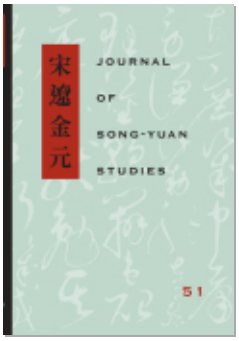
Informational Literature: The Pursuit of Empirical Accuracy in Song Literary Production



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Journal of Song-Yuan Studies, Volume 51, 2022, pp. 305-332 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/sys.2022.0012*

Informational Literature:

The Pursuit of Empirical Accuracy in Song Literary Production

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Empirical facts are accorded little importance in classical Chinese poetics. As is well known, the "Great Preface" of the *Book of Songs* defines poetry (*shi* 詩) as "that to which what is intently on the mind goes" (*zhi zhi suozhi ye* 志之所之也), and ascribes to the expression of emotions—the stirrings of the mind arising from the experience of a situation—a capacity to reveal both the poet's character and the social and political conditions of an age.[1] This canonical outlook on poetry largely remained unchallenged until the mid-Tang, when a group of craftsmen-poets rose to prominence in the ashes of the An Lushan Rebellion (755–763). Living in the post-rebellion world beset with crises in cultural representations, some ninth-century poets, as Stephen Owen has observed, began to acknowledge "a temporal disjunction between the putative experience that occasioned the poem and the act of composition."[2] While these poets aimed to create polished poetic scenes and were not interested in accurate representations, their innovative approach to writing ushered in an era during which poetry was gradually divorced from the cosmo-political order that used to define both its genesis and ultimate significance.

Critical attention to poetry's factual accuracy first became noticeable around the mid-eleventh century. The new literary current, though distinct from the contemporaneous Ancient Style movement championed by the empire's most esteemed intellectuals, resulted from the same historical circumstances that necessitated a reorientation of the literary enterprise. Peter Bol has compellingly

1. The same idea is recorded in the *Book of Documents*. See Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1992), 40.

2. Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese 'Middle Ages': Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 108.

demonstrated that elite learning since the eleventh century ceased to emphasize the mastery of literary forms, as the expansion of the civil examination system and the concomitant increase in educational opportunities transformed *shi* elite from hereditary aristocrats to scholar-officials, and then to local elites.[3] Pushing back against the belletristic tradition characteristic of medieval aristocracy, the Ancient Style proponents, as Bol shows, sought to advance political and social transformations through morally engaged writing. And yet few critics and poets who valued empirical accuracy spoke of their literary commitment in political terms. Most of them were not as eminent as the advocates of the Ancient Style, and most of their comments were discursive.

Early critics often discussed attentiveness to facts in light of Du Fu's 杜甫 (712–770) poems. As Du's popularity escalated after the most complete version of his poetry was printed in 1059, "poetry as chronicle" (*shishi* 詩史), an idea first associated with him in a late Tang commentary, also reentered the public view.[4] Not resonating with the then-dominant idealist discourses and unexciting as a poetic ideal, empirical accuracy, merely one of the manifold interpretations of "poetry as chronicle," only garnered passing scholarly attention in the context of Du's reception.[5] And yet, even within this limited scope of investigation, it is conceivable that the importance of facts in literary representations went beyond the criticism of a single poet. While Tang commentators established Du's reputation as a faithful recorder by virtue of his poems narrating the events following the An Lushan Rebellion, Song readers, no longer fixated on those turbulent years, enthusiastically approached his entire corpus as a repository of historical information.[6]

In fact, informativeness became a desirable literary quality across many

3. Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992).

4. The most influential comment on the historicity of Du's works was from the *New History of the Tang* (1060), where the compilers remark that Du was "good at narrating contemporary events" (*shanchen shishi* 善陳時事). Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 and Song Qi 宋祁, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 201.5738.

5. The most recent work is Chen Jue's "Making China's Greatest Poet: The Construction of Du Fu in the Poetic Culture of Song Dynasty (960–1279)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2016).

6. For a comprehensive survey of the idea of "poetry as chronicle" in the Song and its inextricable relation to Du Fu, see Zhang Hui 张晖, *Zhongguo "shishi" chuantong* 中国"诗史"传统 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2016), 13–84. See also Hao Ji, *The Reception of Du Fu (712–770) and His Poetry in Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 63–73.

genres from the mid-eleventh century, and poetry was not an exception to this trend. Drawing on sightseeing accounts and river diaries, James Hargett has opined that Song travelers, unlike their predecessors, often wrote cinematically descriptive pieces and were disinclined to project personal emotions onto the landscape.[7] In exploring the ways by which Southern Song literati availed themselves to the knowledge of the local past to create a shared cultural identity, Peter Bol points out that the compiler of the thirteenth-century cultural geography, *Records of the Best Sites in the Realm* 輿地紀勝 (1227), assumed that the specifics of locales were important to contemporary literary endeavors.[8] Song literati seemed to have repositioned literature as a source of knowledge integral to their learning despite its declining practical importance after poetry was removed from the examinations in the 1070s. And this new literary vista, as Hargett's and Bol's respective studies indirectly suggest, emerged as the examination and bureaucratic institutions mobilized an unprecedented number of educated men along the empire's growing transport networks, and as negotiations with the institutionalized experience propagated an empire-wide elite culture defined by conversancy with, and contribution to, the local traditions constitutive of this cultural collective.[9]

This article argues that empirical accuracy took shape as an aesthetic ideal in poetry criticism, which further developed into a practical advantage as readership broadened and as writers aimed to cultivate increasingly popular audiences. We shall first see that the privileging of facts over lyrical expressions, by no means a quality exclusively associated with Du Fu, had spread as an implied principle in a variety of commentaries, and it exerted a salient influence on place writing. Then, by tracing the evolution of a new genre of anthology organized around localities, we will discuss how this new literary ideal gained a foothold and prevailed despite the persistent recognition of

7. James M. Hargett, *Jade Mountains and Cinnabar Pools: The History of Travel Literature in Imperial China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 90–114.

8. Peter K. Bol, "The Rise of Local History: History, Geography, and Culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61, no. 1 (2001): 59–64.

9. Ellen Zhang has explored the ways scholar-officials' peripatetic life provided them with a shared experience for the construction of a collective culture. Her focus is on office-holding literati and their commemorative activities on the road. See Cong Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 154–179. For an overview of the infrastructural development during this period that made extensive travel possible, see Wang Fuxin 王福鑫, *Songdai Lüyou yanjiu* 宋代旅游研究 (Baoding: Hebei daxue chubanshe, 2007).

the established expectations for literature as a means of pursuing cultural immortality. Finally, we will look into the demand for, and advocacy of, factual reliability from the perspectives of travelers, compilers, and readers. Though of various degrees of mobility, the reading public by the thirteenth century shared a general desire to be exposed to information on specific natural and cultural sites across the empire. And empirical accuracy did not turn into an essential literary quality until producers of local literature imagined both actual and armchair travelers as their primary audiences.

Pursuing Poetic Precision

The exaltation of the idea of "poetry as chronicle" following Du Fu's canonization in the eleventh century was accompanied by growing attention to the credibility and authenticity of poetic elements. No longer appreciating literary efficacy if it was achieved at the expense of facts, detail-minded scholars began to praise Du for being precise with the complex kinship relations depicted in his poems, or attentive to the spatial perspectives of a river landscape.[10] And yet despite the poet's enormous fame, Du's works were not exempted from intense scrutiny. One of his poems that drew disapproval from several eminent personages was "A Ballad on the Old Cypress" (*Gubo xing* 古柏行). In *Records at the Eastern Studio* 東齋記事, Fan Zhen 范鎮 (1008–1088) faults the poet for exaggerating the height of the tree in the couplet, "Its frosty bark has been drenched by rains, a forty arm-span girth,/eyebrow-black touching Heaven, two thousand feet up."[11] This judgment was soon echoed by the polymath Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031–1095) in *Brush Talks by the Dream Brook* (*Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談), where the previous objection is further specified with a calculation: "Forty arm-span is equal to seven feet in diameter. Isn't this cypress too slender!"[12] Several years later, Wang Dechen 王得臣 (1036–1116), similarly bothered by the tree's height, meticulously explained the conversion of measurements, and showed that Shen's calculation was incorrect: "An arm-

10. Wang Dechen 王得臣, *Zhu shi* 麈史, *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記, ed. Shanghai shifan daxue guji zhengli yanjiusuo 上海師範大學古籍整理研究所 (hereafter *QSBJ*) (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2003–2018), 1.10.44; Chen Yanxiao 陳巖肖, *Gengxi shihua* 庚溪詩話, in *Lidai shihua xubian* 歷代詩話續編, ed. Ding Fubao 丁福保 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 167.

11. 霜皮溜雨四十圍, 黛色參天二千尺. Fan Zhen 范鎮, *Dongzhai jishi* 東齋記事, *QSBJ* 1.6.218. The translation of Du's poem follows Stephen Owen, trans., *The Poetry of Du Fu* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 228–29.

12. 四十圍乃是徑七尺,無乃太細長乎. Shen Kuo 沈括, *Mengxi bitan*, *QSBJ* 2.3.172.

span is equal to a foot . . . [forty arm-span] is then forty feet . . . if its diameter is seven feet, then the girth should be twenty-one feet."[13] The cypress dispute continued into the Southern Song. Some of Du's staunch admirers then asserted that Shen's and Wang's calculations were both wrong, and that they would come to see that Du's depiction of the cypress was perfectly accurate if they knew how to do the arithmetic properly.[14]

While there were literati who pointed out that poetry should not be read with such unimaginative rigidity, it did not take long for the standard of objective reliability to become applicable beyond Du's oeuvre. One of the earliest targets was Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 (1007–1072), whose comments in his remarks on poetry (*shihua* 詩話) opened up an arena for debate for many generations after his death. The illustrious inventor of *shihua*, intending his writing to enliven casual conversations, would probably have never expected that his remarks would be scrutinized so relentlessly for well over a century, and that later individuals, some of whom were not even writing literary criticism, did not seem to tire of reiterating that he had made mistakes.[15] These lines of criticism, backed with a diverse array of evidence, bring to light an emerging current that sought to wed poetry with empirical particularities.

Unlike the measurements of a cypress, the issues with Ouyang's contentious comments were not grounded in common sense, but rather empirical knowledge. A typical example concerns Mei Yaochen's 梅堯臣 (1002–1060) poem on pufferfish, which begins thus: "Silvergrass grows from spring islets; catkins fly along spring riverbanks."[16] In praise of this opening couplet, Ouyang writes:

> Pufferfish often arrive in late spring. They swim in schools on the river-surface to eat catkins and become fattened. Southerners often make [fish] soup with shoots of silvergrass. They say [this dish is] the most delectable. Therefore, those

13. 圍則尺也 . . . 杜子美〈武侯廟柏〉詩云:「霜皮溜雨四十圍,黛色參天二千尺.」是大四丈.沈存中內翰云:「四十圍乃是徑七尺,無乃太細長也.」然沈精於算數者,不知何法以準之.若徑七尺,則圍當二丈一尺.1 *chi* = 1 foot; 1 *zhang* 丈=10 *chi*. Wang Dechen, *Zhu shi*, 62.

14. Huang Chaoying 黃朝英, *Xiangsu zaji* 緗素雜記, *QSBJ* 3.4.244–45.

15. For a discussion of the innovative aspects of this new genre in literary criticism, see Ronald Egan, "A New Poetry Criticism: The Creation of 'Remarks on Poetry'," in *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 60–108.

16. 春洲生荻芽, 春岸飛楊花. Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣, "Fan Raozhou zuozhong keyu shi hetun yu" 范饒州坐中客語食河豚魚, in *Quan Song shi* 全宋詩, ed. Beijing daxue guwenxian yanjiusuo 北京大學古文獻研究所 (hereafter *QSS*; Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1991–1998), 5:239.2768.

> who understand poetry know that the opening couplet alone fully encapsulates pufferfish as a delicacy.[17]
>
> 河豚常出於春暮，羣游水上，食絮而肥。南人多與荻芽爲羹，云最美。故知詩者謂祇破題兩句，已道盡河豚好處。

As a native of Luling 廬陵 (Jiangxi), Ouyang probably felt justified in introducing a "southern" culinary tradition, but the kind of pufferfish in question migrate every year from the sea to the Yangzi, and the gourmets of the Yangzi delta found it difficult to agree with Ouyang on anything about the dish. The Suzhou literatus, Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148), for one, suggests that Ouyang had effectively sullied this specialty by relating it to the customs of his own hometown, which is located by a tributary of the Yangzi far down in the south. He points out that rich families in Jiangyin 江陰 and Changzhou 常州, two adjacent prefectures close to the mouth of the river, would begin to eat pufferfish before the fifteenth of the first lunar month. They would be affordable in the Liangzhe 兩浙 region one month later as their number multiplied, Ye further notes, but no one would still consume them when catkins are flying, as the fish then are believed to be infected.[18] Chao Guanzhi 晁貫之 (fl. 1136), who had a wife from Changzhou, confirms that pufferfish was most valued toward the end of the year, and no one cared for it much after the Lantern Festival.[19] Chen Yanxiao 陳巖肖 (ca. 1110–1174) did not have spousal links to the region, but he had sojourned in both Jiangyin and Changzhou, and discovered that neither place cooked the fish with silvergrass. Yet when he took up an office in Moling 秣陵, a county about 160 kilometers upstream from Changzhou, Chen noticed that local people did follow the silvergrass recipe when they could enjoy the fish around the third lunar month, thus concluding that the poem is about pufferfish in this specific area.[20] All these discussions are found in *shihua*, but the specifics about pufferfish—both before and after they were turned into a dish—seem more important to the commentators than the language of Mei's poem. In a sense, Ouyang and his critics followed the same standards, as they all valued accurate observation. But Ouyang, who knew little about the customs of the lower Yangzi, had made the mistake of speaking for all southerners.

17. Ouyang Xiu, *Liuyi shihua* 六一詩話, in *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話, ed. He Wenhuan 何文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 265.

18. Ye Mengde 葉夢得, *Shilin shihua* 石林詩話, in *Lidai shihua*, 405.

19. Zhu Bian 朱弁, *Fengyue tang shihua* 風月堂詩話 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 114.

20. *Gengxi shihua*, 181.

Given that Ouyang's pufferfish remark, defendable with sufficient localization, still drew criticism, the vehement response to his unfounded cavil against a poem about Suzhou could more or less be expected. The problematic lines are from Zhang Ji's 張繼 (*jinshi* 753) famous "Night Mooring at Maple Bridge" (*Fengqiao yebo* 楓橋夜泊): "Outside of Suzhou's walls, from the Cold Mountain Temple,/ Midnight bells reach my guest boat."[21] A good couplet, Ouyang asserts, but midnight is not a time for tolling bells.[22]

Refutations of this claim can be found in at least ten surviving titles that span the entire twelfth century, and in addition to confirming the accuracy of the original poem, most commentators supplied extra information about temple bells in different localities.[23] The first individual to raise an objection was a northerner, Wang Lizhi 王立之 (1069–1109), who tacitly questions the breadth of Ouyang's reading by citing three Tang poems with the motif of the midnight bell.[24] The critics who followed Wang were all southerners, including a few Suzhou natives, and they all spoke from personal experience. Among them, Ye Mengde was the most lenient, simply remarking that Ouyang had never been to Suzhou and therefore did not know that bells did indeed toll at that hour.[25] Others approached the topic in a more competitive spirit. After criticizing Ouyang's careless speculation, native literati felt obliged to clarify that bells rang at different hours in different temples, with literati across the Zhe River claiming that midnight bells were not unique to Suzhou, but ubiquitous in Liangzhe. The last important work touching on the debate is the Suzhou gazetteer *Wujun zhi* 吳郡志 (1192). The group of native editors, after recapitulating entries from four *shihua* and brush notes (*biji* 筆記), forthrightly suggest that Ouyang could have avoided the mistake if he had visited Suzhou or read more widely.[26]

Commentators repeatedly went back to Ouyang's remark not because his

21. 姑蘇城外寒山寺, 夜半鐘聲到客船. Zhang Ji, "*Fengqiao yebo*" in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, ed., Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 8: 242.2721.

22. Ouyang Xiu, *Liuyi shihua*, 269.

23. See, for example, Chen Yanxiao, *Gengxi shihua*, 171–72; Zhu Bian, *Fengyue tang shihua*, 110; Fan Wen 范溫, *Qianxi shiyan* 潛溪詩眼 in *Song shihua jiyi* 宋詩話輯佚, ed. Guo Shaoyu 郭少虞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 329–30; Gong Mingzhi, *Zhongwu jiwen*. *QSBJ* 3.7.175–76; and Wu Ceng 吳曾, *Nenggai zhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄, *QSBJ* 5.3.73; Lu You, *Laoxuean biji*, *QSBJ* 5.8.118–19; and Wang Mao 王楙, *Yeke congshu* 野客叢書, *QSBJ* 6.6.346.

24. Wang Lizhi 王立之, *Wang Zhifang shihua* 王直方詩話, in *Song shihua jiyi*, 88.

25. Ye Mengde, *Shilin shihua*, 426.

26. Fan Chengda 范成大, *Wujun zhi* 吳郡志, *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 宋元方志叢刊 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), vol. 7, 944.

mistaken view still held currency, but because a celebrity's ignorance furnished them with an opportunity to display the breadth of their learning. Since the eleventh century, miscellaneous knowledge—such as the hour certain temple bells tolled—gained importance as a result of a cultural trend that, in Ellen Zhang's words, took direct observation and personal experience as a legitimate and highly valued source of scholarship.[27] In her study of *biji* writing, Zhang observes that the valorization of miscellaneous knowledge was particularly pertinent to literati who did not enjoy empire-wide fame yet nonetheless regarded themselves as accomplished scholars.[28] The ever-growing urge among the multitudes of educated men to claim a place in elite society could likewise account for the emerging disputes about local facts in poetry criticism. By publicizing the local knowledge that he had accumulated, a literatus would be able to communicate his command over a form of cultural capital that defined, in part, elite identity. And the new perspective of criticism was not the only mark this trend left in the literary field—it also reshaped the ideal and practice of literary production, driving poets to pursue empirical accuracy in their poetic output.

While a poet's investment in empirical accuracy could take many forms, writing in the exhaustive genre "a hundred songs" (*baiyong* 百詠), which became a fashionable practice from the eleventh century, might well be the ultimate demonstration of his seriousness with regards to accurately representing facts. Sometime around 1090, for example, both Guo Xiangzheng 郭祥正 and Yang Pan 楊蟠 wrote a *baiyong* for West Lake by consulting various maps and gazetteers. While consulting maps and gazetteers might be considered rigorous for poets of Guo and Yang's generation, the choice makes them stand out among those who attempted composing in this demanding form: from Huizong's reign (1100–1126), *baiyong* writers took pride in their personal experience, as a native, a local official, or a traveler to a place. Often highlighting that their works could offer something previously unavailable, these poets were not simply restyling what had already been written into poetry, but instead wanted their observation-based compositions to provide new knowledge.[29]

27. Ellen Zhang, "To Be 'Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge': A Study of Song (960–1279) '*Biji*' Writing," *Asia Major* 25, no. 2 (2012): 46.

28. Ellen Zhang, "To Be 'Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge,'" 45.

29. See Ruan Yue 阮閱, "Chenzhou baiyong xu" 郴州百詠序, in Zhu Shangshu 祝尚書

Therefore, we should not be surprised to learn that Guo's and Yang's efforts were slighted in the thirteenth century by the Hangzhou native Dong Sigao 董嗣杲 (fl. late 13th c.). Dong also wrote a *baiyong* on the West Lake. In the preface to his published collection (1272), he dismisses Guo and Yang as rash poets who ventured to conjecture a hundred scenes using nothing but books and proudly points out that he had grown up by the lake and had befriended its landscape.[30] After noting that the one hundred quatrains took him more than two decades to finish, Dong further asserts, "everything is based on what I have seen personally, and I do not boast about wonders or vie for literary magnificence."[31] Some have pointed out that Dong's stylistic choice made his suite of poetry a handy guidebook.[32] And Dong, forgoing the practical use evident from the content of his poems, stressed that he intended the work to preserve a cross-section of the West Lake's history for those who would tour the cultural landmark in the coming ages.

Dong's poetry sequence, at once an urban walking guide and a historical geography of the famous lake, was a product of intersecting literary currents. Unapologetically valuing facts over ornament or lyrical expression, the collection represents the maturation of geographic poetry at the end of the dynasty. With respect to aesthetics, place-based *baiyong* were similar to the empirical poems on local sites Song literati composed during their travels.[33] In terms of structure, however, the genre at its developed stage featured an overarching spatial organization seldom seen in discursive travel poems. Both Duan Xiaolin and Benjamin Ridgway have noticed that the taxonomy the West Lake

ed., *Songji xuba huibian* 宋集序跋彙編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 895; and Ye Xiaoxi 葉孝錫, "Nanhai baiyong xu" 南海百詠序, in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (hereafter *QSW*; Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006) 308:7036.239.

30. Dong Sigao 董嗣杲, "Xihu baiyong xu" 西湖百詠序, *QSW* 356:8259.410. Yang actually served as the Vice Prefect of Hangzhou in 1091, but the two sets of *baiyong* are undatable. Regardless, Dong's criticism still stands even if the poems were written after Yang took the office, since Dong asserted that their poems do not demonstrate knowledge about the lake beyond what maps and gazetteers could offer.

31. 此直據予所見, 不以誇奇斗勝爲工也. Dong Sigao, "Xihu baiyong xu."

32. Duan Xiaolin, *The Rise of West Lake: A Cultural Landmark in the Song Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), 97; and Benjamin Ridgway, "The City in a Garden: The Emergence of the Geo-Poetic Collection in Dong Sigao's 'One Hundred Poems on West Lake,'" *JSYS* 49, no. 1 (2020): 243.

33. They were also similar to the prose travel writings studied by James Hargett. See *Jade Mountains and Cinnabar Pools*, 90–114.

sequence employed resembled that of a local gazetteer.[34] However, the new form was not Dong's invention: the topographic taxonomy governing the compilation of local gazetteers had already begun to shape literary production from the late eleventh century.[35]

Around that time, some anthology compilers, along with *baiyong* poets, started experimenting with locality as the organizing principle for their works. These local collections were similar to *baiyong* in that they often focused on a specific prefecture or a scenic landscape complex. But compilers, unlike poets, were not free to embrace a prevailing aesthetic as they wished. A large number of earlier works that could be considered place writing only contain a simple reference or a fantastic portrayal. It was thus necessary for the compilers to compromise on accuracy, especially regarding works by prominent writers. Nevertheless, while most compilers were not ready to cite accuracy as an inviolable standard, local literary collections were markedly different from previous anthologies even at their inception, and they eventually matured into a genre akin to the local gazetteer.[36]

The Evolution of a Fluid Genre

Choronyms and toponyms are commonly seen in the titles of individual literary collections from the mid-Tang, yet the place—oftentimes related to the origin of one's family—rarely represented anything more than a token acknowledgment of its impact on the writer's character. No one would expect Han Yu's 韓愈 (768–824) *Collection of Changli* (Changji ji 昌黎集) to center on his ancestral hometown, or Du Mu's 杜牧 (803–852) *Collection of Fanchuan* (Fanchuan ji 樊川集) to describe the beauty of the Fan River.

Yin Fan's 殷璠 *Collection of Danyang* (Danyang ji 丹陽集) (after 735), unlike individual collections, included works by eighteen native poets, and

34. See Duan, *The Rise of West Lake*; and Ridgway, "The City in a Garden."

35. Place-based *baiyong* were closely related to local gazetteers during this time: among the eleven surviving suites of *baiyong*, eight were incorporated, partially or entirely, into Southern Song or Yuan local gazetteers, among which four have survived.

36. Most local literary collections, like the local gazetteer, were published with the help of the prefect if not entirely with local government funding. It did not matter if the compiler was an official or a local scholar. In the thirteenth century, a series of literary collections was compiled by the Tiantai local Lin Biaomin 林表民 who was also involved in multiple projects on updating the local gazetteer. See Wu Ziliang 吳子良, "Chicheng jixu" 赤城集序, Chen Qiqing 陳耆卿, "Tiantai ji biebian ba" 天台集別編跋, Lin Biaomin "Tiantai ji biebian ba" 天台集別編跋 and "Tiantai xuji ba"天台續集跋, in *QSW* 341:7863.20, 319:7316.90, 323:7419.123–24.

therefore appears to have been a poetry anthology concerning the titular place.[37] However, based on the snippets of this lost book that Chen Shangjun has recovered, it is clear that Yin, though a Danyang native, had little interest in the prefecture per se. His preface adopts a rhetoric on literature typical of the time, extolling poetry as a cultural form that could "transform and perfect all-under-heaven."[38] And his brief introductions of the poets always focus on their styles: one poet is said to have "subtle emotions and exceptional language," another demonstrates "grand and unconstrained vision," yet another writes in a manner that is "gracefully gorgeous and refreshingly lucid," and so forth.[39] The only transmitted Tang comment on the *Collection of Danyang* groups it together with regular poetry anthologies, and even cites its geographic specificity as an inadequacy.[40] In short, although Yin may have chosen to collect the poems of his fellow townsmen out of a sense of local pride, the prefecture as a place was largely irrelevant to the selected works.

Unlike Yin Fan, few eleventh-century compilers of local literary collections paid much attention to style, or, for that matter, claimed that their projects were politically significant.[41] Kong Yanzhi's 孔延之 (1014–1074) *Complete Collection of Florilegia of Guiji* (*Guiji duoying zongji* 會稽掇英總集) (1072), the only Northern Song local literary collection that has survived in full, adopted a semi-topographic taxonomy in arranging its 805 pieces. While working on this project, Kong served as the local prefect, and in addition to culling materials from books, he organized a team to interview locals and gather inscriptions on public surfaces as well as in caves and on cliffs. Taking poems on the prefectural office compound as the starting point, the first nine chapters present in turn the cultural, scenic, and religious sites of the area, entirely following topographic categories.

37. See Chen Shangjun 陈尚君, "Tang ren xuan difang Tang shi ji *Danyang ji* yu *Yiyang ji*" 唐人选地方唐诗集《丹阳集》与《宜阳集》, *Wenshi zhishi*, no.11 (2017): 40–46.

38. 化成天下. Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, Chen Shangjun and Xu Jun 徐俊 eds., *Tangren xuan Tang shi xinbian* 唐人選唐詩新編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 131. For a discussion of the Tang conception of literary engagement, see "Scholarship and Literary Composition at the Early T'ang Court" in Bol, *"This Culture of Ours,"* 76–107.

39. 情幽語奇; 宏贍縱逸; 婉麗清新. Fu Xuancong et al. eds., *Tangren xuan Tang shi xinbian*, 133–37.

40. Gao Zhongwu 高仲武, "Da Tang zhongxing jianqi jixu" 大唐中興間氣集序 in *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, ed., Dong Gao 董誥 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 458.4684.

41. We also know that You Mao 尤袤 (1127–1194) did not put Yin Fan's *Danyang ji* together with Song local literary collections in his *Book Catalog of the Hall of Fulfilling Original Wishes* (*Suichu tang shumu* 遂初堂書目).

Each of these sites, however obscure it might be, begins with a brief preamble that serves to situate the related poems.[42] While Kong simply tailored an extant essay by someone else for the sites of greater cultural renown (e.g. the Orchid Pavillion *lanting* 蘭亭 and the Mirror Lake *jianhu* 鑒湖), he had to write a preamble on site for the rest of the places. Before the twenty poems on the Hill of the Five Cascades, for instance, he writes:

> The Five Cascades is a waterfall. Forty *li* west of Zhuji county, a creek lies between two peaks; their cliffs reach the clouds. [The waterfall] stands 200 fathoms high and several dozen fathoms wide. It glides down in five steps, and is therefore called the Five Cascades. At the foot of the Five Cascades there is a deep pond. In years of drought, there is always a response when one prays there for rain. One can also find a monastery called Responding to Heaven. The hill has many wondrous peaks; some have compared it to the Wild Goose Pond Mountains.[43]
>
> 五泄，瀑布也。在諸暨西四十里有兩山夾溪，造雲壁立，高二百丈，廣數十丈，水瀉五節，故曰五泄。下有龍湫，歲旱，請雨輒應。寺曰應乾。山多奇峰，或比之雁蕩云。

The Five Cascades was relatively unknown in Kong's time, and his description of the waterscape makes the visitors' corresponding poems much easier to appreciate. Several of them write about the steep peaks, the sprawling vines, and the roaring sound of the waterfall; one mentions the pond as a site for rain prayers and a few others simply marvel at its natural beauty. The last category of poems with no descriptive details were all inscriptions found in the hill, which means their authors expected a readership personally experiencing the wonder of the place on site.[44] Yet, with a concise introduction outlining the spatial composition of the waterfall, these poems would also be meaningful to all those who were prepared to experience the Five Cascades through Kong's book.

Nevertheless, despite Kong's effort in localizing all the poems in the first half of his book, the organization of the collection changed after the ninth chapter. The six remaining chapters of poetry were loosely divided according to literary motifs such as "parting" (*songbie* 送別), "stirring" (*ganxing* 感興), and "persons" (*renwu* 人物). And uncategorizable pieces were placed in the

42. See Kong Yanzhi 孔延之, *Guiji duoying zongji* 會稽掇英總集, ed. Zou Zhifang 鄒志方 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2006).

43. Kong Yanzhi, *Guiji duoying zongji*, 61.

44. Kong Yanzhi, *Guiji duoying zongji*, 62–65.

last verse section titled "assorted poems" (*zayong* 雜詠). This unprecedented taxonomy reflects a dual interest: on the one hand, Kong clearly aspired to represent the locale topographically through poetry; on the other, he strived for comprehensiveness, thus employing traditional literary categories to incorporate every single piece he had gathered.

In the preface to the *Florilegia of Guiji*, Kong tells us that the project grew out of a keen sense of impermanence, and he compares the literary traces preserved in the anthology to precious jade and pearls that would shine on through many generations. There must be tens of thousands of literary pieces composed for a place so famous as Guiji, he observes, but only a fraction of them have survived because of wind, rain, and human negligence. Reasoning that a printed book would stand the best chance of being transmitted, Kong arranged his work to be printed immediately after its completion—a rare practice among his contemporaries.[45] What Kong aimed to achieve with the *Florilegia of Guiji*, then, was to display the brilliance of Guiji to future readers, and hence establish for it an enduring reputation.

In the *Zuo Tradition* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳), the fountainhead of the idea of literary immortality, the imperishability of words was contingent on their value to statecraft; in Cao Pi's 曹丕 (187–226) axiomatic "Discourse on Literature" (*Lunwen* 論文), literary accomplishment becomes what enables a writer to gain everlasting fame.[46] Yet in the eleventh century, we find an anthologist refashioning this age-old idea to promote an area's rich cultural heritage. With new selection criteria and a new taxonomy, the immortalizing words in this collection are no longer prized for their embodiment of politics or personalities, but rather for their representations of a particular place.

That said, for the late-eleventh century generation, there seemed to be no rules for a local literary collection as long as it focused on a particular place. Although the *Florilegia of Guiji* is the sole fully surviving example, we know something about other contemporaneous local literary collections from prefaces and book catalogues that have been transmitted. The preface to the *Collection of Yangzhou* (*Yangzhou ji* 揚州集) (1081), for example, simply

45. "Preface," *Guiji duoying zongji*, 3.

46. For a discussion of the inextricability between "establishing words" (*liyan* 立言) and governance in the *Zuo Tradition*, see Liu Chang 刘畅, "San buxiu: huidao xianqin yujing de sixiang shuli" 三不朽: 回到先秦语境的思想梳理, *Wenxue yichan*, no.5 (2004): 17–27. For an introduction to Cao Pi's seminal idea on literature's immortalizing power, see Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 57–72.

explains how the contemporary prefecture evolved out of the vast southern region historically known as Yangzhou, and how this geographic development informed the anthology's selection criteria. The preface to the *Categorized Collection of Runzhou* (*Runzhou leiji* 潤州類集) (1084) remarks that the book was put together because the prefect wanted to have pre-Song local poems ready for reference during his outings and banquets. The preface to the *Collection of Mt. Luofu* (*Luofu ji* 羅浮集) (1100) indicates that the book can help readers better appreciate the remote mountain.[47] And a preface to the *Poetry of Wuxing* (*Wuxing shi* 吳興詩) (ca. 1072) was never written, as the compiler did not even bother to sign his name after completing the book.[48] In addition, all compilers who had left a preface appear to have been oblivious to other collections, speaking of their respective works as independent efforts free from external influence.[49]

Since the genre was still at a formative stage, it is not surprising that most compilers had not reflected on how a local literary collection should be organized or what end such a collection should serve. However, a discernible, though indistinct, connection between the local gazetteer and the local literary collection did take shape in the last decades of the Northern Song. The Suzhou native Zhu Changwen 朱長文 (1039–1098) compiled the *Complete Collection of the Wu Area* (*Wumen zongji* 吳門總集) (ca. 1080) alongside his much more famous gazetteer, the *Supplementary Records to the "Illustrated Guide to Wu Commandery"* (*Wujun tujing xuji* 吳郡圖經續記).[50] Similarly, the Yuezhou (i.e. Guiji) native Hua Zhen 華鎮 (*jinshi* 1079) composed for his hometown both a gazetteer, the *Record of Guiji* (*Guiji lu* 會稽錄), and a literary collection, *Poems on the Ancient Sites of Guiji* (*Guiji langushi* 會稽覽古詩).[51]

47. Qin Guan 秦觀, "Yangzhou ji xu" 揚州集序; Zeng Min 曾旼, "Runzhou leiji" 潤州類集序; and Tan Cui 譚粹, "Luofu jixu" 羅浮集序. See *QSW* 119:2577.371, 102: 2236.274–75, and 82:1793.313.

48. Chen Zhensun 陳振孫, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), 453.

49. Seventy-four titles of local literary collections are recorded in the late twelfth-century *Book Catalog of the Hall of Fulfilling Original Wishes* (*Suichu tang shumu* 遂初堂書目), the thirteenth-century *Annotated Book Catalog of the Upright Studio* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題), and the "Treatise on Literature" in the *Song shi*. Four out of the thirteen Northern Song collections (including Kong Yanzhi's compilation) still have a preface. More titles of local collections can be found in transmitted poems and essays, but it is not always possible to determine the nature of these lost works.

50. Preface to *Wujun tujing xuji*, *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, vol.1, 639.

51. Hua's contemporaries largely ignored these works in favor of his panegyrics and exegeses

Although the connection between the two genres remained undiscussed until the thirteenth century, it had become more salient in practice since compiling local literary collections turned into a commonplace endeavor. The first Southern Song local literary collection we can still read today was by Dong Fen 董棻 (?–?) who completed both a literary collection and a gazetteer for Yanzhou 嚴州 in 1139. In the preface to the gazetteer, Dong makes clear that he expects the book to provide exemplary models for local administrators, help cultivate amicable relationships among young students, and inspire a commitment to moral integrity among eminent officials—positions widely-held among Southern Song gazetteer compilers.[52] He is less clear about the goal of the literary collection. At first glance, he seems to consider himself a follower of "those who gather and organize old and new literature from a prefecture in recent years." Comparing these collections to the "Airs of States" (*Guofeng* 國風), he asserts that they can shed light on the local ethos.[53] Yet, after giving a list of famous natives skilled in writing and celebrated visitors who had praised the local landscape, Dong confessed that he had no choice but to include Yanzhou-related works by eminent literati (e.g. Han Yu, Sima Guang, and Su Shi) who had never been to the prefecture.[54] The reference to the "Airs of the States," therefore, was but a convenient analogy that could ascribe a significance to the collection—what Dong actually sought to accomplish was to fashion a favorable image for Yanzhou.

The value Dong Fen saw in his Yanzhou anthology was similar to what Kong Yanzhi saw in the *Florilegia of Guiji*, and this intention of making a local literary collection a showcase for appealing representations of a place is more plainly articulated by Yuan Yueyou 袁說友 (1140–1204), a later literatus who undertook similar projects. The agenda Yuan set for his *Categorized Literary Collection of Chengdu* (*Chengdu wenlei* 成都文類) (1195) was distinct from that for the Chengdu gazetteer he finished in the same year. Whereas Yuan drew attention to the southwestern metropolis's

on the Classics, and both books have been long lost. Gu Hongyi 顧宏義, *Songchao fangzhi kao* 宋朝方志考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 161–62.

52. Dong Fen 董棻, "Yanzhou tujing xu" 嚴州圖經序, *QSW* 199:4396.68–69. The educational function of Southern Song local gazetteers is thoroughly demonstrated in James Hargett, "Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers and Their Place in The History of Difangzhi Writing," *HJAS* 56.2 (Dec. 1996): 424–36.

53. 近代有裒類一州古今文章敘次以傳者. Dong Fen, "Yanling ji xu" 嚴陵集序, *QSW* 199:4396.69.

54. Dong Fen, "Yanling ji xu."

declining economy and troubling social realities in his comments on the function of the gazetteer, he reiterated in the preface to the literary collection that Chengdu needed to be glorified through literature, just like the ancient capitals had been through grand rhapsodies.[55] Perhaps the *Florilegia of Guiji* was preserved exactly because Kong Yanzhi's approach and agenda were similar to those adopted by a large number of Southern Song compilers.[56] Like Kong, both Dong and Yuan served as local prefects when they organized local scholars to work on their respective projects, and both took great pains to gather local works susceptible to loss or erasure. Furthermore, despite their concern for writings that offered firsthand observations, they shared a goal of constructing a comprehensive *literary* picture for the places. And this literary picture was intended to be passed down as a token of cultural memory.

The view that a local literary collection mainly served to immortalize a place through literature was challenged by Li Jian 李兼 (d. 1208), who suggested that the literary collection and the gazetteer of a prefecture should be complementary.[57] Dissatisfied with the collections ubiquitous in the southeastern prefectures at the turn of the thirteenth century, Li proposed that the genre should elucidate the relations among a place's landscape, architecture, folk customs, and elite traditions. Following his own understanding, Li pushed further the topographic interest that first surfaced in the *Florilegia of Guiji* when he compiled an anthology for his native town Xuancheng 宣城. In his *Complete Collection of Xuancheng* (*Xuancheng zongji* 宣城總集), the kind of exclusively lyrical pieces included in the second half of the earlier collection such as "stirrings" or "partings" were entirely absent, and its twenty-three themes all dealt with some aspect of Xuancheng as a place. Besides local customs and historical events that had an impact on the prefecture, Li focused on "mountains, rivers, gardens, pavilions, halls, and towers," as well as "flowers, herbs, fruits, trees, birds, beasts, insects, and aquatic creatures." He also restricted the selection to writers who had personal knowledge

55. Yuan Yueyou 袁說友, "Chengdu wenlei xu" 成都文類序 and "Chengdu zhi xu" 成都志序, *QSW* 274:6207.310–12.

56. Besides the case of Yanzhou and Chengdu discussed below, other examples include Xiong Ke 熊克 for Zhenjiang 鎮江, (*Song shi* 204.5158, 209.5400); Chen Baipeng 陳百朋 for Kuocang 括蒼, (Chen Zhensun, 248, 454); and Lin Jue 林桷 for Dangtu 當塗 in 1178, (Chen Zhensun, 249, 455).

57. Li Jian 李兼, "Tiantai ji xu" 天台集序, *QSW* 302:6887.36; and *Song shi* 204.5160.

about the prefecture, only including "residents, local officials, travelers, and sojourners."[58]

While a consensus on the organization of a local literary collection was never reached, those who concurred with Li's position found the boundary between a local literary collection and a local gazetteer quite porous.[59] Around 1180, Lin Yizhi 林亦之 (?–?) imagined that a friend would read Du Fu's poems as an illustrated guide upon his arrival in Sichuan.[60] And Fan Zhirou 范之柔 (*jinshi* 1172), who always regretted that his native Kunshan had no decent local record, praised his fellow townsman's *Assorted Poems of Kunshan* (*Kunshan zayong* 崑山雜詠) (1207) as an admirable compilation that "could substitute for an illustrated guide."[61] Illustrated guides, the immediate precursor to the local gazetteer, were designed to be administrative documents that provided agents of the imperial state essential information to maintain control over local areas. As such, they had been compiled as archival materials with a prescribed format and content until the last decades of the eleventh century, when the central government had abandoned the requirement mandating periodic submission of illustrated guides with up-to-date local information. By the Southern Song, however, few book projects that bore the name of "illustrated guide" were still driven by state initiatives, and individual compilers began to exert an influence on the compilations.[62]

No longer fulfilling a duty imposed by the state, Southern Song compilers took liberties to modify the conventional rubrics of the old genre in accordance with their target audiences. Consequently, we find not only readers, but also compilers, who conceived of a collection of literary pieces as an illustrated guide. In 1202, Song Zhirui 宋之瑞 (*jinshi* 1163), a native of Tiantai, traveled

58. 山川園林亭堂樓閣; 花草果木鳥獸蟲魚. Wu Qian 吳潛, "Xuancheng zongji xu" 宣城總集序, *QSW* 337:7775.241.

59. The inconsistent compiling standards caused some controversy. In his preface to the *Expanded Gazetteer of Xin'an* 新安廣錄 (1240), Lü Wu 呂午 called local literary collections "loose and incoherent" (*li er buhe* 離而不合). He goes as far as to reject this entire genre, arguing that the appropriate place to preserve local literature is the local gazetteer. See "Xin'an guanglu xu" 新安廣錄序, *QSW* 315:7214.74–75.

60. Lin Yizhi 林亦之, "Fengji Yun'an anfu baowen shaoqing Lin Huangzhong" 奉寄雲安安撫寶文少卿林黃中, *QSS* 47:2508.29002.

61. 可以代圖經之作矣. "Kunshan zayong xu" 崑山雜詠序, *QSW* 280:6354.273.

62. The above discussion of the development of the illustrated guide as a genre is based on Pan Sheng 潘晟, *Songdai dili xue de guannian, tixi yu zhishi xingqu* 宋代地理学的观念、体系与知识兴趣 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2014), 119–49.

to all corners of his hometown and gathered inscribed poems, broken stele inscriptions, as well as local tales and legends when he was at home for the period of ritual mourning. At first glimpse, the materials he collected seem more suitable for inclusion in a literary collection. Yet he titled the book the *Illustrated Guide of Tiantai* (*Tiantai tujing* 天台圖經), and, despite not providing updated administrative information such as tax rates and population data, he suggested that his work was much more reliable than the old court-commissioned *Illustrated Guides to Prefectures and Counties in the Xiangfu Reign Era* (*Xiangfu zhouxian tujing* 祥符州縣圖經) (1007). Song also used the most famous piece of Tiantai literature, Sun Chuo's 孫綽 (320–377 CE) "Rhapsody on Touring Mt. Tiantai" (*You Tiantaishan fu* 遊天台山賦), as a foil to this new work: unlike Sun's writing which merely consisted of "fanciful imaginings," Song argued that the *Illustrated Guide of Tiantai* is "concrete and not empty" (*xiang er feixu* 詳而非虛), with everything included in the book verified by his own eyes and ears.[63]

Neither for posteriority nor for the state, the kind of accuracy Song Zhirui boasts of distinguishes the *Illustrated Guide of Tiantai* from florid literature unconcerned with empirical facts as well as from earlier illustrated guides preoccupied with the interests of the imperial government. In the preface, Song makes it clear that the book was intended for his curious peers who were eager to know more about the prefecture, and he hopes that the result of his effort could "benefit sightseers and provide answers to their inquiries."[64] In fact, the Tiantai native, who spent his youth engrossed in his studies, once knew very little about his hometown, and it was not until his classmates at the Imperial University repeatedly asked him about Tiantai's scenic sites that he realized such knowledge was a social necessity. Song's book, as he readily admits, largely resulted from a wish to ameliorate the earlier embarrassment caused by his unwitting ignorance.

Such consideration for the needs of readers was shared by Li Jian, though Li did not seem to have been pressed by his peers. The Xuancheng literatus, who refused to romanticize his hometown, believed that compilers should think of their works as a source of local knowledge. Ideally, through the perusal

63. Song Zhirui 宋之瑞, "Tiantai tujing xu" 天台圖經序, *QSW* 259:5826.140. For a discussion of Sun's piece as a spiritual journey enabled by imagination, see Tian Xiaofei, *Visionary Journeys: Travel Writings from Early Medieval and Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 44–46.

64. 便覽觀而資問答. Song Zhirui, "Tiantai tujing xu."

of their books, a reader would be able to "thoroughly feast his eyes on the splendor of the seas and mountains without stepping outside his courtyard, and obtain valuable writings without sustained effort."[65]

Compilers like Song and Li discerned a difference between collections *about* a place and collections *for* a place. Far from being a matter of taste, the distinction resulted more from different cultural expectations for the collections than from different aesthetic preferences. Notwithstanding the growing emphasis on poetic precision from the late Northern Song, the literary image of a place and the prospects of establishing literary immortality were important to Kong Yanzhi and like-minded literati. In contrast, compilers who prioritized the reliability of information were more inclined to satisfy the demands of contemporary readers. Southern Song compilers did not dream up the needs of their readers: for more than half a century, increasing mobility and the blossoming interest in sightseeing had cultivated a solid audience for works that might be used as travel guides, either on the road or from an armchair.

Books Satisfying Wanderlust

Dozens of Song poems indicate that literati were in the habit of reading an illustrated guide—presumably from the court-commissioned Xiangfu Compendium—for their travels since the eleventh century.[66] With hardly anything better available, most Northern Song literati read the content from the compendium with a critical eye, and they often found various kinds of inadequacies after having reached their destinations. Some noted missing objects of interest, such as a rare fruit from the far south, an islet in front of a mountain, a strange rock in the shape of cypress, or an unusual temple on a famous mountain.[67] Some believed the records failed to do justice to the marvelous sites. While visiting the Five Cascades in Guiji, Hu Zongyu 胡宗愈

65. 不出戶庭而盡睹海山之勝,不費探討而坐獲巾笥之藏. Li Jian, "Tiantai ji xu."

66. Few clarified how they obtained a copy, but no one spoke of an illustrated guide as a rare source invaluable for their trips. In fact, a certain Shen Jichang 沈季長 (1027–1087) was tired of the repetitive Gou Jian 勾踐 stories he had read in these guides, since it was virtually impossible to dispense with the epic life of the King of Yue for most compilers working on a southeastern prefecture. See "Song Cheng jishi zhi Yuezhou" 送程給事知越州, *QSS* 11:620.7384.

67. See, for example, Su Shi 蘇軾, "Lianzhou longyan zhiwei shujue kedi lizhi" 廉州龍眼質味殊絕可敵荔支; Wang Anshi 王安石, "Ciyun zhiyuan Muren zhou ershou" 次韻致遠木人洲二首; Hong Mai 洪邁, "He Zhu Ziyuan shibai shi" 和朱子淵石柏詩; and Zhang Kuo 張擴, "Shu Yandang shan Lingyan si bi" 書雁蕩山靈巖寺壁, *QSS* 14:826.9569; 10:554.6604; 38:2123.24007; 24:1398.16081.

(1029–1094), albeit admitting that he struggled to depict the unusual landscape, maintained that to allow the level of inaccuracy found in the illustrated guide was simply deplorable.[68] And Wei Xiang 韋驤 (1033–1105), disillusioned with his guide, chose to ask countryfolk about the places he planned to visit.[69] Issues ranging from incomplete records of events to partial descriptions of local weather also bothered travelers.[70] In general, elite travelers' attitudes toward illustrated guides until the mid-twelfth century may be neatly summarized by the following lines from Qiang Zhi 強至 (1022–1076): "Today I came to visit the extraordinary sights,/and just realized [visiting the place] was far better than examining an illustrated guide."[71]

Such disappointment was natural, for the needs of travelers were hardly a concern for early eleventh-century administrators who were charged with compiling local guides for official use. Throughout the Northern Song, only a few officials interested in making pictorial representations of their appointed areas were mindful of contemporary literati audiences. Perhaps the traditional notion of literary immortality was so ingrained that serious literary undertakings still presumed a future readership, or perhaps the same tradition made it pretentious for one to assume that one's contemporaries would care to read something that had not survived the test of time. As we have already seen, even for a work like the *Florilegia of Guiji* that could greatly aid travelers, the compiler remained silent on its potential benefit to them, and emphasized that he intended the collection to impress future generations.

Visual materials were largely free from this cultural burden. In the *Florilegia of Guiji*, we can find a preface that recounts the making of a map (1070) by one-time prefect Shen Li 沈立 (*jinshi* 1030).[72] It seems that Shen attempted to cram as much local information into the map as possible: his preface covers not only the location and size of the prefecture and its administrative divisions, but also market towns, temples, shrines, gardens as well as mountains and rivers in the vicinity. Toward the end of the preface, Shen remarks that his great-great-grandfather was from Guiji, so he requested the appointment and made a map in the hope that "interested groups" (*hao shizhe* 好事者) could get a broad understanding of the area.

68. "He Ding Baochen you Wuxie" 和丁寶臣遊五泄, *Guiji duoying zongji*, 63.
69. "Anyuan daozhong" 安遠道中, *QSS* 13:729.8494.
70. Li Tao 李燾, "Lingyun yan" 靈雲巖, *QSS* 37:2058.23212.
71. 今日一來探絕賞, 始知全勝考圖經. "You Baozhang yuan" 遊寶掌院, *QSS* 10:594.7008.
72. Shen Li 沈立, "Yuezhou tu xu" 越州圖序, *Guiji duoying zongji*, 297.

Poems complaining about faulty illustrated guides suggest that there was no lack of such interested groups, and most literati would presumably have noticed this cultural atmosphere. Sheng Nanzhong 盛南仲 (?–?), after taking up his post in Yaozhou 耀州 in 1091, immediately suspected that the illustrated guide only contained a sketchy portrayal of Mt. Yuhua 玉華山, the local mountain made famous by the namesake summer palace built by Emperor Taizong of Tang (r. 630–649). Yet Sheng came to appreciate the mountain, with its precipices and waterfalls, as a perfect abode for recluses. After a painter-friend of his produced a painting of Mt. Yuhua following multiple visits, the immensely pleased Sheng placed it in a pavilion at the prefecture's main traffic junction, claiming that travelers who passed by would henceforth be able to admire the magnificent mountain even if they could not pay a visit.[73]

Later on, woodblock prints and stone rubbings of various attractions were made for armchair travelers, but it was not until the mid-twelfth century that we find the first instance of a text serving a similar purpose.[74] Hong Kuo 洪适 (1117–1184), who would rise to the position of Chief-councilor after the death of Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090–1155), served in several local posts after he obtained the *jinshi* degree.[75] During this period, he compiled two literary collections, one specifically for the perilous natural bridge at Mt. Tiantai (1145), and the other for a landscape complex in Jingmen prefecture, Hubei (1155). Unlike the Yanzhou collection completed just a few years earlier, Hong made no effort to connect these collections either to the literary tradition or any contemporary trend. In the case of the natural bridge, then known as the stone bridge of Tiantai, Hong gives a graphic description of its danger after establishing the site as the soul of the mountain:

> This bridge hangs high up in the air—its width no more than a foot, [its surface] made slippery by mosses, upon which it is impossible to put one's feet together. Two ravines intersect below [the bridge], and there a deep whirlpool swirls. Herdboys and horse-drivers believe those who can cross it are blessed. The

73. Sheng Nanzhong 盛南仲, "You Yuhua shan ji" 遊玉華山記, *QSW* 92:2009.336.

74. See, for example, Gai Yu 蓋噢,"Huiju si shantu xu ji" 慧聚寺山圖序記 (1111); Hu Yanguo 胡彥國, "Huangshan chongke tujing ba" 黃山重刻圖經跋 (1156); An Gui 安珪,"Yanghua yan tu bing xu" 陽華巖圖並序 (1156); and Yuan Cai 袁采, "Yandang shan tu xu" 雁蕩山圖序. *QSW* 142:3058.128, 198:4378.153, 210:4671.349–50, and 254:5720.374. Wei Xiang also mentions consulting a collection of pictures of Mt. Jiuhua during his visit, *QSS* 13:731.8537.

75. Hong's political eminence in his mature years played no small part in the preservation of the two prefaces that inform us of his projects. Similarly, the main source that sheds light on travelers' reading habits discussed below is by another Chief-councilor, Zhou Bida.

> lane is so perilous that if someone manages to pass it, he would look smug; if he unfortunately tumbles, however, then he would plunge into deep darkness, immediately dead, beyond rescue.[76]
>
> 危磴憑虛，狹不盈咫，莓苔濟以滑，足不可並。兩澗相會，下奔邃淵，牛童馬走以爲過之者受祉。其行險，苟免則盱衡有矜色，不幸一跌，遂淪絕冥，死且莫救。

The twenty-eight-year-old, in setting up the menacing yet intriguing landscape, colors his project with a heroic tint. Professing to be an avid climber, Hong observes that blocks of poems are inscribed on the cliffs at the ends of the bridge, and it is a pity that such a place is less than ideal for reading poetry. For this reason, he decided to edit them into a volume and have it published—perhaps by first memorizing the inscriptions at the site. Except for the danger involved, the most remarkable quality of the *Collected Poems on Mt. Tiantai's Stone Bridge* (*Tiantaishan shiqiao shiji* 天台山石橋詩集) is the compiler's frank description of his purpose. Hong was not imitating any canonical anthology, nor did he intend for the collection to communicate the magnificence of the site to later generations. Instead, he thought the book could bring the bridge right before the eyes of his readers who lacked the chance, or the courage, to see it in person: "with their elbows bent on the desk, they would get the splendid view of the stone bridge—isn't it convenient!"[77]

Hong's consideration for contemporary readers was continued in the *Collection of Jingmen* (*Jingmen ji* 荊門集), which, despite its name, focuses on a vast complex of hills, springs, and wetlands to the west of the prefectural seat. Collecting inscriptions there was not dangerous, but it pained Hong that most inscriptions had been irrevocably effaced during the Jurchen conquest. In his preface to this collection, a poignant sense of loss substitutes for the jubilant tone found in his account of the stone bridge. Perhaps Hong also wished his readers to share his regret for the loss, but more importantly, he asserted that he would not let the compromised texts underrepresent what he believed to be the best of the Jingmen landscape. To compensate for the lost inscriptions, the *Collection of Jingmen* opened with several woodcuts depicting the rocks and springs so that "it would allow those with cleated clogs who have never been there to be able to visualize a rough outline of the place."[78]

76. Hong, "Tiantai shan shiqiao shiji xu" 天台山石橋詩集序, *QSW* 213:4738.292.
77. 曲肱几席, 遂得石橋勝槩, 不亦便乎. Hong, "Tiantai shan shiqiao shiji xu."
78. 使屐齒未及者, 可以想見梗槩. Hong, "Jingmen ji xu" 荊門集序, *QSW* 213:4738.294.

The two collections by Hong Kuo are included in the *Book Catalogue of the Hall of Fulfilling Original Wishes*, together with more than twenty similar works. Whether or not the compilers of the lost collections were equally considerate of their readers, travelers since the mid-twelfth century began to consult them as guidebooks. The travel diaries of Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126–1204) clearly indicate that books were essential for his journeys, and the friends and colleagues who hosted him on the way also understood this need. Of the five travel diaries Zhou authored, the most elaborate one, *A Record of Sailing on Rivers and Roaming in Mountains* (*Fanzhou youshan lu* 泛舟遊山錄), was written in 1167 after he took a sinecure that guaranteed him a comfortable life with no responsibility. While this diary does not discuss how many books he brought for this ten-month round trip from his hometown of Luling to his wife's hometown in Suzhou, it does mention that he received several books along the way, including a river map, two literary collections on Mt. Lu, and an account of a certain Jade Basket Mountain (Yusi shan 玉笥山).[79]

Zhou's diary shows that he read extensively prior to, if not during, his trip. Occasionally he would quote from encyclopedic books, such as the *Record of Universal Geography during the Reign of Great Peace* (*Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記) and *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhengao* 眞誥). More frequently, he would consult illustrated guides—mostly the *Xiangfu* version, or works on more specific places—such as a mountain, a river, or even a particular temple.[80] When Zhou described his trip to the famous Daoist mountain Maoshan 茅山, for instance, he not only used the information he found in the texts to explain the origins of certain peaks or caves, but also to provide contesting records that piqued his curiosity and spurred him to conduct further investigations. For every site he visited, Zhou took care to note the changes he perceived, such as deserted architecture or altered names, and he never hesitated to point out the differences between what he read and what he saw.[81]

79. See *Fanzhou youshan lu* in *QSW* 231:5158.343, 232:5159.24. Little is known about these titles except for the fact that the river map and the Mt. Lu collections were still available at the prefectural school of Jiangning in the 1260s. See Zhou Yinghe 周應和, *Jingding Jiankang zhi* 景定建康志, *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan*, vol. 2, 1887.

80. Zhou would give the author's name when he mentioned a later work, such as that by Zhu Changwen or Dong Fen. Therefore, when he simply cited a "*tujing*" without further specification, it probably refers to the standard *Xiangfu* compendium.

81. *QSW* 231:5158.341–232.

Not everyone consulted as many books as Zhou did for travel or leisure reading, but the kinds of books that appealed to elite readers addressed similar aspects of a specific attraction. In Zhou's view, the essential information included a historical account, a detailed portrayal of the place by a native, and impressions of past visitors, usually collected from natural or public surfaces. In 1197, the retired Chief-councilor prefaced a fellow townsman's poetry compilation on a Daoist mountain near his native Luling. He introduces the mountain as one of the many Daoist grotto-heavens, but soon dismisses its religious importance by referring to a fire in 1110, which burnt down most of its Daoist architecture, and by also noting that the church was not qualified to recruite initiates. But the landscape is magnificent, Zhou remarks, so there are perhaps many more wandering immortals here than in the better-known Daoist grotto-heavens. Regarding this poetry collection, which contained inscriptions from the mountain since the Tang, Zhou suggests that readers consult it along with two other books by "reputable local scholars" (*yi zhi mingsheng* 邑之名勝). Both books were completed three decades earlier, in 1158. One was a 20,000-word account of the mountain's history, and the other was a resident Daoist's poetry collection, consisting of more than three hundred pieces on the mountain's various sites. As Zhou recommends these books, he makes it sound as if they were readily available: "for all interested groups who have not been to this mountain, just read these three books for the time being."[82]

With more writers and compilers keeping readers in mind, the quality of information available to Southern Song travelers was much better than that for their Northern Song counterparts. As the *Xiangfu* compendium ceased to be a reference that literati relied upon, we find fewer poems complaining about the inaccuracy of illustrated guides. In fact, many Southern Song poets praised the illustrated guides' usefulness. These handy books were probably later compilations similar to Song Zhirui's work on Tiantai: the court-commissioned guides, shoddy even by the standards of Northern Song travelers, were deemed unhelpful to later readers seasoned in a more vibrant print culture. Several literati a generation younger than Zhou Bida took the remodeled illustrated guides as a staple for travel, recommending that travelers "just find an illustrated guide and read it"; or asserting that "to enter the border,

82. 凡好事者, 苟未能一至此山, 姑視三書. Zhou Bida, "Qunyu shiji xu" 群玉詩集序, *QSW* 230:5117.139.

one must bring an illustrated guide."[83] In the late thirteenth century, a poet even boasted that he could recognize an area as he approached it without consulting his guide, which suggests that most travelers had such a book on hand for reference during their trips.[84]

The interest in travel writing was broad enough that successful compilations could exert a lasting influence on the empire's cultural landscape. When Jiao Yuan 焦源 (?–?) updated the *Illustrated Guide of Yellow Mountain* (*Huangshan tujing* 黃山圖經) (1208) with pictures and inscriptions of notable sites, the celebrated mountain, tucked away from major traffic routes, was still an obscure place few had heard of, let alone visited.[85] Just a few decades later, however, a native would claim that the magnificence of the mountain's landscape was famous across the empire, and all those who had read the guide enjoyed talking about it.[86]

Readers' enthusiasm also encouraged creative endeavors that humored their needs. Shi Zhu 史鑄 (?–?), who annotated Wang Shipeng's 王十朋 (1112–1171) "Rhapsody on the Customs of Guiji" (*Guiji fengsu fu* 會稽風俗賦) in 1217, presents the new edition as a versatile work that catered to different groups. His preface begins with a summary of the downside of illustrated guides and gazetteers from the reader's perspective:

> There is indeed no lack of records on Guiji's mountains, rivers and scenic sites in illustrated guides and gazetteers. Yet one could easily get bored flipping through them one by one, and readily exhausted perusing them line by line. Without editing them and turning them into literature, how could [the gazetteers] be a source of enjoyment?[87]
>
> 會稽之山川風物，載于圖經地志者固不少也。然人一一泛觀則興易盡，屑屑徧讀則神且疲。儻非有所去取，纂次成文，焉能資於玩繹？

Wang composed the rhapsody in 1157, and probably did not conceive of his work as a leisurely read upon its completion. Benjamin Ridgway notices a

83. 試覓圖經看；要須入界挾圖經. Zhao Fan 趙蕃, "Zaiyong qianyun bingji Sun tuiguan sishou qiyi" 再用前韻并寄孫推官四首其一; and Ao Taosun 敖陶孫, "Shang Min shuai Fan Shihu wushou qisi" 上閩帥范石湖五首其四, *QSS* 49:2626.30610; 51:2710.31882.

84. Hu Zhonggong 胡仲弓, "Yuan jianggui" 遠將歸, *QSS* 63:3336.39837.

85. Zhang Jie 張介, "Huangshan tujing xu" 黃山圖經序, *QSW* 304:6948.259. The original illustrated guide was compiled by private initiative in the 1070s and had been damaged by Jiao's time.

86. Lü Wu, "Yaobi ge ji" 搖碧閣記, *QSW* 315:7216.122.

87. Shi Zhu, "Guiji sanfu xu" 會稽三賦序, in *Songji xuba huibian*, 1383.

strong political overtone in this piece when examined in the context of Wang's career, concluding that Wang's writing should be considered as "a literary and rhetorical corrective to the geopolitical orientation of the Gaozong administration."[88] Sixty years later, however, a native annotator suggested that it should be considered a literary reworking of existing gazetteers, intended for enjoyment.

Shi believed his annotation would make Wang's rhapsody useful to all literati who lived or traveled in the area, as well as to those who resided outside of it. With the annotated rhapsody, Shi contends, residents, sojourners, and travelers would not need to repeatedly climb the mountains or descend the valleys to appreciate the landscape, and outsiders could experience the natural splendor of these sites without visiting them in person. To reassure his potential readers that there was no need to balk at the forbidding genre of rhapsody, Shi also highlighted the work he had done to enhance the original's accessibility—all difficult phrases had been glossed and punctuated based on responses from previous readers.[89]

As can be seen from the examples above, literary collections on diverse locales were not only intended as guidebooks, but they also sought to reproduce on-site experiences. As such, the efficacy of mimetic allure was an integral part of the accurate information they claimed to provide. In 1308, Fang Shifa 方時發 (?–?), a Chizhou 池州 native, recovered and reprinted the damaged woodblocks of the *Collected Poems of Mt. Jiuhua* (*Jiuhua shiji* 九華詩集), an anthology published by his fellow townsman, Chen Yan 陳嚴 (?–?), shortly before the Mongol conquest. Like Hong Kuo with his *Collection of Jingmen*, Fang added woodcut images of the Chizhou mountain so that "friends from afar" could experience the full delight of living at its foot. Appropriating Su Shi's famous equation between painting and poetry, he further remarked that "mountains are silent poetry, and poetry mountains with sound," thus suggesting a shared aesthetic foundation between the landscape and its visual and literary representations.[90]

88. Benjamin Ridgway, "A City of Substance: Regional Custom and the Political Landscape of Shaoxing in a Southern Song Rhapsody" in Joseph S. C. Lam et al., eds., *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127–1279* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2017), 239.

89. Shi Zhu, "Guiji sanfu xu."

90. 山乃無聲之詩, 詩乃有聲之山. Fang Shifa 方時發, "Jiuhua shiji xu" 九華詩集序, in *Songji xuba huibian*, 2315–16.

Conclusion

Literary works based on observation and experience began to hold considerable appeal from the eleventh century. As the idea of "poetry as chronicle" gained pervasive popularity following Du Fu's canonization, critics' insistence on accurate representation also extended in extreme cases to questions about the measurement of a tree's girth and the distinct ways of preparing a seasonal specialty. While not everyone saw the need to reduce a poem to arithmetic, empirical accuracy soon developed into a literary ideal upheld by critics and a writing principle embraced by poets, essayists, and compilers. Place writing, accordingly, turned into a prime site for these educated men to display their enthusiasm for reliable, objective literary details.

But such dedication to empirically verifiable literary representations was not unqualified. Even though some writers and compilers avowed the veracity of their works, the facts were, perhaps with a shared tacit understanding, put in a distinct perspective. Peter Bol has noted that the thirteenth-century *Records of the Best Sites in the Realm* "makes every place worthy" by showing that "every place contains more or less the same categories of uniquely worthwhile things."[91] Mainly comprised of landscape, architecture, as well as flora and fauna, these categories, which first surfaced in Kong Yanzhi's *Florilegia of Guiji* in 1072, feature a specific way of seeing a place expected of a literatus. By representing a locality with details that catered to the literati's gaze, works of local literature were at once status-confirming scholarship for the producers and a place-creating project that amplified the empire-wide cultural space constituted by the aggregation of aesthetic-oriented local knowledge.[92]

The local literary collection, a genre that emerged in the late eleventh century, not only exemplifies literati's new-found passion for accurate representations, but also reveals how accuracy was transformed from a desirable quality in the *literary* enterprise to a practical demand for the *spatial* imagination of the empire's natural and cultural landscape. Unlike earlier anthologies which showed little interest in a place beyond their titles, local literary collections compiled since the Northern Song placed increasing importance on eyewitness accounts; some also incorporated a topographic taxonomy. Yet until the twelfth century most compilers, while spending

91. Bol, "The Rise of Local History," 61.

92. Song literati's overt aesthetic orientation while constructing a cultural site is evident from the ubiquity of the epithets "delightful" (*jia* 佳), "superb" (*sheng* 勝), and the like in their writing. See Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys*, 155–56.

considerable effort in gathering empirically authentic writings, envisioned a future audience who would appreciate the constructed literary splendor of a place, and they were reluctant to leave out imaginary or even irrelevant works as long as they were composed by literary luminaries. Empirical authenticity could not become an indispensable rule governing all selected pieces as long as compilers viewed their literary endeavors as a direct gateway to cultural immortality—for the places as well as themselves.

Collections that boasted reliable representations probably could not have materialized during the Southern Song if not for the mounting demand from a readership thirsting for travel literature.[93] Thanks to an audience that only cared for words insofar as they provided new knowledge about a place, the compilers of later collections, instead of rehearsing the grand purpose of literature prescribed by the tradition, usually had a stated goal of entertaining the curiosity of "interested groups" by bringing the attractions right before their eyes. Genre boundaries also began to collapse for travel writings oriented toward a contemporary readership. Local literary collections, illustrated guides, and uncategorizable compositions responding to this trend all promised readers a pleasant and informative armchair traveling experience.

The unprecedented emphasis on accuracy in literary production, though first manifested in an aesthetic ideal associated with one poet, was bolstered and sustained by a readership immersed in the burgeoning travel culture. And the tireless efforts to map words onto places during this period indicate that information quality, despite the burden of the tradition, could be as important as literary refinement in the evaluation of a work's appeal.

93. Among the transmitted titles of local literary collections, one was named *The Essential Literature of the Capital of Wu* (*Wudu wencui* 吳都文粹), attributed to an obscure Suzhou native, Zheng Huchen 鄭虎臣, and published toward the end of the Southern Song. The Qing scholar Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818) suspects that it was edited by a bookseller, since it lacks a preface and does not make any update to the literary works collected in the *Wujun zhi*, which was completed 80 years earlier. See Zhu Shangshu ed., *Song ren zongji xulu* 宋人總集敘錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 410.