of that later era, carefully collating his edition with others, could indeed boast of the superiority of his manuscript to printed editions. This was *not*, however, the state of the manuscript legacy of Tang literature a century earlier in the 980s, the time of *Wenyuan yinghua*'s compilation.

The texts of some authors seem to have been widely circulated. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) may have been deeply concerned about the textual state of Han Yu's 韓愈 (768–824) works, and many people complained that his collection was “not circulated”; but Han Yu's works did indeed circulate widely, albeit in textually various editions. The situation with many other writers is far less clear. When I discuss *Wenyuan yinghua*, I will be considering the holdings of the imperial library; but it is important to recognize that Tang and Five Dynasties manuscripts and copies of them were spread all over China—in provincial libraries, temple libraries, and private libraries. In a number of cases versions later entered general circulation that were far more complete than what we find in the imperial library, as represented by the *Chongwen zongmu* or as we infer from *Wenyuan yinghua*. Some more popular works may have been in many such libraries, but “popular” here is defined by ninth- through early eleventh-century taste, which was far from the canon of Tang literature that we now know. Much literary material in general circulation probably looked like the Dunhuang manuscripts, where the predominant form of literary work was a “personal anthology” of poetry; that is, a selection of poems by different poets that does not seem to have been based on a known anthology. Less “popular” works survived in odd places in the Northern Song; one chanced to find them by accident or heard about them. Unless one happened to go to a place where a manuscript was or heard a friend mention it, that manuscript was unknown. Northern Song literary scholars were, by and large, civil servants. Bound to their assignments, they could not, like the great Renaissance humanists, tour monastery libraries hunting out lost codices. The dispersal of texts influenced not only the preservation of works but also the preparation of editions. A scholar might consult a number of editions in preparing a critical edition, but no one could do a comprehensive comparison of existing manuscripts. Our

¹¹ *HJAS* 54.1 (1994): 5–125.

evidence is that these manuscripts differed considerably both in what they included and in variants. A rule of thumb is that the more texts there were, the more the variants.

Manuscripts were everywhere for those who looked. This is evident in the case of Kong Yanzhi 孔延之, a Song scholar with access to regional manuscripts and inscribed texts. When posted to Yue, Kong compiled *Guiji duoying zongji* 會稽掇英總集, with a preface dated to 1078 and beginning with a characteristic Northern Song lament for lost books. This anthology celebrates the region, but it also includes many Tang texts with no other known source, giving us reason to believe that Kong Yanzhi had access to texts representing the interests of a regional library or local bibliophiles, along with inscriptional sources. We may not trust all the ascriptions, but we see much evidence of local survival of manuscripts that were elsewhere unknown.

SOME ACCOUNTS OF LITERARY COLLECTIONS

In an exemplary account of the preparation of a critical edition, Song Minqiu 宋敏求 (1019–1079), one of the most famous Northern Song scholars, tells us a great deal about the manuscript legacy standing behind those Song editions that are the basis for our modern editions. Song Minqiu prepared his edition of Meng Jiao 孟郊 (751–814) from four primary versions and an unspecified number of other sources. Of the primary versions, one was in five scrolls consisting of 124 pieces; one was in ten scrolls with 331 pieces; one was in five scrolls with 340 pieces; and the last was in two scrolls with 180 pieces. The first lesson we may draw is that the number of scrolls bears only a highly variable relation to the actual size of the collection—between twenty-five and ninety poems per scroll. Song Minqiu continues in his colophon: “The rest are not editorially organized and just record pieces randomly. Every one is different. I have now made a general gathering of what was left out and have gotten rid of the duplications and those whose style seems not like Meng’s. I have 511 pieces.”¹²

This is eloquent testimony to the variation in versions of Meng Jiao’s poetry in the second half of the eleventh century. None of these versions

¹² Hua Chenzhi 華忱之 and Yu Xuecai 喻學才, *Meng Jiao shiji jiaozhu* 孟郊詩集校注 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1995), p. 694. “What was left out” presumably refers to pieces attributed to Meng Jiao that were not in the major manuscripts.

is marked as an “anthology.” Not only do the numbers vary, but so do the contents, giving Song Minqiu a composite number of 511 pieces. The largest single collection available to Song Minqiu was only two-thirds of the aggregate number of poems he recovered by comparing versions. The phrase that should give us particular pause—if I have interpreted it correctly (and it is peculiar)—is “those whose style seems not like his” 若體制不類者.¹³ He has apparently taken it upon himself to exclude works on stylistic grounds; and if our current collection of Meng Jiao’s poetry sounds remarkably homogenous, we cannot say if this is due to Meng Jiao himself or to Song’s editorial intervention.¹⁴ The lesson is loud and clear: we do *not* have Tang literature; we have Tang literature as it circulated in ninth- through tenth-century manuscripts, as those manuscripts survived in the Song, and as Song editors preserved them. When Wang Zhu 王洙 compiled the 1039 edition of Du Fu’s poetry that became the basis of all subsequent editions, he used nine versions ranging from one to twenty scrolls.

Song Minqiu was a remarkably diligent editor, managing to find four fairly large editions. Again the Chinese is not clear, but the quoted section beginning “The rest are” (*zi yu* 自餘) suggests informal manuscripts, perhaps readers’ personal selections of a poet’s work. I like the term the “little collection” (*xiaoji* 小集), the term for an “anthology” of a single writer’s work. Song Minqiu’s note on his editorial work, however, calls into question the usefulness of that term.¹⁵ If the largest single manuscript of Meng Jiao’s poetry is only two-thirds of the aggregate collection from the various manuscripts (excluding those poems

¹³ *Tizhi* 體制 (體製) was the term used to describe an authorial style or a period style, so that the alternative interpretation of *bulei* 不類 as “not good” does not fit. Compare Yan Yu, writing of a poem that he thinks was falsely incorporated into Tao Yuanming’s collection: “Its style and tone are not like [Tao] Yuanming’s” 其體制氣象與淵明不類. Wu Wenzhi 吳文治, ed., *Song shihua quanjian* 宋詩話全編 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998), p. 8732.

¹⁴ Song Minqiu is now best known for an anecdote recounted by Su Shi that immortalizes Song as the exemplary bad editor of poetry. According to Su Shi, Song objected to Du Fu’s line “A white gull sinks into flooding vastness” 白鷗沒浩蕩 on the grounds that a gull could not “sink,” and therefore changed *mo* 沒 to *bo* 波 (“White gull, waves vastly flooding”). *Dongpo quanji*, SKQS, 100.2a–2b.

¹⁵ I have somewhat twisted the use of this term. Song bibliographies use this term to describe what they see as purposeful anthologies, and they use it only when they have a more complete edition. The “personal anthology” is more properly a *chaoben* 鈔本. Eventually *chao* 鈔 or 抄 came to mean simply “copy by hand,” but it originally meant “to select certain pieces to copy.” Other terms are used for making a complete copy in the Tang. Such anthologies of a writer’s work would be copied (*chao*) in turn, augmented or diminished according to the inclinations of the copyist.

that did not “sound like” Meng Jiao), then all we had were “anthologies” (*xiaoji*). From the evidence the *xiaoji* was the norm of circulation for literary manuscripts.

Within *xiaoji* there is immense variation, from large collections, like Song Minqiu’s version with 340 poems, to very small collections, represented by Song Minqiu’s “the rest.” Some *xiaoji* were formal anthologies of an author’s works, prepared for the purpose of circulation. Fan Huang’s 樊晃 late eighth-century anthology of Du Fu’s poetry is perhaps the outstanding example of a large anthology widely circulated, with 290 of Du Fu’s poems. Other such anthologies were made simply by copying personal favorites, and these might in turn be copied by others, making them impossible to distinguish from a formal “anthology.”

Song Minqiu’s list of texts used in the collation of Meng Jiao’s poetry, each with the number of scrolls and poems included, is a healthy antidote to the usual form of traditional Chinese bibliography, giving “the works of so-and-so” in a certain number of scrolls (*juan*, or, as we enter the world of butterfly books and printed texts, “fascicles”). We have cases (as we will see with Li Jiao’s *Baiyong*) in which the size of the scroll (and probably the size of the manuscript hand) might be varied to produce a satisfying number of scrolls/*juan*.¹⁶ Every piece of evidence suggests that the reality was far closer to what Song Minqiu describes—until Song Minqiu’s edition of Meng Jiao became the authoritative one, as it did, along with Northern Song editions of other writers. The works of an author circulated in different sizes with different works included (and varying degrees of overlap) and sometimes very different texts. Scrolls had normative physical sizes (though they were not uniform), but the number of works they contained in manuscript depended on the size of the handwriting (which should be evident from Song Minqiu’s descriptions of the texts he used). At the low end, particularly important for many authors, were those short collections of favorites, which in some cases included all that remained of an author’s

¹⁶ The *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 bibliography proudly lists the collected works of Li Jiao in 50 scrolls, 20 scrolls larger than the collection as given in the High Tang catalog copied into the *Jiu Tang shu*. Then we note that Li Jiao’s *Baiyong*, actually numbering 120 poems, occupies 12 scrolls. If this number is not a scribal error, these were either very small scrolls or scrolls with very large characters, even if we factor in Zhang Tingfang’s commentary. This suggests that the librarians—much like students adjusting margins and font size to produce the requisite number of pages—sometimes used the format of scrolls to produce collections of a size that gave the appearance that there had been no loss.

work and in other cases might be a valuable source for otherwise missing texts (though Song Minqiu's sources seem to have given him some poems by Meng Jiao's late ninth-century admirer Nie Yizhong 聶夷中 as Meng Jiao's own). I use the term *xiaoji* as a convenience; in some cases—Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819), and Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846)—we have the works much as they were made or constituted after the author's death; in most cases, however, all we had were *xiaoji* of varying sizes, often combined or supplemented in the Song. One more point should be made: so far as we can tell, the early Song imperial library judged its completeness on titles (and in the case of Kaiyuan and earlier works, matching the number of scrolls with the bibliography from Xuanzong's reign). If Song Minqiu made a composite edition, we can assume that the imperial library eventually got a copy, but there is no evidence that the imperial librarians actively sought more complete editions of Tang literary works dating after the 721 catalog.

Meng Jiao, though much neglected after the eleventh century, was a popular poet in the late ninth and tenth centuries. Song Minqiu does not speak of any difficulty in finding several versions of Meng's works. Other cases of compiling a more complete edition of an author's works often involved some sort of search for manuscripts, with varying degrees of effort and frustration.

If the predominance of partial versions (“every one is different,” as Song Minqiu says) is the primary complication in assessing the manuscript legacy of Tang literature, an important secondary complication is the issue of the specialized collection. The dominant model of Chinese bibliography from the Song to the present has been the “[complete] literary works” (*wenji* 文集). Writings on history, classical scholarship, technical treatises, informal compositions, and, later, vernacular literature were placed outside the *wenji*; but the *wenji* was supposed to represent all of the author's works in classical literary genres. The problem was that an author's literary works might circulate in sub-collections that were not originally intended to become part of the *wenji* or poetry collection (*shiji* 詩集) as it was compiled by the author or first editor; sometimes works in these sub-collections were explicitly meant to be excluded. There was no term for this kind of work in traditional bibliography, and they were simply included as another work by the author in the *wenji* or *shiji* sections. Such specialized collections became popular in the second half of the eighth century and were widespread in

the ninth and tenth centuries. Some of these were banquet collections, “exchange collections” (*changhe ji* 唱和集), and other kinds of group collections, which were integrated easily into the *wenji* of individual authors; but other sub-collections present a variety of issues.

Song editors like Song Minguo wanted a *wenji* or a *shiji* as the “complete works” to represent an author comprehensively. Out of the flotsam and jetsam of the manuscript tradition they sometimes found a specialized sub-collection but no primary collection, and sometimes, a primary collection without the specialized sub-collections. The case of Li Shen 李紳 (772–846) is instructive. We have only small, fragmentary remains of his regular poetry collection; what we have instead is a sub-collection, *Zhui xiyou* 追昔遊 (Recollecting past travels), in three scrolls, with a preface dated to 838. This collection has a chronological sequence of the poems that Li Shen should have written on his experiences between 820 and 836, but composed retrospectively between 836 and 838. When Song and later editors had diverse sources, they sometimes integrated them into a single collection, using one of the then popular classificatory systems, such as genres or themes. In Li Shen’s case the surviving poems from the original poetry collection were simply added on after *Recollecting Past Travels*. This accident of textual preservation gives us a highly skewed picture of the poet. Li Shen, the poet who wrote the ballad version of *Yingying zhuan* 鶯鶯傳 (which survives in only a few passages) and who was a lively participant in the poetic experiment of the Yuanhe 元和 generation (806–820), appears to us primarily as an old man nostalgically reviewing the previous decades of his life between 820 and 836.

The case of Wen Tingyun’s 溫庭筠 (?–866) poetry collection, whose date of compilation is unknown, is a good example of what would be lost if we had only the primary collection or only material from one of the secondary sub-collections. The *Xin Tang shu* “Bibliography” lists a number of collections under Wen’s name, including a “poetry collection” in five *juan* (perhaps from a Tang source; this collection is not in *Chongwen zongmu*, although two other specialized collections are). Our current version of Wen Tingyun’s poetry is in nine *juan*. If we consider *juan* 3 to 7, we have five *juan* in the form of a remarkably standard mid-ninth-century “poetry collection,” beginning with some conventional *yuefu*, which are followed by a collection of primarily occasional regulated verse in the predominant style of the day. This is fine work, and

includes a few of Wen Tingyun's best-known poems, but it is nothing out of the ordinary. The first two *juan* of the nine-*juan* version, however, consist of brilliant and daring *yuefu* in the style of Li He 李賀 (790–816), like nothing else in the five following *juan*; these are probably from one of the specialized collections. The eighth *juan* is yet again different, with sometimes bizarre, witty poems bearing no resemblance to either the blander “poetry collection” or the Li He–style *yuefu*. We know with some certainty that the poems in the eighth *juan* come from a specialized anthology (*zongji*), Duan Chengshi's 段成式 *Hanshang tijin ji* 漢上題襟集, a collection representing a group of friends in Xiangyang between 857 and 859. Here we find a poem on a fight between two singing girls comically done in the most ornate poetic language. The ninth *juan* seems to consist of poems recovered from other sources, the ubiquitous addendum that reminds us how collections continuously grew with the discovery of new texts. The remarkable diversity of Wen Tingyun's poetry is apparently dependent on the fortuitous survival of different sources.

A generic economy was at work in textual circulation in the ninth and tenth centuries. Had only one of the components of Wen Tingyun's poetry collection survived—as was probably the norm—we would have had a one-sided view of Wen Tingyun as a poet (just as we now can have only a one-sided view of Li Shen). We see similar economies in collections kept explicitly apart. The Han Wo 韓偓 (842–923?) of the *Han Hanlin ji* 韓翰林集 was a follower of Du Fu during the last days of the Tang, a dynastic loyalist who described the disintegration of the empire with a dignity and pathos that is still poorly appreciated. The Han Wo of the specialized collection, the *Xianglian ji* 香奩集, wrote erotic vignettes, such as a description of a woman taking a bath. Each of these two collections excludes works of the kind that appear in the other collection. The two collections survived separately, with the *Xianglian ji* preface apologizing for such poetry. As Anna Shields has discussed, the *Yan shi* 豔詩 of Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831) were excluded from Yuan's *Yuanshi Changqing ji* 元氏長慶集, but they clearly circulated independently and were preserved in part in the mid-tenth-century anthology *Caidiao ji* 才調集.¹⁷ Most literary manuscripts were not what we call a complete *wenji* or a *shiji*.

¹⁷ Anna M. Shields, “Defining Experience: The ‘Poems of Seductive Allure’ (*yanshi*) of the Mid-Tang Poet Yuan Zhen (779–831),” *JASOS* 122.1 (Jan.–March 2002): 61–78.

The independent circulation of sub-collections is important in understanding Tang literature, particularly from the ninth century on, precisely because of the vagaries of the manuscript legacy. Sometimes a poet is represented by a bland “poetry collection”; sometimes a poet is represented by a single series of poems or a set of works on unusual topics in an unusual style. Such differences, often used to characterize poets, may be no more than the accident of what survived in the manuscript tradition. The poet Li Shangyin 李商隱 (ca. 813–ca. 858) was first known through a *xiaoji* restricted to only one kind of poetry; his image as a poet was completely transformed by the devoted quest to rebuild his poetry collection.

Song Minqiu appears again in Zeng Gong’s 曾鞏 (1019–1083) *Bao Rong shiji mulu xu* 鮑溶詩集目錄序 (Preface to the index to Bao Rong’s *Poetry Collection*), where a bibliographical error opens up a can of worms with editions of literary works in the imperial library.¹⁸

Bao Rong’s Poetry Collection in six *juan*. Among the Historiography Office books the former title was “Bao Fang’s Collection” in five *juan*. The *Chongwen zongmu* is the same in its account in individual collections. The Drafter Song Minqiu told me that poems in this collection that also appear in the [*Tang*] *Wencui* 唐文粹 (Essence of letters) and *Tang shi leixuan* 唐詩類選 (Tang poems selected by categories) are all given as Bao Rong’s works; moreover, Fang’s “*Za gan*” 雜感 (Miscellaneous stirrings), though his most prominent poem, is not in this collection, by which we know the collection is not Fang’s work. I investigated this with the *Essence of Letters* and *Tang Poems Selected by Categories*, along with “Miscellaneous Stirrings,” and what Minqiu said is correct. I also got a “Bao Rong Collection” from the library of Ouyang Xiu, Participant in Determining Government Matters, which is the same as this collection. Only then did I understand for sure that this was indeed [Bao] Rong’s collection. The book in the Historiography Office is in five *juan* and has about two hundred poems in all. Ouyang Xiu’s book has no *juan* division and just over a hundred poems, thirty-three of which are not in the Historiography Office version. I have now appended these as a separate *juan*, giving them the collective title *Bao Rong’s Poetry Collection* in six *juan*.

This preface is a mine of issues in manuscript culture, which come to the surface only because of the problem of the correct name of the author: is this the collection of Bao Fang or Bao Rong, both of whom were known poets?

Had Zeng Gong’s curiosity not been stirred by Song Minqiu’s observation regarding the error in the name of the author, he would not have checked the Historiography Office version of the text against

¹⁸ *Zeng Gong ji* 曾鞏集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 192.

Ouyang Xiu's version. Comparison, however, revealed that Ouyang Xiu's version had only about sixty-seven poems in common with the Historiography Office version; about one-third of Ouyang Xiu's edition was not in the Historiography Office version (which is the imperial library version). The purpose of Zeng Gong's "Preface" was to announce a new, more complete edition, with a final scroll of addenda from Ouyang Xiu's version, making now a six-scroll edition of Bao Rong's poetry, with the name corrected.

In simple terms, the imperial library had a different *xiaoji* from that in the collection of Ouyang Xiu's. In all probability Bao Rong wrote many more poems than were found in either collection. Zeng Gong took the fortuitous discovery as an opportunity to supplement the missing poems. The imperial library was not looking for Bao Rong's (or Bao Fang's) poetry collection because the librarians thought this was what they already had. If, however, by some magical power one had been able to recover and compare *all* the versions of Bao Rong's poetry circulating in China at that time, I strongly suspect that the collection would have grown many times over.

In a pair of letters to one Han Ji, Liu Kai 柳開 (947–1000) tells of having once found a copy of the poems of mid-Tang poet Lu Tong 盧仝 for sale in a bookstore and purchased it for a hundred cash.¹⁹ His brother gave the manuscript to a friend, Zheng Yan. After Zheng's death, the manuscript disappeared, and Liu Kai was unable to retrieve it; Liu then describes searching fruitlessly for a copy of Lu Tong's poems everywhere in his travels. Liu Kai has heard from a friend that Han Ji has a copy of Lu Tong's poems and wonders if this could be a copy of the same edition he lost. He asks to borrow the manuscript. The second letter deals largely with other matters, but closes by noting that he was returning the manuscript with the comment that he copied it out, and found that it was a different version of Lu Tong's poems. Until the age when literature became widely available in print, different manuscripts often meant different selections of texts, and certainly different variants.²⁰

The great saga of recovering a collection from scattered sources is Yang Yi's 楊億 (974–1020) account of rebuilding the collection of Li

¹⁹ *Quan Song wen* 全宋文 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1988–), pp. 634–36.

²⁰ The rareness of the collection is partially confirmed by the absence of any Lu Tong poems in *Wenyuan yinghua* and the inclusion of only one set in *Tang wencui*.

Shangyin's poetry.²¹ In the Zhidao reign (995–997) of Song Taizong, Yang tells us that he initially got a copy of Li Shangyin's poems with somewhat over a hundred pieces (that is, a *xiaoji*). He was quite taken with these but, speaking from his later perspective, they “did not get the deeply engaging quality [of his poetry]” 未得其深趣. Later, in the Xianping reign (998–1003) of Zhenzong, he speaks of a general search for surviving Tang poems; he does not speak of specifically finding another edition or anthology, but in the process he built his Li Shangyin collection to 282 poems. He had heard that at the end of the Tang there were many editions of Li Shangyin's poetry in the lower Yangzi region, and a friend found one of these, bringing the Li Shangyin poetry collection to over four hundred poems (somewhat over two-thirds of the size of the current collection). Here is the case of an editor who did undertake something like a national search for manuscripts and whose perseverance and political power made his attempt to recover a collection relatively effective. The result was a collection over four times the size of the one with which he began (eventually becoming, in its current form, a collection six times the size of the initial *xiaoji*).

The case of Li Shangyin's poetry, where we know something of the history of the collection's reconstitution and the changing responses, well demonstrates how the move from a readily available *xiaoji* to a fuller collection could completely change a poet's reputation. Toward the end of the Tang or perhaps early in the Five Dynasties period, Li Fu 李涪 denounced Li Shangyin's poetry in the following terms: “not a single word he wrote contributes to the state, nor is there even a slender thought encouraging virtue; [his poetry] is a mere display of literary craft.”²² Such a judgment, so incomprehensible to the modern reader of Li Shangyin, was almost certainly based on a *xiaoji* that selected precisely the erotic pieces and rhetorical tours de force that sustained Li Fu's judgment. This was the kind of Li Shangyin's poetry that was popular in the tenth century and in general circulation. The same bias is evident in the selection of Li's poems in the mid-tenth-century anthology *Caidiao ji* 才調集 and in the poems in *Wenyuan*

²¹ *Shishi leiyan*, SKQS, 34.12a–b. Cited in Wan Man 萬曼, *Tangji xulu* 唐集敘錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), pp. 283–84.

²² Li Fu, *Kan wu* 刊誤, in Song Zuogui 宋左圭, *Baichuan xuehai* 百川學海 (photoprnt., Kyoto: Chūbun, 1979), p. 519.

yinghua, representing the collection in the imperial library (though the selections in *Caidiao ji* and *Wenyuan yinghua* have remarkably little overlap). This was probably the kind of poetry represented in Yang Yi's initial *xiaoji*. We can imagine Yang Yi's surprise when he saw still more poems by Li Shangyin. Continuing the story of the collection, Yang Yi cites and concurs with a friend's praise of the poem "Jia Yi." This suggests that "Jia Yi," a poem that offers unambiguously ethical judgment on history, was added by Yang Yi in the final stage of compiling the collection (it was not one of the Li Shangyin poems imitated in Yang Yi's earlier *Xikun chouchang ji* 西崑酬唱集) and that its qualities differed from those he valued in the initial *xiaoji*. In short, without Yang Yi's continuous effort over many years, Li Shangyin would have held a very different place in the history of Tang poetry.

There are many other stories of loss and recovery, such as Zhang Ji's 張洎 (933–996) account of his efforts between 946 and 965 to rebuild the poetry collection of the mid-Tang poet Zhang Ji 張籍: "Hardly one in ten of his works survived." The theme of loss was a common bibliographical trope, but with a strong basis in historical fact. What we see are the accidents of loss and recovery, the general difference in works included and textual variants among different manuscripts, the centrality of a devoted editor in the process (allowing that most Tang writers did not find such editors), and the way in which these conjunctions of chance shaped individual reputations and the Tang literary heritage.

We should not overlook the correlative problem of the ever-growing collection. Although some scholars, like Song Minqiu, were interested in less well-known Tang writers, Song dynasty scholars devoted most of their attention to a few famous poets, like Li Bai, Du Fu, Du Mu, and Li Shangyin. The consequence of such attention was that the "collected poems" of these poets kept growing. Because the original Du Mu collection was well defined (based on the poet's own radical selection of his work), the growth of the poetry collection was in addenda, which, we now recognize, contain numerous false attributions. We may suspect the same is true of the collections of the other famous poets. Poems often circulated under various names; and if one judged the authenticity of a work by Song Minqiu's criterion of "being like the style" of a poet, the way was open for the inclusion of pieces by epigones, as Nie Yizhong's poems entered the collection of Meng Jiao.

WHAT IS *WENYUAN YINGHUA*?

Wenyuan yinghua is not only the single most important source in the preservation of Tang literature; it also provides a window on the manuscript legacy of the Tang as it existed in the late tenth century.²³ With the *Taiping guangji* completed in 978 and the great encyclopedia *Taiping yulan* nearing completion, in 982 Song Taizong commissioned Li Fang 李昉 and many of his previous editorial associates to “examine the literary collections of preceding eras and select what is essential in them” 閱前代文集撮其精要.²⁴ Li Fang and many of the original editorial board moved on to other tasks and were succeeded by others. In January 987 the work, in a thousand *juan*, was presented to the throne. The emperor approved. He had more pressing tasks than to check the compilation against the books in the imperial library. It soon became apparent, however, that the work had textual problems, and it was recollated in the first decade of the eleventh century. This reedited version was apparently lost in the great palace fire of 1015 that burned the Treasury of the Left, the Imperial Repository (Bigé 祕閣), and the repository of books in the Academy for Venerating Literature (Chongwen yuan 崇文院). Zhenzong was reported to have said (perhaps worrying about the Treasury), “What a pity that all that had been amassed in the two preceding reigns is almost entirely gone in a single morning!”²⁵ After that date the imperial library, the collection from which *Wenyuan yinghua* had been compiled, was not quite the same.

Wenyuan yinghua was not printed until 1201–1204, over two centuries after it was compiled in manuscript form. For this edition the retired Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126–1204), acting on imperial commission, did another collation. Corrections for this edition were also made by Peng Shuxia 彭叔夏 who in 1204 published a work on textual problems, the *Wenyuan yinghua bianzheng* 文苑英華辨證, which survives and is eloquent testimony to the standard problems of manuscripts and to the cases in which *Wenyuan yinghua* had the textually better version. We

²³ For a thorough study of the history of *Wenyuan yinghua*, see Ling Chaodong 凌朝棟, *Wenyuan yinghua yanjiu* 文苑英華研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005).

²⁴ Unlike *Taiping guangji* and *Taiping yulan*, *Wenyuan yinghua*, at least in its current version, does not come with a list of the books consulted.

²⁵ *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, p. 716.

do not know where the Southern Song got its manuscript copy of the work; it would probably not have been the version in the Northern Song imperial library, and the quality of the transcription is uncertain. The Song printed edition eventually came to be disseminated again in manuscript copies, which introduced new errors. Probably from one of these manuscript copies we have the Ming edition of 1566–1567 that was printed in Fujian, which survives in toto (130 *juan* of the Song printed edition also survive). There are fragments of a 1516 Korean printed edition, and a group of Ming manuscript editions in varying degrees of completeness. Adequate collation remains to be done.²⁶

Although Zhou Bida claimed that *Wenyuan yinghua*'s purpose was to preserve texts at a time when it was hard to find the works of many Tang authors, the initial imperial commission, to “select what is essential,” was quite clear. Zhou Bida was trying to explain the peculiarity of the product, rather than reiterating its initial mandate. The *Wenyuan yinghua* was implicitly intended as a continuation of the *Wen xuan*.²⁷ The work, however, was no “anthology” in the usual sense; from the point of view of *any* canonical selection of Tang literature, both earlier and later, its omissions are striking and many of its inclusions, perplexing. The editorial board was made up of an impressive array of court officials, who conceivably divided the tasks among themselves for personally taking charge of their respective sections. The actual work, however, looks like the product of a group of scribes set loose in the imperial library with a skeleton of rubrics. One constraint seems to

²⁶ Since so many collections were reconstituted from *Wenyuan yinghua*, it is tempting to use it as the source against which to measure the texts of such collections. Many of these collections were first made before our current version of *Wenyuan yinghua* and may possibly represent a better stage in the transmission of the manuscript. In his *Wenyuan yinghua bianzheng* (Analysis and presentation of the evidence in *Wenyuan yinghua*), prepared in conjunction with Zhou Bida's Southern Song edition, Peng Shuxia gives long lists of cases where the *Wenyuan yinghua* version is superior to the texts then in circulation. A remarkable amount of laborious textual scholarship has gone into editions of works that have clearly been reconstituted almost entirely from *Wenyuan yinghua*, while there has, to my knowledge, been no attempt to collate the Ming printed edition with the Ming manuscript copies, or with Gao Sisun's 高似孫 twelfth-century *Wenyuan yinghua zuanyao* 文苑英華纂要, a collection of excerpts, done before the work was edited at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Gao Sisun's work, however, was collated with existing literary collections, and in my sample collation of a section with the corresponding *juan* in the Song printing of Zhou Bida's edition, every variant appears with Peng Shuxia's note that this is the reading in the author's independent collection.

²⁷ In the original version there was surely a preface and a presentation memorial, which would have made this explicit.

have been not to copy too many examples of one person's work under one category.²⁸ A second apparent constraint—and a significant one for reading back from the “anthology” to the sources—was the need to omit works for which a rubric was lacking.²⁹

Over the centuries scholars have mined *Wenyuan yinghua* to rebuild lost Tang collections, alternately praising its riches and lamenting the state of its text (which in many cases may be the very text from which our current versions of collections originated). *Wenyuan yinghua* and, to a lesser degree, the much smaller one-hundred-scroll *Tang wencui* 唐文粹, compiled by Yao Xuan 姚鉉 (968–1020) in 1012 before the library fire (but presented to the throne in 1020, by his son), are the sources for much of our knowledge of Tang literature.³⁰ Many authors we now consider important are preserved primarily in *Wenyuan yinghua* and *Tang wencui* texts, with only a few additions from other sources. In many cases the number of surviving works is relatively small (say, under thirty pieces), which suggests that in most of those cases the editors did not have even a *xiaoji*. The editors did, however, have access to a range of Tang anthologies far beyond what we currently possess, and such works probably come from anthology sources. Although *Wenyuan ying-*

²⁸ As large as the sections on parting poems or verse letters are, *Wenyuan yinghua* includes a much smaller proportion of such pieces from independently surviving collections than less common topics.

²⁹ We must explain *Wenyuan yinghua*'s extensive representation of Chen Zi'ang's 陳子昂 (659–700) poems, but the complete exclusion of his famous series *Ganyu* 感遇, along with the complete exclusion of Li Bai's *Gufeng* 古風. It would be tempting to conclude that the editors wanted to avoid poems that were supposed to be “critical” of the ruler, but we find no such avoidance in selecting from Bai Juyi's *Xin Yuefu* 新樂府 (New *yuefu*). The exclusion is better explained by a predetermined set of categories and subcategories in which there was no obvious place for such poems in the “ancient style.” Ling Chaodong also suggests that the categories were the reason for excluding Chen Zi'ang's *Ganyu* in *Wenyuan yinghua yanjiu*, pp. 42–43. Such omissions were remedied in [*Tang*] *Wencui* a few decades later.

³⁰ The relationship between the *Tang wencui* and the imperial library is a vexed question. The preface merely says that he “thoroughly perused the various collections” 遍閱群集, but not where those collections were. The *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志, SKQS, 4 xia.35b, claims that Yao Xuan had a large library with many rare editions; this may indeed have been the case, but the *Junzhai dushu zhi* brings this up in connection with the first fifty *juan*, which he later expanded to the current one hundred. Yao Xuan may have had a very good library indeed, but we should seriously doubt that he had the range of collections from which the *Tang wencui* provides the unique source for particular pieces. There are so many collections that have been reconstructed almost entirely from *Wenyuan yinghua* supplemented by *Tang wencui* that it is hard to believe that Yao Xuan did not compile at least his expansion of the original fifty *juan* from the imperial library before the fire. As is well known, *Tang wencui* chose “old style” prose and poetry; in some ways it was positioning itself against *Wenyuan yinghua*, but the selections often overlap.

hua is by far the more important compendium, *Tang wencui* is useful because Yao Xuan sought important texts overlooked by *Wenyuan yinghua*. Many other collections survived independently, but these were by very popular authors or fortuitous survivals. We are so accustomed to the large modern compendia of Tang poetry and prose, as well as to fine editions and commentaries, that we often forget the sources from which they were built. It often turns out that a distinguished history of editions going back to the Southern Song ultimately derives in large part from gleanings from *Wenyuan yinghua*, supplemented by *Tang wencui*.³¹

My interest here is somewhat different; I want to look at the *Wenyuan yinghua* as a snapshot of the textual remains in the imperial library in the 980s, a snapshot in many ways superior to the *Chongwen zongmu*, which is the only credible library catalog we have from the Northern Song.³² About half a century, including a great deal of scholarly work, new manuscript discoveries, and a major library fire, separates *Wenyuan yinghua* from *Chongwen zongmu*. Li Shangyin's poetry collection, for example, appears in the latter, but had not been fully pieced together when *Wenyuan yinghua* was compiled. By looking where particular works were preserved and considering the processes by which collections were formed, we can better understand how the record can be skewed. The standard bibliographical practice of counting *juan* in old bibliographies is only of tangential use.

I have not yet compared all the Tang literary collections with *Wenyuan yinghua*, looking at their sources and bibliographical histories, but I have detected some patterns in my study of the majority of such collections. My first observation is that we are far more indebted to *Wenyuan*

³¹ We might consider the case of the famous eighth-century prose writer Xiao Yingshi 蕭穎士 (716–768). He has 26 surviving prose pieces, 23 of which are preserved in *Wenyuan yinghua*, with the remaining pieces all from *Tang wencui*. Xiao Yingshi's contemporary Li Hua 李華 (715–774) commented in the preface that a ten-scroll collection was in circulation, but that often the titles were preserved while all or part of the text itself was missing. The *Jiu Tang shu* bibliography and all the Song bibliographies give the collection in ten scrolls; the *Chongwen zongmu* and the major Southern Song bibliographies give us confidence that a ten-scroll edition existed. In *Tang ji xulu* Wan Man seems to profess ignorance about who made the current selection. This “selection” was evidently made by the *Wenyuan yinghua* editors and by Yao Xuan, perhaps from the ten-scroll version, and the modern one-*juan* version was compiled from those sources.

³² After the fire of 1015, a separate version of the imperial library was established outside the palace gates, the Outer Academy for Revering Literature 崇文外院. This was probably for copies. Although making second and even third copies of works in the imperial library was common practice, the known losses in the 1015 fire suggest that at least prior to this in the Song copies were not always made. See *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, p. 717.

yinghua for Tang prose than for Tang poetry—although we are heavily indebted to *Wenyuan yinghua* for Tang poetry. This is to be expected; apart from the prose of Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, poetry collections circulated much more widely than individual prose collections. In a remarkable number of cases, prose collections have obviously been almost entirely reconstituted from *Wenyuan yinghua*.³³ In both poetry and prose we commonly find two extremes: either the collection comes predominantly from *Wenyuan yinghua* (often supplemented by *Tang wencui*), or only a few pieces come from *Wenyuan yinghua*. In the first case we can sometimes see from the size of the collection as given in *Chongwen zongmu* that the recompilation probably occurred after the library fire.³⁴ In the second case it is reasonable to assume that the pieces included in *Wenyuan yinghua* came from anthologies and that the imperial library did not have the individual collection, which was found later.³⁵

The sequence of texts in poetry collections by lesser-known writers often remains the same from edition to edition, and that sequence often seems to reflect the history of the collection's formation. We find a number of cases in which the larger part of the collection derives from *Wenyuan yinghua*, followed by a long sequence of poems or prose pieces that survive only in the collection as it later circulated. This probably indicates the situation that we saw in Zeng Gong's preface to the Bao Rong collection; the core of the collection was reconstituted by using *Wenyuan yinghua*, *Tang wencui*, and other surviving anthologies; then a *xiaoji* was found and missing texts were copied in at the end.

³³ This is especially true of *fu*. It is no exaggeration to say that without *Wenyuan yinghua* and the "old style" *fu* from *Tang wencui*, our corpus of Tang *fu* would be remarkably small. Most Tang *fu* are regulated *fu*, and it seems likely that we possess these in the current numbers because they served as models for preparing for the examination from *fu* anthologies and collections preserved in regional libraries.

³⁴ If the pieces of a collection are entirely or almost entirely included in known anthology sources (of which *Wenyuan yinghua* is the main source in almost every such case), then that collection has been reconstituted from anthologies. This means that the anthology sources are the oldest textual sources. When, in such cases, one sees a note on a variant in the printed edition of *Wenyuan yinghua*, that "the collection reads" (*ji zuo* 集作) thus and so, this is most likely not the original collection but the product of Song editing. Song editing is sometimes on the mark, but often the original *Wenyuan yinghua* version should be preferred.

³⁵ If *Wenyuan yinghua* includes only 19 of Chu Guangxi's 儲光羲 (ca. 706–ca. 763) 226 extant poems, it is highly unlikely that this is due to editorial taste. Rather, it seems clear that a more complete version of the Chu Guangxi collection was recovered later. We see it in the 5-juan edition in Chao Gongwu's 晁公武 *Junzhai dushu zhi* and Chen Zhensun's 陳振孫 *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題. The original Tang version of the collection was in 70 juan.

Another common sequence is finding *Wenyuan yinghua* selections scattered throughout the collection, with a sequence of poems entirely from *Wenyuan yinghua* at the end. This suggests that the collection survived independently and that eventually an editor compared the contents with pieces included in *Wenyuan yinghua* and at the end added the *Wenyuan yinghua* pieces that were not in the collection. Both cases provide evidence of the predominance of *xiaoji*.

In some cases (a few of which are well documented like the poetry collections of Meng Jiao and Li Shangyin discussed above) a larger version of the literary collection was found or compiled after the completion of *Wenyuan yinghua*. In these instances the imperial library of the 980s probably had a *xiaoji* or its editors included works from anthology sources, unaware that much more complete versions existed elsewhere.

Let us examine a particular case. As mentioned above, in 984 Song Taizong issued an edict to recover as many works as possible from the 721 Tang imperial catalog. Dudbridge speculates that the emperor evidently felt satisfied with his late eighth- and ninth-century holdings—not realizing that the version of a literary collection he had in his library might well have been a *xiaoji*, which could quadruple or sextuple in size if compared with other versions. One collection probably recovered (or fortuitously surviving in the existing imperial collection) was that of Li Jiao 李嶠 (645–714), a major poet and literary courtier of Empress Wu’s reign. The *Jiu Tang shu* “Jingji zhi” (Bibliography), using the 721 catalog, lists this collection as having thirty scrolls.

Li Jiao has 209 poems in the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩.³⁶ Of those 209 poems, 120 represent his famous *yongwu* 詠物 collection, the *Baiyong* 百詠, which circulated independently (there is a complete manuscript in Japan with the commentary of Zhang Tingfang and a partial manuscript among the Dunhuang findings).³⁷ Only 43 of the *Baiyong* are included in *Wenyuan yinghua*. Sixty-three of the remaining 89 poems were preserved in *Wenyuan yinghua*.³⁸ Many of the other extant Li Jiao poems come from the known Tang anthologies.

³⁶ I use this rather than numbers augmented by Japanese and Dunhuang finds, because it represents the process of compiling a literary collection from those materials that survived in the Song.

³⁷ For a facsimile of the Japanese manuscript, see Hu Zhi’ang 胡志昂, ed., *Ricang guchao Li Jiao yongwushi zhu* 日藏古抄李嶠詠物詩注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998).

³⁸ Counting is a less straightforward task than it might appear. I have done my primary count

In this case we have good reason to believe that the imperial library of the 980s possessed the complete collection of Li Jiao's poems. The reason for this assumption is the inclusion in *Wenyuan yinghua* of group court compositions, done to imperial command, in which Li Jiao's poem is consistently given first. This is how the poems would have appeared in Li Jiao's collected works. The Li Jiao collection disappeared in the *Chongwen zongmu*, perhaps lost in the 1015 fire. A notice of the collection reappeared in the *Xin Tang shu* "Bibliography," listed as having an incredible fifty scrolls, with the *Baiyong* (given with its alternative title *Zayong* 雜詠) listed in twelve scrolls (this must have been in enormous characters, considering that such a manuscript would have only ten poems per scroll; even with Zhang Tingfang's commentary, twenty scrolls is extravagant). Clearly, the collection as we have it was reconstituted from *Wenyuan yinghua* and other anthology sources; not only do we owe most of Li Jiao's surviving poems (apart from the *Baiyong*) to *Wenyuan yinghua*, but also almost all of his 157 prose works are drawn from *Wenyuan yinghua*.

Let us return to the 43 *Baiyong* poems included in *Wenyuan yinghua*, out of an original 120. Here we have a known original number of source poems and a known proportion of those poems—about a third—selected for *Wenyuan yinghua*. We also know that the *Baiyong* circulated independently in two scrolls, which, with 60 eight-line poems per scroll, is within the broad parameters of a normal sized scroll. If we multiply the 63 other Li Jiao poems in *Wenyuan yinghua* by 3, we get about 190 poems, or roughly three more scrolls. If we then multiply the 157 prose works by 3, we get 470 works. Since fewer prose works occupy a scroll, this could easily fill twenty-five scrolls. In short, if we consider the Li Jiao selections in *Wenyuan yinghua* to be about a third of the collection, the full collection would in turn be about the size of the thirty scrolls given in the *Jiu Tang shu* "Bibliography."

from Hiraoka Takeo 平岡武夫, *Tōdai no shihen* 唐代の詩篇 (Kyōto: Jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 1964–1965), and Hiraoka Takeo, *Tōdai no sanbun sakuhin* 唐代の散文索引 (Kyōto: Jinbun kagaku kenkyūjo, 1960). I have checked that against the *Wenyuan yinghua* index. In one case, that of Bai Juyi's prose, the discrepancy is very large (*Tōdai no sanbun sakuhin* clearly did not give the majority of Bai's prose works). In many cases there are small discrepancies (the Kyōto series, for example, counts individual works within sets, whereas the *Wenyuan yinghua* index counts sets as one work). These differences are, however, not statistically significant. To keep proportions of *Wenyuan yinghua* selections to total number of works consistent, I have followed the numbers in the Kyōto series, with the exception of Bai Juyi's prose.

Let me offer the hypothesis that the editors of *Wenyuan yinghua* quite literally and somewhat mechanically took the emperor's mandate to "examine the literary collections of preceding eras and select what is essential (*jingyao*)." They were not making a true anthology but a survey and epitome of the *jibu* in the imperial library. They divided *each collection and anthology* into "three grades" 三品 (top, middle, and bottom) and selected roughly what they considered the top third from each collection (working within the constraints described above, for example, avoiding too many instances of one type of writing for a particular author). This procedure has interesting consequences that remain significant for scholars of the Tang. Not only were the editors of *Wenyuan yinghua* not making an anthology of the best Tang literature; they were not even making a selection from individual collections proportional to their sense of the importance of the author (as in the anthology model established by Yuan Haowen's 元好問 *Zhongzhou ji* 中州集 of 1250). It was not that they believed the best of Li Jiao was better than the middle of Li Bai; they felt that their charge from the emperor was to give the best of each collection. Large selections from insignificant writers appear because the editors happened to have that collection and were doing their job as they understood it. In the end they produced a thousand scrolls, about a quarter to a third of the *jibu* in the imperial library.

One of the common misconceptions about *Wenyuan yinghua* is that it favors parallel prose and regulated poetry. This misconception is in part because *Wenyuan yinghua* includes so much regulated *fu*, parallel prose, court poetry, and examination poetry; it is also, in part, because *Tang wencui* so aggressively defined itself as a *fugu* anthology, selecting "old style" *fu* and poetry. If there are many examination poems and examination *fu*, as well as model political documents, in *Wenyuan yinghua*, we need only think of the interests of regional libraries in the Tang, preparing students to take the examination and participate in political life. The texts in those libraries were, no doubt, the foundation of the collections in Bianjing, Jingnan, Shu, and the Southern Tang. In fact, the *Wenyuan yinghua* seems to have had no biases whatsoever (apart from the rubrics it includes and those it omits). Many of the Tang prose writers in the *guwen* lineage, both before and after Han Yu, survive primarily through selections in *Wenyuan yinghua*, rather than in *Tang wencui*. As the emperor had ordered, the *Wenyuan yinghua* editors represented

what the library had, perhaps choosing individual works by personal preference; but they had no apparent biases either for or against the “ancient style.”

We would wish that the editors had included a list of works used, as was done in *Taiping yulan* and *Taiping guangji*. Such a list does not appear in the current version, but considering the absence and presumable loss of a preface or presentation memorial in the current version, it is quite possible that such a list might have existed at some earlier stage of the text’s circulation. If the hypothesis is valid, however, *Wenyuan yinghua* represents the Tang and Five Dynasties manuscript legacy, not as it was scattered all over China, but in the collections of Bianjing and the regional kingdoms, augmented by targeted searches for missing titles from the Kaiyuan reign and earlier.

In connection with my hypothesis let me bring up one of *Wenyuan yinghua*’s most notorious “sins”: the inclusion of the same poem twice under different rubrics. This is taken as a mark of the carelessness of the editors—and on some level this judgment may be correct. Such duplications were noted in the printed version of the early thirteenth century, but the duplicated texts were expunged. If we presume an editorial board, changing over time, working with copyists, the reasons for this “sin” become quite clear. Charged with giving the best of every work in the *jibu*, the editors also took selections from the anthologies—and by far the largest number of anthologies were of poetry. Categorization of texts under a given rubric is sensitive to titles, and any scholar of Tang poetry knows that, however unstable the texts of poems may be, titles are the parts of poems most subject to change. Li Bai’s famous “Jiang jin jiu” 將進酒 (Bring in the ale), appears twice in *Wenyuan yinghua* (195.9a and 336.2b). The second time it appears, however, it appears in the “song” (*gexing* 歌行) category under the title “Xi kong zun jiu” 惜空尊酒. This is also the title under which the poem appears in the Dunhuang manuscripts.³⁹ In this case the same text was surely copied from two different sources; in one source the title “Jiang jin jiu” led to it being copied in the *yuefu* section; in the other source the title “Xi kong zun jiu” led to it being copied in the *gexing* section. If the same scribe had been working with the same source text, this probably

³⁹ Xu Jun 徐俊, *Dunhuang shiji canjuan jikao* 敦煌詩集殘卷輯考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), p. 74.

would not have happened. This suggests rather two scribes or editors working with different source texts. *Possibly* these were different versions of Li Bai's collection; but the most likely scenario is that one version was copied from the collection, and the other from an anthology.

I must strongly emphasize that the history of each collection is different. When a collection consists almost entirely of pieces from *Wenyuan yinghua* and *Tang wencui*, we have a clear indication that our current version of the collection was compiled from those sources; when we have a now sizable collection represented by only a handful of pieces in these two large early Song "anthologies," we also have a clear case of what was *not* in the early Song imperial library. The "one-third" hypothesis is a way to understand the history of the formation of a collection; pure "one-third" representations of collections are the minority, but they represent a minority so large as to be statistically significant. As we will see in the cases of Li Bai and Du Fu, what at first glance seem exceptions to the "one-third" hypothesis often turn out to be consistent with what we know of the collection in the early Song. New manuscripts remained to be found and many of the old manuscripts in the library were to go up in flames.

In a few anomalous cases we have some confidence in the imperial library's possession of a widely disseminated collection, but the representation does not fit the "one-third" hypothesis. Of over 2,800 poems by Bai Juyi, only 287 were selected for the *Wenyuan yinghua*. It may be that the editors either did not want to overrepresent him or had a *xiaoji*; they included 425 of his 750 prose pieces.⁴⁰ Other collections with relatively wide circulation, however, often give us roughly a third of the author's corpus. The prose collections of Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan were in circulation. Han Yu's prose is represented in *Wenyuan yinghua* by 103 pieces out of an extant 336; Liu Zongyuan's prose by 184 pieces out of an extant 443.

We can infer that a relatively full collection by Zhang Yue 張說 (667–730) was available to the *Wenyuan yinghua* compilers by the same criterion we find in Li Jiao: the presence of court compositions to imperial command in which Zhang Yue's name comes first. *Wenyuan yinghua*

⁴⁰ Zhou Bida in his colophon claimed that *Wenyuan yinghua* included all of Bai Juyi. The high representation of certain prose genres in Bai Juyi may be due to the fact they were pedagogic models, likely circulating as independent works in provincial libraries. This seems the case with the large number of model examination answers and "judgments" (*panwen* 判文).

includes 128 of Zhang Yue's 358 extant poems, with the vast majority of the poems not included in *Wenyuan yinghua* having no known source other than Zhang Yue's collection as it has been preserved. This both confirms the rule of a third and suggests that Zhang Yue's current collection of poetry is roughly the same as that available to the *Wenyuan yinghua* compilers.

The case of Zhang Yue's prose is rather different. Here *Wenyuan yinghua* has 142 prose pieces out of a surviving 212, with many of the other surviving works drawn from *Tang wencui*. This strongly suggests that the prose works of the original collection were lost and were reconstituted from *Wenyuan yinghua*, *Tang wencui*, and the numerous anthologies of public prose listed in the *Chongwen zongmu*. If we multiply the 142 prose pieces in *Wenyuan yinghua* by 3 and add the surviving poems, we have numbers roughly consistent with the thirty-scroll collection given in the *Jiu Tang shu* "Bibliography."

The Zhang Yue and Li Jiao cases suggest that the poetry and prose editors alike had *wenji* that included both poetry and prose; but in a number of cases we find strange disproportions. Liu Zongyuan's prose is represented by about a third of the extant works as expected, but *Wenyuan yinghua* includes only one poem (out of 161 surviving). It seems likely that the editors did *not* have Liu Zongyuan's poetry. The inclusion of only 45 of Han Yu's 419 poems suggests that the library had a *xiaoji*. These and other cases indicate that prose collections and poetry collections often circulated separately.

The rule of a third recurs so often in *Wenyuan yinghua* that it cannot be easily dismissed. *Wenyuan yinghua* includes 66 of Wang Changling's 王昌齡 (?–ca. 756) 182 poems in *Quan Tang shi*; 37 of Li Qi's 李頎 (?–757?) 123 poems; 91 of Meng Haoran's 孟浩然 (689–740) 266 (or 218 by the Tang count). It includes 32 of Shen Yazhi's 沈亞之 (*jins* 815) 90 prose pieces. The pattern recurs regardless of the importance of the author.

When the rule breaks down, the reason is often evident. Wang Wei's 157 poems in *Wenyuan yinghua* represent a high proportion of the 382 extant poems, but the number remains roughly within the rule of one in three. In this case the somewhat higher representation is easily explained: Wang Wei was well represented in the existing Tang poetry anthologies; we would expect him to have been included as well in the much larger Tang anthologies, now lost but still available in the

Northern Song. Insofar as those anthologies were also represented in *Wenyuan yinghua* by a third, this would potentially boost Wang Wei's numbers.⁴¹ *Wenyuan yinghua* includes only 242 of Li Bai's 1,003 poems listed in the *Quan Tang shi*; however, we know that in the Xianping reign (998–1003) Yue Shi 樂史 combined two versions of Li Bai's collection and came up with 776 pieces; if we add in the 13 prose pieces in *Wenyuan yinghua*, we have a number remarkably consistent with a third of the two versions of the collection.

The case of Du Fu is quite similar to that of Li Bai. Roughly 1,400 poems are now attributed to Du Fu, but the *Wenyuan yinghua* includes only about 240. The history of Du Fu's collections is complex, and the "complete works" continued to grow in the Song. When Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 (1008–1048) combined two versions of the collection, he came up with about 800 poems, to which he added texts from another version to produce a bit over 880 poems. Although the versions he used were not those in the imperial library in the 980s, the number is such that we can easily infer that 240 was about a third of what was probably available from a good single version.⁴²

Meng Jiao is represented in *Wenyuan yinghua* by only 50 poems, but this number is consistent with a third of the size of two of the four editions that Song Minqiu used in the last part of the eleventh century. *Wenyuan yinghua* includes only 52 poems by Li Shangyin, which would lead us to suppose that the imperial library had a *xiaoji* with 150 to 160 poems. We know that Yang Yi eventually built the corpus of Li Shangyin's poetry to over 400 poems about two decades *after* the compilation of *Wenyuan yinghua*; however, Yang Yi began with a *xiaoji* of over 100 poems, and by the turn of the eleventh century he had increased the collection to 282 poems, an addition of about 170 poems. This number is remarkably close to the size of our hypothetical *xiaoji* in the imperial library.⁴³

⁴¹ *Wenyuan yinghua* includes only four pieces of Wang Wei's 65 prose works, probably indicating that the library had only the poetry collection.

⁴² The fact that almost 40 percent of Du Fu's current collection was not included in a composite of two large editions circulating in the mid-eleventh century, combined with the knowledge that there was a premium on discovering hitherto unknown Du Fu poems, should give us some unease when we delve into the complete poems as we have them.

⁴³ One might reasonably object that there should be a significant overlap between poems in Yang Yi's initial *xiaoji* and our hypothetical *xiaoji* in the imperial library. There is, however, remarkably little overlap between the forty Li Shangyin poems in the mid-tenth-century Shu anthology

Scholars of the Tang who have looked at old bibliographies like the *Chongwen zongmu* will lament how much of Tang literature is now lost; the trope of loss that Dudbridge describes lives on. If my hypothesis is correct, however, a third of those books do survive, disassembled and hidden beneath the categories of *Wenyuan yinghua*. A good part of the *jibu* of the imperial library of the 980s, the last trove of Tang and Five Dynasties manuscripts gathered from Bianjing, Jinling, Jiangling, and Chengdu, are still extant. The nature of the manuscript tradition and the problems inherent in transmitting a collection like *Wenyuan yinghua* do not necessarily make it the best textual source, but we should never forget that for many titles and works it is the oldest textual source.⁴⁴

The centuries that followed belonged to scholars like Song Min-qiu, who carefully conserved and tried to make single collections out of many sources. Though grateful for their efforts, we should always remember how those sources came to them, usually in bits and pieces; and in knowing that, we will understand how tenuous our link is to the Tang author's collection as it once existed in the Tang.

Our understanding of Tang literature came through a filter of destruction and dispersal, in which material was preserved by good fortune. The probability of preservation was in direct proportion to the number of manuscripts in circulation and thus to the popularity of authors and works at a particular moment in history. Song Taizong's edict to recover works in the old catalog helped preserve some rare complete collections from before the Tianbao reign of the Tang. Some of those survived into the mid-eleventh century and some did not. Apart from this act of imperial will, Song scholars found what had been copied.

When we speak of "popularity," we are referring primarily to late ninth- and tenth-century taste. To understand why we have what we have, it is important to understand the competing values in that par-

Caidiao ji 才調集 and the *Wenyuan yinghua* selection, suggesting the circulation of *xiaoji* representing very different tastes.

⁴⁴ The problem with using *Wenyuan yinghua* as the "oldest" source is that *Wenyuan yinghua* itself has been edited; moreover, the greater part of the compilation survives only in the Ming edition, probably a product of one of the manuscript copies made from the edited Song printed edition. One important source here to check the probabilities of textual variance is the *Wenyuan yinghua zuanyao* 文苑英華纂要 from the twelfth century (before it was edited). This book survives only in a Yuan edition, whose pages are sometimes incomplete. This is a selection of passages. Comparison with the current edition of *Wenyuan yinghua* shows that the texts are substantially the same, though there are a number of variants.

ticular period. Han Yu's immense prestige as a prose writer no doubt led to the recovery of his complete poetry collection. If we look at the 45 poems by Han Yu preserved in *Wenyuan yinghua*, we presume a *xiaoji* of about 135 poems in the imperial library. Virtually all of the *Wenyuan yinghua*'s selections represent what now seem an odd and unrepresentative "take" on Han Yu's poetry; it includes primarily his social regulated verses and rhetorically inventive *yongwu*. We must allow the possibility that the skewed selection represents the choices of the poetry editors of *Wenyuan yinghua*; however, the alternative possibility is that this represents the normative choices of the copyist who compiled the *xiaoji*, reading Han Yu's poetry through the literary interests of the late ninth and tenth centuries. Here and in other cases the discovery of a more complete collection shows us how radically skewed the earlier versions were.

We should then ask ourselves if the same might not be true of that large majority of literary collections where we may have supplements from other *xiaoji* but clearly do not have the full collection as it once existed. If we cannot reconcile contemporary Tang statements on a writer with the works that survive, as is often the case, we have some rather clear evidence in the line of transmission why this might be so. Each case must be understood individually; nevertheless, by and large our "Tang" has been filtered not through a tradition of scholarly preservation, but through acts of partial copying largely determined by period taste (at the same time acknowledging that the period taste of the late ninth and tenth centuries was various and complex).

This history of loss and recovery is as much an essential part of the history of Tang literature as the works we discuss with such intense regard. Even though we cannot repair the losses, if we clearly understand just how the historical record is skewed, in our accounts we can acknowledge how and where the record is probably biased.