DAVID R. KNECHTGES
TONG XIAO

Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume I

Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals

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Wen xuan

OR SELECTIONS OF REFINED LITERATURE

VOLUME ONE: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals

XIAO TONG (501–531)

Translated, with Annotations and Introduction by

David R. Knechtges

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, Guildford, Surrey

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data will be found
on the last printed page of this book

This book has been composed in Monophoto Baskerville by
Asco Trade Typesetting Ltd., Hong Kong

Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books
are printed on acid-free paper, and binding materials are chosen
for strength and durability

Printed in the United States of America by
Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

To the Memory of Erwin von Zach (1872–1942)

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Foreword

No one who has studied the literature of China from the Tang Dynasty onward can escape the observation that practically all of the quotations and allusions to earlier writers outside the Classics are traceable to a single anthology. The *Wen xuan* was in fact the core reading of every literate person. Even writers whose work antedates the compilation of this anthology seem also to have read the same works, demonstrating that the selection was indeed more than the idiosyncratic taste of a single individual. I think it fair to say that the examples translated here in a unique way represent the early literary tradition of China. No one who studies that tradition even in its later manifestations can afford to neglect its contents. But it is a heartbreakingly large anthology, and even by Chinese standards extraordinarily difficult to read. Before the appearance of this complete annotated translation by David Knechtges, only a tiny and haphazardly selected fraction of its contents had been accessible in English, and even that was scattered and of uneven quality.

There was, it is true, the monumental corpus of nearly 90 percent of the whole which had been translated into German by the Austrian Sinologist Erwin von Zach, to whose memory the present volume is dedicated. His translation, conveniently gathered into two large volumes of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies by Ilse Martin Fang in 1958 from obscure Batavian publications of the Twenties and Thirties, represented an almost superhuman achievement, as Professor Knechtges generously acknowledges in his Introduction. But some of the most important selections, such as Ban Gu's "Two Capitals Rhapsody" and Song Yu's "Rhapsody on the Wind" were not included. What is more serious, Von Zach did not have access to the best texts or to the invaluable contributions of modern Chinese and Japanese scholarship. While translating "for students" rather than the general reader, he still opted for frequent interpolations and paraphrase instead of supplying the much-needed annotation. The present accurate, readable, and amply annotated translation superbly remedies all of these shortcomings and in addition provides us with an exquisitely nuanced and lucid rendering executed with impeccable philological discipline. It repre-

sents the culmination of more than fifteen years of loving and devoted labor. The reader can only feel continuous gratitude to the translator and the Translation Project of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the editors of the Princeton Library of Asian Translations of Princeton University Press whose imagination and profound wisdom have made possible the publication of the entire work.

Richard B. Mather
Minneapolis
July, 1981.

Preface

Translating a work as difficult and as long as the *Wen xuan* is admittedly a bold, perhaps even foolhardy undertaking. Although I have worked almost constantly with this text for over fifteen years, only in the past three years have I systematically set out to put the entire work into thoroughly annotated English versions. I have found this task challenging, at times tedious, but always rewarding. The insights about ancient Chinese culture a careful reading of this collection of literary masterpieces has given me have been invaluable.

At the outset, I should state that I do not consider this work primarily a translation. Although I have attempted to render the *Wen xuan* selections into a graceful, readable English, I do not pretend to have created great poetry. At times I have been deliberately literal, feeling that it is better to preserve the meaning of the original than to find English equivalents that are not always appropriate to a Chinese context or which I find unacceptable on philological grounds. This version of the *Wen xuan* is a reference work as well as a translation. The annotations take advantage of the most authoritative scholarship, traditional or modern, Asian or Western, that I could find. I have closely followed the traditional Chinese commentators, especially the Qing philologists, whose learning and command of the classical language are far beyond my own competence. Consequently, one will rarely find new interpretations here. In problematical cases, I have usually referred the reader to secondary sources rather than offered my own original solutions. I found the process of simply trying to decipher the learned discourses of the Chinese scholars a difficult enough task, and I believe I have made a significant contribution in presenting the information they contain in a more concise and comprehensible form.

In addition to the works of Chinese scholars, I found of immense value previous translations of the *Wen xuan*. I have immense respect for the monumental undertaking of Erwin von Zach (1872–1942), who translated almost the entire *Wen xuan* into German. Even though his work is unannotated, I often found his paraphrases helpful where the Chinese commentator was unclear or said nothing at all. I also relied heavily on recent

Japanese translations, notably the complete seven-volume work by Obi Kōichi and Hanabusa Hideki, and partial translations by Uchida Sennosuke, Ami Yūji, and Nakajima Chiaki. I found them convenient for locating the exact location of passages cited in the Chinese commentaries. They are especially useful for their parsing of lines where the syntax is not always clear.

In addition to these important reference tools, I have been aided and inspired by several English-language translators, some of whose practices I have adopted. I am especially indebted to my former teacher, James Robert Hightower, whose uncompromising yet elegant renderings of prose and verse I have attempted to emulate. Although I have not achieved his power and grace, David Hawkes's masterful *Chuci* translations have served as a model of good scholarship and literate English. I must also acknowledge the influence of Edward H. Schafer, whose insistence on philological and scientific accuracy has often motivated me to dig deeper into the sources to discover what terms really mean. Finally, I must mention the inspiration of the work of Richard Mather, whose translation of the *Shishuo xinyu* was always at hand as I tried to put Six Dynasties Chinese into English.

There are many who have assisted me with my work, and it is impossible to mention all of their names here. The person who has helped me the most, both with scholarly advice and moral support, is my wife Chang Taiping. Her learned explanations of difficult lines saved me from many a blunder. I am also indebted to my research assistants, Alan Berkowitz, Eva Chung, Robert Joe Cutter, and Felicia Hecker, for their aid in proofreading, compiling the bibliography, and correcting numerous errors. I must credit William G. Crowell with discovering in the Nanjing University Library the information about the study where Xiao Tong compiled the *Wen xuan*. John Marney and J. T. Wixted offered many helpful stylistic and bibliographical suggestions; Jack L. Dull contributed useful historical information, and Paul L-M Serruys provided me with advice on linguistic problems. I must thank the Graduate School Research Fund, University of Washington, for its financial support of my work when it was most needed.

The preparation of this volume was made possible (in part) by a grant from the Translations Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent Federal Agency.

Note on the Translation

All of the works in this volume are examples of the *fu* 賦 genre, which is variously translated as rhyme-prose, prose poem, poetic essay, poetic description, or rhapsody, the name I prefer to give it.[1] Rhapsodies were written by poets who incorporated in their works vast learning and a rich vocabulary. These pieces are in effect repositories of information about early Chinese flora and fauna, astronomy, mineralogy, architecture, geography, government, history, ritual, medicine, dress, weaponry, conveyance, folklore, music, and even philosophy. One of the purposes of the annotations is to explain the various technical terms that even an educated Chinese reader would not understand without the aid of a commentary. For many of these terms, especially plant, animal, mineral, and fish names, I provide no extended explication, and instead refer the reader to detailed discussions in secondary sources. In those cases in which a plant, animal, mineral, or fish term cannot be identified, I attempt to invent an English equivalent, no matter how fanciful, and only if my resources completely fail me do I resort to romanizing the term. As much as possible, I have been guided by considerations of scientific and philological accuracy, even at the expense of poetry. For example, I never translate the plant *lan* 蘭 ("thoroughwort") as "orchid," even though most translators have agreed that "orchid" is more "poetic."[2] I do compromise slightly on names of mythical creatures, and thus I have followed the more or less standard rendering of *fenghuang* 鳳凰 as "phoenix" and *luan* 鸞 as "simurgh." The names of most other mythical beings, however, I have chosen to romanize and explain in a note.

A more difficult kind of term to handle is the descriptive binome, which is often vaguely or imprecisely explained even in the best Chinese commentaries.[3] The meaning of these expressions, which often represent alliterative or rhyming "sound-images," cannot always be determined from the graphs used to write them.[4] In addition, depending upon the context, the same descriptive binome can vary in sense.[5] Although a detailed linguistic analysis of such expressions would be a valuable contribution,[6] I have not, except in a few cases, treated them in my notes. In most instances, espe-

cially for those terms that are imperfectly understood, I have accepted the interpretations given by the Qing *Wen xuan* authorities and Bernhard Karlgren.[7] I have often rendered the Chinese with two English words, not because I believe each element of the binome to have a precise lexical meaning, but in order to achieve a more rhythmic English line, and where possible to indicate through alliteration or repetition of synonyms something of the euphonic effect of the Chinese terms. (I have not tried to use rhyme in translating rhyming binomes.)

I also do not provide any detailed literary analysis of the works translated in this volume. Instead, I prefer to allow the poems to speak for themselves, except for passages that are subject to several interpretations. Including literary exegesis would have made what is already a massive work into an unwieldy tome, and since I will be soon publishing an extended treatment of these rhapsodies, I will not duplicate that effort here.[8]

Although I have striven for consistency and have tried to follow the original word order, in a number of places I have had to produce, either for considerations of clarity or euphony in English, a rendering that only approximates the Chinese. I have also not hesitated to supply the understood subject where omitting it would make the line incomprehensible. Other slight deviations from the original include the addition of conjunctions and transition words in order to make a smoother connection between lines and clauses.

In the notes, I specify the edition used at the first occurrence of the work. For the *Lun yu* and *Mengzi*, I refer to the chapter and section numbers as given in James Legge's *The Chinese Classics*. For the *Classic of Songs*, I give the *Mao shi* poem and stanza number based on Karlgren's *The Book of Odes*. All translations cited in the notes, unless specified, are my own. I generally do not provide references to other translations, for most of these come from the classics, and I assume the reader can easily locate these passages in the standard translations. I translate at the first occurrence the titles of premodern Chinese works. English versions of the titles of modern Chinese and Japanese works may be found in the bibliography.

Textual variants are not a serious problem for most of the pieces included in this volume, and except for the "Two Capitals Rhapsody," which has significant differences between the *Hou Han shu* and *Wen xuan* texts, I have not attempted to include copious collation notes.

In determining pronunciation of Chinese words, place names, and personal names, I have relied on the *Cihai* and the *Guoyu cidian*.[9] The modern equivalents of ancient place names are based on the *Cihai*, or if the name is not in the *Cihai*, Morohashi's *Dai Kan-Wa jiten*.[10]

Introduction

Early Chinese Genre Theory and the Beginnings of the Genre Anthology

In the Song dynasty (960–1279) there was a saying that circulated among students preparing for the civil service examinations: "The *Wen xuan* thoroughly done,/Half a licentiate won" (*Wen xuan lan, xiucai ban* 文選爛, 秀才半).[1] This famous ditty, which is still a common idiom in modern Chinese, expresses the extent to which one of China's most important and widely read anthologies influenced the traditional Chinese scholar class. The *Wen xuan* (*Literary Selections*) has been called the "Chinese Anthology."[2] Compiled by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), known posthumously as the Crown Prince of Resplendent Brilliance (*Zhaoming taizi* 昭明太子), the *Wen xuan* is the oldest surviving collection of Chinese literature arranged generically. It contains 761 pieces of prose and verse by 130 writers, covering the period from the late Zhou to the Liang dynasty. It includes masterpieces of early Chinese literature from thirty-seven different genres. It preserves most of the best specimens of *fu* 賦 (rhyme-prose or rhapsody) and *shi* 詩 (lyric poetry) from the Han, Wei, Jin, and North-South Dynasties period, as well as representative examples of inscriptions, epitaphs, laments, elegies, encomia, eulogies, expository essays, memorials, letters, prefaces, epigrams, and imperial edicts. It was one of the primary sources of literary knowledge for educated Chinese in the premodern period, and it still is the vade mecum for specialists in pre-Tang literature.

The *Wen xuan* was the product of several centuries of experimentation with the genre anthology. From as early as the Zhou dynasty, Chinese men of letters occupied themselves with the selection and collection of literary masterpieces. Confucius himself is traditionally credited with choosing the 305 pieces that make up the first anthology of Chinese poetry, the *Classic of Songs*.[3] In the Han dynasty, the bibliographer Liu Xiang 劉向 (57–6 B.C.) and his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (?– A.D. 23) engaged in anthology-making of a sort, for in the process of editing old texts in the imperial collection, they condensed a wide variety of disparate material into coherent collections.[4] Liu Xiang even may have been involved in the compilation of the impor-

tant anthology of southern Chinese poetry, the *Chuci* 楚辭 (Songs of Chu or Elegies of Chu).[5]

These protoanthologies, however, were confined to a single genre, and one must look to the period immediately after the Han dynasty to find the first "general collections" (*zong ji* 總集), that contained a variety of genres. One reason the generically ordered general collection did not exist earlier is that criticism distinguishing and identifying literary types did not appear until the beginning of the third century A.D. (One might also add that for genre criticism to occur, there had to be a substantial body of literature written in discrete, mutually distinguishable forms.) It is true that the Han philosopher Wang Chong 王充 (A.D. 27–ca. 100) formulated a scheme of "five classes of literature" (*wu wen* 五文), but his categories did not include any of the genres of belles-lettres.[6]

The first to write about generic categories of belles-lettres was Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), Emperor Wen of the Wei dynasty. In his essay "On Literature" ("Lun wen" 論文),[7] which was a chapter of his only partially extant *Classical Treatises* (*Dian lun* 典論), Cao established "four classes" (*si ke* 四科) of writing:

> As for literature, its roots are the same, but the branches are different. The Presentation (*zou* 奏) and Opinion (*yi* 議) ought to be elegant. The Letter (*shu* 書) and Treatise (*lun* 論) ought to be logical. The Inscription (*ming* 銘) and Dirge (*lei* 誄) should favor verisimilitude. Lyric Poetry (*shi*) and the Rhapsody (*fu*) should be ornate.[8]

Scholars have observed that Cao Pi was probably less interested in making a comprehensive list of genres than he was in formulating for literature a set of criteria comparable to the categories of "human abilities" established by the third century "pure criticism" (*qing yi* 清議) characterization experts.[9] Nevertheless, his attempt, whatever its motivation, prompted poets and critics of succeeding generations to expand upon Cao's scheme. Lu Ji 陸機 (A.D. 261–301), much as Cao Pi, affixes particular attributes to each of ten genres he lists in his "Rhapsody on Literature" ("Wen fu" 文賦):[10]

> Lyric Poetry (*shi*) springs from emotions and is lovely and exquisite;
> The Rhapsody (*fu*) gives form to the object, and is limpid and clear.
> The Epitaph (*bei* 碑) dons ornament to bolster substance;
> The Dirge (*lei* 誄) wrenches the heart and is mournful and sad.
> The Inscription (*ming* 銘) is all-inclusive yet compact, tender, and gentle;
> The Admonition (*zhen* 箴) with its checks and curbs is crisp and bold.
> The Eulogy (*song* 頌) is relaxed and leisurely, lush and luxuriant;
> The Treatise (*lun* 論) is refined and subtle, lucid and smooth.
> The Presentation (*zou* 奏) is placid and penetrating, seemly and elegant;
> The Discourse (*shuo* 說) dazzles and glitters, but is cunning and deceitful.[11]

Although some of the qualities Lu Ji associates with particular genres are highly ambiguous and have been the object of controversy in Chinese scholarship,[12] unlike Cao Pi, who was primarily concerned with establishing four general categories of literature,[13] Lu seems to recognize a variety of literary types, each of which possesses it own distinct features.

Concurrent with the classification of literature into discrete types was the attempt by some scholars to collect various kinds of writings and arrange them generically in anthologies. The earliest "general anthology" about which substantial information exists is the *Collection of Literature Divided by Genre* (*Wanzhang liubie ji* 文章流別集) compiled by Lu Ji's contemporary Zhi Yu 摯虞 (ob. 312).[14] Although the anthology itself does not survive, one can obtain a good knowledge of its contents from the "Treatises" (*lun*), that apparently were included with each section.[15] Those genres for which Zhi Yu's remarks still survive include the Eulogy (*song*), Rhapsody (*fu*), Lyric Poetry (*shi*), the Sevens (*qi* 七), Admonition (*zhen*), Dirge (*lei*), and Lament (*ai ci* 哀辭 or *ai ce* 哀策). Zhi even had a section on the prognostication texts (*tu chen* 圖讖), thus indicating that he conceived of literature as anything in written form, a view that the critic Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465–ca. 522) shared.[16] Virtually all of Zhi Yu's comments display a strong didactic concept of literature. He hails the eulogy, which "praises the concrete appearance of consummate virtue,"[17] as "the finest form of poetry."[18] He bemoans the fact that it, like the rhapsody, in more "recent times" began to deviate from the canonical standards. He condemns a number of Han writers for wrongly titling works "eulogy," that, according to Zhi, more appropriately belonged to another genre.[19] He criticizes rhapsody-writers after Xun Qing 荀卿 (ca. 313–ca. 238 B.C.), and Qu Yuan (with the exception of Jia Yi 賈誼, 200–168 B.C.), whose emphasis on "matter and form" (*shi xing* 事形) over "rightness and rectitude" (*yi zheng* 義正) led to excessive use of metaphor, refined language, argumentation, and ornament.[20] Illustrative of Zhi's distaste for didactic works in which verbal artistry prevails over moral content is his condemnation of the "Sevens" genre, a special subgenre of the rhapsody.

The "Seven Stimuli" was composed by Mei Cheng 枚乘 (?–140 B.C.). It uses men from Wu and Chu as the host and guest interlocutors. It first speaks about the detriment of "arthritis and paralysis from riding a carriage outside the palace and a sedan chair inside"; attacks of "fevers and chills from residing in deep palaces and cavernous chambers"; the poisons of luxurious repose with fair-skinned ladies and beautiful women; the dangers of excessive bedazzlement with "strong flavors and warm clothes." [Then, he says the prince] ought to heed "the essential words and marvelous doctrines of the masters of the ages," and by controlling the spirit and managing the body, relieve himself of such longstanding maladies. Having set forth these words in order to make clear the alternative paths, the guest tries to persuade

the prince by means of the pleasures of women and song and leisurely excursions. His persuasions having no effect, he then presents the joys of the discourses of sages and disputants, and suddenly his illness is cured. This chronic illness, which is caused by rich foods, is thought to have been cured by corrective exhortation. Even though [Mei's piece] has highly exaggerated language, it never loses its principle of subtle criticism and advice. But as the genre subsequently broadened, this principle changed and generally [the pieces of a later period] have the defects of the "epideictic writers' unrestrained beauty."[21]

Zhi Yu's anthology was followed by a number of similar collections, which are listed in the *Sui shu* "Monograph on Literature." Some of the larger ones include the *Collection Park* (*Ji yuan* 集苑), probably by Xie Hun 謝混 (ob. 412);[22] *Collection Grove* (*Ji lin* 集林), compiled under the auspices of Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), who was also responsible for *A New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語);[23] and *Park of Literature* (*Wen yuan* 文苑) by Kong Huan 孔逭 (fl. ca. 480).[24] In addition to these general anthologies, there were many single genre anthologies, such as the *Collection of Rhapsodies* (*Fu ji* 賦集) by Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433) and Cui Hao 崔浩 (ob. 450),[25] and the *Collection of Verse* (*Shi ji* 詩集) and the *Collection of Sevens* (*Qi ji* 七集), both of which were also edited by Xie Lingyun.[26] One also finds a number of collections of epitaphs, treatises, edicts, memorials, letters, palindromes, humorous writings, and Buddhist texts.[27]

Although none of these fourth and fifth century anthologies is extant, they were known in the Liang dynasty (502–556) and were available in the state libraries and possibly even in private collections.[28] Compilers of anthologies such as the *Wen xuan* must have been familiar with the principles of selection and organization used in earlier collections. Their anthologies were not generated *ex nihilo*, but represent the result of several centuries of experimentation with genre classification.

Xiao Tong's Life and Compilation of the Wen xuan

The Liang dynasty was a period of intense literary activity, not only in the realm of creative writing, but also in the relatively new fields of literary criticism and scholarship. Beginning with the founder, Xiao Yan 蕭衍, known posthumously as Emperor Wu 武 (464–549), the Liang imperial house maintained an ardent devotion to literature in all of its aspects. Writers and scholars were invited to the Xiao family courts, both in the capital and in the provinces. At many of these establishments writers formed literary clubs or salons, which were usually headed by a member of the Xiao clan.[29]

One of the most important salons of the early Liang period was cen-

tered around Xiao Tong. Xiao Tong, born in September or October 501, was the first son of Xiao Yan.[30] His mother was Ding Lingguang 丁令光 (485–525), whom Xiao Yan took as a concubine in 498 while he was stationed as an administrator in Xiangyang 襄陽 (modern Xiangyang *xian*, Hubei).[31] A little over half a year after Xiao Tong's birth, Xiao Yan assumed the throne as emperor of the Liang dynasty.[32] Xiao Tong and his mother had remained in Xiangyang while Xiao Yan instituted his coup against the Qi regime. As soon as the capital of Jiankang 建康 (south of modern Nanjing) was secure and Xiao Yan was installed as emperor, both mother and son were summoned to the capital, where they were given residence in the Hall of Manifest Yang (Xianyang 顯陽).[33] On the auspicious *jiazi* 甲子 day of the eleventh month of Xiao Yan's first year as emperor (24 December 502), he named Xiao Tong crown prince (*taizi* 太子).[34]

As heir apparent, Xiao Tong's education was carefully supervised. From an early age, learned scholars were assigned to him as tutors, scribes, librarians, and compilers. Until the age of five, Xiao Tong continued to live in the Hall of Manifest Yang, and all of the members of his entourage were assigned to the Department of Eternal Blessings (Yongfu sheng 永福省).[35] Both of his dynastic history biographies report that Xiao was a precocious child, and already at the age of two (three *sui*), he began to receive instruction in the *Classic of Filial Piety* and the *Conversations* (*Lun yu*) of Confucius. By the age of four (five *sui*), he could recite the five classics from memory. At the age of eight (nine *sui*), he gave a lecture on the *Classic of Filial Piety* at the Hall of Long-lived Peace (Shouan 壽安), in which he demonstrated a "thorough understanding of the general meaning" of the text.[36] Although precocious feats are commonplaces of literati's biographies in the dynastic histories, they may be true; at least there is no evidence to the contrary.[37]

On 22 July 506, at the age of five (six *sui*), Xiao Tong officially took up residence in the Eastern Palace, the official domicile of the crown prince.[38] During his first few years in the Eastern Palace, one of his preceptors was Shen Yue 沈約 (441–512), who at that time was probably the most respected poet and scholar at the court.[39] Xiao Tong's closest adviser, however, was the ritual authority, Xu Mian 徐勉 (466–535), whom the emperor appointed to the Eastern Palace especially to manage the crown prince's affairs. "The crown prince treated him with great deference and consulted with him on every matter."[40] When Xiao Tong gave his lecture on the *Classic of Filial Piety*, Xu officiated as Holder of the Canon (*zhi jing* 執經). Soon after he was selected as the "worthy most dear" to the crown prince, an honor that earned him "wide acclaim."[41] Xu Mian had a reputation for incorruptibility and philanthropy and regularly distributed a

portion of his salary to poor relatives.[42] Although the sources do not contain any specific information on this point, it is conceivable that Xiao Tong's own philanthropic activities were influenced by his teacher's example.

His advisers' devotion to learning could not have been entirely lost on the young crown prince, for in this period Xiao began to develop an interest in scholarly pursuits. One of his obsessions was the collection of rare manuscripts. His younger brother Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503–551) describes the intensity of his bibliomania:

> The famous records of Qunyu,
> The silk and bamboo documents of Luoyang,
> The literary remains of the Western Zhou and the Eastern Lodge,
> The doctrinal essence of the schools of Form and Name, Mohism and Ruism:
> There was none of which he was unaware,
> And they all were enclosed in his silk bookcovers.
> He gathered the strange and unusual,
> Searched for the lost and scattered.
> He sent off his internuncio messengers,
> Fixed rewards of a basket of gold.
> Huizi's five carts of books
> Cannot be compared with this.
> Wenzhong's collection
> Cannot be matched with this.[43]

One of Xiao Tong's first acquistions was at about the age of ten, when his young cousin Xiao Fan 蕭範 (502–552) presented him with an old edition of the *Han shu*. The ink and paper of the text, which was called a "genuine original" from Ban Gu himself, were old, and it was written in an unusual "dragon-rising" script that resembled neither "clerk" nor "seal" style.[44] Upon receipt of the manuscript, Xiao Tong immediately ordered the scholars Liu Zhilin 劉之遴 (478–549), Zhang Zan 張纘 (499–549), Dao Gai 到溉 (477–549), and Lu Xiang 陸襄 (480–549) to compare it with the extant *Han shu*. Liu Zhilin then submitted a report, which detailed many significant differences.[45] Largely through efforts of this kind, the Eastern Palace library grew to some 30,000 *juan*.[46]

In spite of his youth, Xiao Tong seems to have played an active role in the scholarly and literary activities of the Eastern Palace. In 515, after his capping ceremony (age fifteen *sui*), that formally admitted him to adulthood,[47] his father authorized him to take complete charge over a variety of matters, including the reading of memorials, adjudication of legal cases, and appointment of officials to his staff.[48] The *Liang shu* indicates the extent to which the Eastern Palace became a major attraction for scholars of this period:

He invited and received talented and learned scholars, and he was untiring in his appreciation and admiration for them. He often himself discussed texts and documents, and sometimes consulted with scholars on matters of the past and present. In his idle moments, he continued with his literary composition. Generally, one could consider this a habitual practice. At this time, the Eastern Palace had some 30,000 *juan* of books, and famous men of talent gathered together here. Such a flourishing of literature and scholarship (*wenxue*) had not been seen since the Jin and Song.[49]

The Eastern Palace was also a center of Buddhist activity. Like his father,[50] Xiao Tong was a devout Buddhist, and he was well-read in the sutras. To pursue his interests further, he constructed in the Eastern Palace the Hall of Wise Meaning (Huiyi dian 慧義殿), that was used for assemblies of famous monks who preached sermons and discussed points of Buddhist philosophy. Xiao Tong himself took part in these discussions, and "he himself established the meaning of the Two *Satya* and the *Dharmakāya*."[51]

His Buddhism, as well as his early tutelage under the kindly Xu Mian, helped develop Xiao Tong's strong sense of compassion. In his role as judicial officer, he was known for particular leniency in dispensing punishment.[52] In times of heavy rain or snow, he would send his personal attendants to the wards and hamlets of the capital to distribute rice to the destitute. He also used silk from his own storehouse to make clothing that he gave anonymously to the poor in the winter months. For people who died without the resources for proper burial, Xiao Tong provided coffins. His humanitarian impulse was so strong that even reports of people's suffering from the burdens of taxation and forced labor reputedly were enough to bring a "sober expression" to his face.[53] He so intensely detested the idea of corvée labor that on one occasion he even dared to submit a memorial protesting his father's edict ordering people to be conscripted to build drainage canals in the Wuxing 吳興 area (modern Wuxing *xian*, Zhejiang).[54]

Regretably, this talented, kind man did not enjoy the blessings of long life. His untimely death at the age of twenty-nine was the result of a bizarre accident. In April of 531 Xiao Tong and members of his entourage went to the "rear pond" of the palace for an outing. The crown prince took a small boat onto the pond to pick lotuses. One of the palace ladies who was with him suddenly rocked the boat, and Xiao Tong was thrown into the water. Although his attendants rescued him, he was seriously injured.[55] Afraid of causing his father worry, he ordered his attendants not to say anything about the incident, and told them merely to report that "he was sick in bed."[56] When his father issued an order inquiring about the nature of the crown prince's illness, Xiao Tong wrote a letter himself in response. As his condition worsened, his attendants implored him to inform the emperor,

but again he refused, saying, "How can I let his supreme majesty know I am this wicked!" Finally, on 7 May he became gravely ill, and the emperor was immediately informed. Before the emperor could arrive at the Eastern Palace, Xiao Tong died.[57]

Xiao Tong, who was given the posthumous title Crown Prince of Resplendent Brilliance, was buried on 21 June 531. The emperor ordered the poet Wang Yun 王筠 (481–549) to compose a lament.[58] On 27 June 531 Xiao Gang was appointed crown prince.[59] In the customary fashion, Xiao Tong's biographies in the dynastic histories conclude with information about his writings:

> The collected works of his own writings amount to twenty *juan*. He also compiled: classical pronouncements and elegant sayings from the past and present, i.e., the *Zheng xu* 正序 (Correct Sequence?), in ten *juan*; the best examples of five-syllable verse, i.e., the *Wenzhang yinghua* 文章英華 (Prime Blossoms of Literature), in twenty *juan*; and the *Wen xuan*, in thirty *juan*.[60]

The only one of these works to survive is the *Wen xuan*.[61] Contrary to what one might expect, the only mention this most famous of Chinese anthologies receives in either the *Liang shu* or *Nan shi* is in the passage cited above. One can only speculate on the questions of how, when, and by whom the *Wen xuan* was compiled.[62]

All of the sources that provide information on the compilation of the *Wen xuan* are relatively late. They do agree, however, on one point: Xiao Tong did not assemble the work on his own. One of the first to mention Xiao Tong's cocompilers is the Japanese Buddhist monk Kūkai 空海 (774–835), who in his *Bunkyō hifuron* 文鏡秘府論 (Essays from the Secret Repository of the Literary Mirror) cites an unnamed authority as saying: "When Xiao Tong, Crown Prince of Resplendent Brilliance of the Liang, Liu Xiaochuo 劉孝綽 (481–539), and others compiled the *Wen xuan*, they themselves said it encompasses all Heaven and Earth, and one could hang it with the sun and moon."[63] A much later source, the twelfth-century *Restoration Library Catalogue*, mentions Xiao Tong's cocompilers as "He Xun 何遜 (?–ca. 518), Liu Xiaochuo, and others."[64]

The suggestion that Xiao Tong had assistance in compiling the anthology is not surprising, considering the vastness of the task of selecting, editing, and collecting materials for such a large work. That the name of Liu Xiaochuo appears prominently should also not be surprising, for Liu was one Xiao Tong's closest friends. He was the nephew of the famous Qi poet Wang Rong 王融 (469–493), who was one of the first to experiment with tonal regulations in poetry.[65] In 507 Liu served as secretary to Xiao Xiu 蕭秀 (475–518), Prince of Ancheng 安成 and accompanied him to the provinces. Upon his return (ca. 510), he was appointed twice to the crown

prince's staff, both times serving as librarian.[66] Sometime later, probably around 522,[67] he returned to the Eastern Palace as supervisor to the Crown Prince.[68]

During this period Xiao Tong began to take a serious interest in literature, and he spent many of his leisure moments in the company of such scholars as Liu Xiaochuo, Wang Yun, Yin Yun 殷芸 (471–529), Lu Chui 陸倕 (470–526), and Dao Xia 到洽 (477–527).[69] All of these men had served periodically as officials in the Eastern Palace. Shen Yue himself had recommended Wang Yun, whose verse he considered unrivalled in his time.[70] Lu Chui had been one of Xiao Yan's favorite poets, who at one time commanded Lu to compose two inscriptions, that Xiao Tong eventually included in the *Wen xuan*.[71] Xiao Tong and his five companions spent many hours wandering in the palace gardens, especially the Park of Mystery (Xuan pu 玄圃).[72] As he strolled through the park, with one hand on Wang Yun's sleeve and the other on Liu Xiaochuo's shoulder, he would say, "This is what is called 'The left grasping Fouqiu's sleeve,/The right patting Hongya's shoulder.'"[73]

The one who enjoyed favor above all others, however, was Liu Xiaochuo, and Xiao Tong expressed his fondness for him in several ways. For example, when the portraits of noted scholars were being painted in the Hall for Enjoying the Worthies (Le xian tang 樂賢堂), which Xiao Tong had newly erected, he ordered the artist to do Liu Xiaochuo's portrait first.[74] He also honored Liu by commissioning him to edit the crown prince's own writings, a task many in Xiao Tong's entourage had sought.[75] Xiao Tong's admiration of his other associates was almost as strong. After the death in 527 of Dao Xia and the venerable Ming Shanbin 明山賓 (443–527), who had served on Xiao Tong's staff in the early 520s,[76] he issued the following panegyrical edict:

> Ming Beiyan [Ming Shanbin] and Dao Changshi [Dao Xia] have now passed away in succession. I am so grief stricken and full of remorse I cannot help myself. Last year Lu Taichang [Lu Chui] died. Now these two worthies have bid their final farewell. Master Lu fostered loyalty and observed upright conduct, was pure as ice, as unsullied as jade. His writing enfolded the Four Beginnings,[77] and his learning encompassed the Nine Categories.[78] With lofty feelings and triumphant spirit, straight up he soared. The Ruist scholar Ming delved into antiquity. Honest and generous, steadfast and sincere, he established his character and followed the *Dao*. From beginning to end he seemed to be the same. If he could have met the Master, he surely would have ascended Confucius' hall.[79] Daozi's manner and spirit were open and brisk, and the import of his writing is worthy of notice. In managing official duties, he was uncompromising and impartial. They were both outstanding talents of the world and the secret treasures of the Eastern Chamber.[80]

Although Liu Xiaochuo is the only member of Xiao Tong's Eastern

Palace scholars who is specifically mentioned as one of the *Wen xuan* compilers, it is not too unreasonable to assume that others were involved as well. For example, He Rong 何融, in his 1949 article on the compilation of the *Wen xuan*, tentatively suggests that the most important roles were played by Liu Xiaochuo and Wang Yun. They may have been assisted by Yin Yun, Dao Xia, Ming Shanbin, and Zhang Shuai 張率 (475–527), an associate of both Lu Chui and Liu Xiaochuo.[81] The date of compilation is not known precisely. It must be later than 516, for Liu Jun's "Treatise on Fate" contained in chapter 54 was probably written around this time.[82] The most probable time of compilation is in the Putong 普通 era (520–526), the period in which Xiao Tong's putative cocompilers served in the Eastern Palace. The Putong era was also the period in which three writers, Liu Jun (ob. 522), Xu Fei 徐悱 (ob. 524), and Lu Chui (ob. 526), whose works were included in the *Wen xuan*, died. According to a Tang dynasty source, Xiao Tong followed the principle of including in his anthology only writings by people who were no longer living.[83] Thus, even if the compilation were begun early in the Putong era, the final version may not have been completed until after 526.

Although one can be quite certain that the *Wen xuan* was compiled in the Eastern Palace, there is a tradition that locates its compilation not in the capital, but at Xiangyang (in Hubei). The Song geographical treatise *Recorded Splendors of the World* (*Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝) by Wang Xiangzhi 王象之 (*jin shi* ca. 1196) mentions that at an ancient site in Xiangyang one could find a building called the *Literary Selections* Loft (*Wen xuan* lou 文選樓), where, according to an old "map text," the Crown Prince of Resplendent Brilliance compiled his anthology. This "map text" goes on to say that Xiao Tong assembled at this place ten scholars, who included Liu Xiaowei 劉孝威 (ca. 496–549), Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (ca. 487–551), Xu Fang 徐防, Jiang Bocao 江伯操, Kong Jingtong 孔敬通, Hui Ziyue 惠子悅, Xu Ling 徐陵 (507–583), Wang Yun, Kong Shuo 孔爍, and Bao Zhi 鮑至, for the purpose of compiling the *Wen xuan*. This group was known as the Scholars of the Lofty Studio (*Gaozhai xueshi* 高齋學士).[84] In spite of the pervasiveness of this tradition, which survived quite late, it has no historical basis.[85] Several Qing scholars, as well as the learned *Wen xuan* authority Gao Buying 高步瀛,[86] have shown that the sources that associate Xiao Tong with Xiangyang are mistaken. Except for the first few months after his birth, Xiao Tong was never in Xiangyang. Furthermore, Xiangyang was the capital of Yong 雍, the province over which Xiao Tong's younger brother Xiao Gang ruled from 523 to 526,[87] and it was to him, not Xiao Tong, that the coterie of scholars known as the Scholars of the Lofty Studio belonged. Evidence for this point is provided by the *Nan shi*:

[When Yu Jianwu] was in Yong Province, he was commanded together with Liu Xiaowei, Jiang Boyao 江伯搖, Kong Jingtong, Shen Ziyue 申子悅, Xu Fang, Xu Chi 徐摛 (472–549), Wang You 王囿, Kong Shuo 孔鑠, Bao Zhi, altogether ten persons, to copy and compile various literary works. They were bountifully treated with fruits and delicacies and were called the Scholars of the Lofty Studio.[88]

Although the names of the ten scholars in the *Nan shi* account differ somewhat from those in the "map text" version, clearly both works refer to the same group. There is no doubt that they properly belong with Xiao Gang, who was as ardent a devotee of literature and scholarship as his elder brother.[89]

The Literary Milieu of the Liang and Xiao Tong's View of Literature

The Qi-Liang era (479–556) was one of the most innovative periods in Chinese literary history. It was a time of great attention to literary craft, which in verse led to experiments with prosody, and in prose to the deliberate cultivation of parallelism. For the first time, prosodists began to establish rules for the use of tones and rhyme in poetry. The leading advocates of "innovations" (*xin bian* 新變) were the foremost poets of the day, Shen Yue, Xie Tiao 謝朓 (464–499), and Wang Rong. Their style, called the "Yongming style" (*Yongming ti* 永明體) after the Yongming period (483–493) of the Qi dynasty in which it flourished, showed meticulous concern for tonal balance and rhyme. The earliest and most objective account of their activities is provided by the historian Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (489–537), who was also a prominent poet:

At the end of the Yongming era, writers extensively engaged in literary composition. Shen Yue of Wuxing, Xie Tiao of Chen commandery, and Wang Rong of Langye, because of their similarity of temperament (*qi lei* 氣類), made recommendations for one another. Zhou Yong 周顒 (?–485) of Runan was well-acquainted with tone and rhyme. The writings of Yue and the others all made use of the tonal system.[90] They considered the four tones as level, rising, falling, and entering, and on this basis they stipulated the rhymes, which could neither be augmented nor diminished. In that era they called it the 'Yongming style.'"[91]

The attention to prosodic niceties, which extended to concern for delicate phrasing, earned the Yongming stylists a reputation for preciosity. Both the *Liang shu* and *Nan shi* comment on this feature:

During the Yongming period of the Qi, the compositions of the literary scholars Wang Rong, Xie Tiao, and Shen Yue began to use the four tones, and this was considered an innovation (*xin bian*). At this point [their works] were restricted by

tone and rhyme and became increasingly ornate and gaudy (*limi* 麗靡), going far beyond anything of former times.[92]

The prosodic and stylistic innovations introduced by the Yongming poets continued to be influential in the early Liang period. Although Xiao Yan himself was not an adherent of the new interest in tones,[93] he did not forbid Shen Yue and his imitators from practicing their art. The "ornate and gaudy" quality attributed to the Yongming poems probably refers to the many delicate descriptive pieces known as *yongwu* 詠物 ("a poem on things"), that dominate the corpus of poets like Shen Yue, Wang Rong, and Xie Tiao.[94] An example is Shen Yue's short poem describing an embroidered design on a collar:

> Dainty hands craft something new and unusual;
> They embroider a lovely design.
> Twining silk she puts butterflies in flight;
> Knotting threads she sets little bees to rest.
> Though soundless, they seem to whirr and buzz;
> There's no wind, but they flutter gracefully by themselves.
> As long as her beauty does not fade,
> It will catch the cloudy locks hanging down her neck.[95]

Experimentation continued through the Liang period, and by the 530s the "ornate and gaudy" style became the fashion in the Eastern Palace of Xiao Gang, who was known as the patron of the "palace-style" (*gongti* 宮體) verse.[96] Some of the innovators even formulated theoretical justifications for what were considered by some unwarranted deviations from classical norms. For example, Xiao Zixian, in an essay appended to the literature section of his history of the Southern Qi, argued that literary change was necessary to avoid banality and to foster the creation of good literature.

> Habitual practice is a reasonable principle, but when pursued at great length, it can become contaminating. When this principle resides in literary composition, writing increasingly suffers from the banal and trite. If there were no innovations (*xin bian*), it would be impossible to continue producing outstanding literary works. The Jian'an had a uniform style, but in the *Classical Treatises* both its strengths and weaknesses were exposed. Pan Yue 潘岳 (247–300) and Lu Ji were equally famous, but their style in the final analysis is quite different. The literary taste south of the Jiang [i.e. the Eastern Jin] allowed Taoist terminology to flourish. Guo Pu 郭璞 (276–324) initiated the wondrous changes, and Xu Xun 許詢 (fl. ca. 358) exploited Names and Principles (*ming li* 名理) to their limit. With Yin Zhongwen 殷仲文 (?–407) the "mystical air" (*xuan qi* 玄氣) was not wholly eliminated. Even though Xie Hun's poetic sentiments were fresh, he has never achieved an illustrious name. Yan Yanzhi 顏延之 (384–456) and Xie Lingyun emerged at the same time, but

each of them lay claim to a distinctive style. Hui Xiu 惠休 (fl. 464) and Bao Zhao 鮑照 (ca. 412–466) appeared later, and both served as standards to the world. Vermilion and indigo are equally beautiful, but each is derived from a different source.[97]

Although innovation seems to have been a widely shared interest, several important poet-critics expressed strong opposition to what they considered to be the deleterious qualities of the "new style." Zhong Rong (or Zhong Hong) 鍾嶸 (?–518) in his *Gradings of Poets* (*Shi pin* 詩品) was one of the first to attack the tonal theories of the Yongming poets.[98] In the third section of his *Shi pin* preface, he singles out Wang Rong, Shen Yue, and Xie Tiao as the culprits principally responsible for establishing excessive prosodic constraints on verse.

Wang Yuanchang [Wang Rong] initiated its beginnings; Shen Yue and Xie Tiao whipped up the swells. These three worthies all happened to be descendants of noble clans, and when young they possessed literary eloquence. Thereupon scholarly circles emulated them, striving to be exact and precise, making their "folds" fine and dainty, each one trying to surpass the other. Thus, they imposed many restrictions and taboos on literature and harmed its real beauty. I maintain that a literary composition basically must be read aloud, and it should not falter or be encumbered. Simply allow the sounds to flow smoothly, and the mouth and lips to work harmoniously together—that is sufficient. As for "level, rising, falling, and entering," I am afraid I am not proficient at them. Regarding "wasp waist" and "crane's knee," the country folk have already mastered them.[99]

Zhong Rong's reservations about the new trends in literature were shared by Pei Ziye 裴子野 (469–530), who was the center of a respected group of conservative scholars with strong antiquarian interests. One of them was Liu Zhilin 劉之遴 (478–549), a leading authority on bronzes and ancient script. Liu is described as a man "fond of composition," whose writings "mostly imitated the ancient style" (*gu ti* 古體).[100] The same sources portray Pei in similar terms:

Ziye's manner of writing was classically chaste and rapid, and he was not given to ornate and gaudy (*limi*) diction. His compositions for the most part were modeled on the ancients and differed from contemporary style.[101]

The term "classically chaste" (*dian* 典) as applied to Pei's writings probably refers to his adherence to the classical ideal that stressed a sober, plain style in which content was more important than form.[102] Pei was especially disturbed by the apparent neglect of classical norms by many writers since the end of the Song dynasty. In an essay titled "Treatise on Carving Insects" ("Diaochong lun" 雕蟲論), Pei denounced the innovators for their obsession with the surface quality of literature while ignoring its moral content.[103]

From this [time, i.e. the end of the Song dynasty], youths from the villages and children[104] of the nobility all have discarded the Six Classics to "sing forth their emotions and natures."[105] Scholars take broad acquaintance with poetic figures[106] as an urgent endeavor and refer to textual commentary as stupid and inane. Their unrestrained writings have broken the classical norms (*dian*), and to them the merely "handsome"[107] is worthy of merit. They do not fit their compositions to the "pipes and strings," nor do they "stop with rites and propriety."[108] Their deepest thoughts focus on plants and trees, while their most profound interests extend only to wind and clouds. Their inspiration[109] is shallow, and their moral intent is weak. They are well-crafted but meaningless; they are recondite but not profound.[110]

As can be seen from this excerpt, Pei was an archaist who saw nothing of value in the works of the innovators. His position, however, was an extreme one, and there were others who, though uneasy about some aspects of the "new style," did not repudiate it completely. These "compromisers," as they have been called,[111] attempted to strike a balance between classical norms and innovation. The most eloquent spokesman for this position was Liu Xie, author of the *Wenxin diaolong*. In his final chapter, in which he states the purposes of his treatise, Liu clearly indicates his desire to mediate between extreme positions:

In agreeing with and differing from other critics,
I have not cared whether they were ancient or modern.
In "dissecting the muscles and marking the veins,"
I have sought only to strike a compromise.[112]

On the question of innovation, Liu indicates his disapproval of the directions many of the literary experimenters were taking. He saw literature moving from a simple, pristine quality, which it had in remote antiquity, to a much more florid, ornamental style, full of "solecism" (*e* 訛) and "novelty" (*xin* 新):

Style has progressed from simplicity to solecism. The more recent the period, the more insipid it has become. Why is that? By striving for the modern and neglecting the ancients, the wind has died down and vitality has dissipated. The most talented and outstanding scholars of the day assiduously apply themselves to literary study, but they often ignore pieces from the Han and take the Song anthologies as their models. Even though they have read through all of the ancient and modern writings, they still cling to the recent and neglect the remote.

Blue is produced from indigo and crimson is produced from madder. Even though they both are superior to their primary colors, they cannot be changed further.... Therefore, to refine the blue and purify the crimson one must return to indigo and madder. To correct solecism and overturn superficiality, one must come back to venerating classical injunctions.[113]

This passage shows that Liu did not object to literary innovation per se. His

use of the color metaphor, in which blue and crimson are superior to the colors from which they are derived, implies by analogy that literature directly derived from the classics may be superior to the classics themselves. "However, just as blue, to be superior, must derive from indigo, so then should subsequent literature likewise derive from, or share a common basis with, the classics. What he objects to are derivations of derivations, blues from blue, not from indigo, i.e. a writer taking as his model other writing which does not in some fundamental way embody classical values."[114] Thus, innovation is legitimate only if it is based on classical models:

> If one casts his work in the mold of the Classics, soars and lands in the techniques of the Masters and Historians, clearly understands the changing of emotions, intricately exhibits the proper style, he will be able to generate fresh ideas and carve unusual expressions. He exhibits the proper style, therefore his ideas are fresh but not disorderly. He understands the changes, therefore his expressions are unusual but not repulsive. If the structure and ornamentation are not yet rounded out, and the force[115] and diction are not yet perfected, and one disregards old rules and races after a new creation, even though he may capture a clever idea, the perils and failures will be many.[116]

As a solution to the problem of innovation, Liu developed the theory of "continuity and change" (*tong bian* 通變).[117] According to Liu Xie, literary development consisted of "constant" elements, the generic rules and conventions, and the "variable" stylistic innovations or "changes" that different writers may introduce. As far as Liu was concerned, literary change was inevitable and even desirable, as long as the innovations followed the established norms.

> Literature changes and thus endures;
> It maintains continuity and thus is not deficient.
> Follow the times and achieve definite results;
> Use the opportunities, for there is nothing to fear.
> Look toward the present and create the unusual;
> Consult the ancients to establish the laws.[118]

Although Liu Xie's views were undoubtedly known in his time, it is difficult to determine the extent of their influence on Xiao Tong. We do know that sometime between 511 and 517 Liu was appointed to Xiao Tong's staff as Chamberlain for the Surrogate Secretary in the Eastern Palace (*Donggong tongshi sheren* 東宮通事舍人). He continued in this capacity perhaps as late as 520, even while holding other positions. According to the *Liang shu*, "the Crown Prince of Resplendent Brilliance was devoted to literature, and received him with deep admiration."[119] Unfortunately, the sources mention nothing about the literary discussions that Liu Xie and Xiao Tong must have held. They are also silent about whether or not Xiao

Tong read the *Wenxin diaolong*. Although the date of Liu Xie's treatise is disputed,[120] the latest possible date of completion is earlier than the compilation of the *Wen xuan*, and one could reasonably assume that Xiao Tong had access to it in his large Eastern Palace library.

In spite of the difficulties of establishing a direct influence between the *Wenxin diaolong* and the *Wen xuan*, several scholars have attempted to compare various aspects of Liu Xie's formulations with the literary "theories" of Xiao Tong. Zhou Xunchu, for example, classifies Xiao Tong as a member of Liu Xie's "compromise school."[121] Zhou shows that Xiao, like Liu Xie, attempted to establish a moderate position between the innovators and archaists. In commenting on the problem of style, Xiao once remarked:

> If a literary style is too classically chaste (*dian*), it becomes burdened with rusticity. If it is too ornate, it is harmed by superficiality. If it can be ornate yet not superficial, chaste yet not rustic, the form and content are elegantly blended, and it will have the attainment of the Gentleman.[122] I once wanted to write in this way, but regretably I have not yet reached that point.[123]

The "chaste" style that he condemns probably was that of Pei Ziye and his imitators. The thrust of his remarks on the "ornate" (*li*) style is less clear, but most likely was directed against the Yongming poets. Xiao never explicitly comments on this group, but there is evidence that he did not share their taste for the "frivolous." For example, in his otherwise laudatory comments on Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427), he criticizes Tao's "Rhapsody on Stilling the Passions" ("Xian qing fu" 閒情賦), which contains an unabashedly erotic description of a beautiful lady, as a "slight flaw in a white jade disc."[124] Furthermore, his own corpus of poetry contains almost nothing that resembles the "palace style" of his younger brother.[125] Indeed, Xiao Tong had a reputation as a sober young man who generally abstained from sensual pleasures (perhaps that is why his accident was such an embarrassment to him). Both the *Liang shu* and *Nan shi* mention that on one occasion he and some of the court scholars were boating on the rear pond of the Eastern Palace when the Marquis of Panyu 番禺 suggested how fitting it would be for a performance by female musicians. Xiao Tong did not reply, but instead recited two lines from Zuo Si's 左思 (ca. 250–ca. 305) "Seeking the Recluse": "Who needs strings and reeds?/The mountains and streams have their own pure sounds."[126] Embarrassed, the marquis withdrew his suggestion. The texts go on to say that in the twenty years after his departure from the main palace, Xiao Tong "did not cultivate music," and he showed no interest in the troupe of female singers that his father had presented to him.[127]

As illuminating as these bits of information may be, one must turn to the *Wen xuan* and its preface to discover Xiao Tong's principal ideas about

literature. The preface, written almost entirely in elegant, parallel prose style, is primarily significant for its attempt to define the limits of "literature," especially with respect to the genres that may be properly included in an anthology. In referring to "literature," Xiao does not confine himself to a single term. As one would expect, he uses the word that is in the title of his anthology, *wen*. As Xiao uses it, however, *wen* does not always have the sense of "literature," but often seems to mean either "writing" or "pattern." The opening lines of the preface, which trace the genesis of *wen*, are more concerned with the origin of writing and culture than with literature.

> Let us examine the primordial origins of civilization,
> And distantly observe the customs of the remote past—
> Times when men dwelled in caves in winter, nests in summer,
> Eras when people consumed raw meat and drank blood.
> It was a pristine age of simple people,
> And writing (*siwen*) had not yet been invented.
> Then when Fu Xi ruled the empire,
> He first
> Drew the Eight Trigrams,
> Created writing (*shuqi*)
> To replace government by knotted ropes.
> From this time written records (*wenji*) came into existence.
> The *Changes* says, "Observe the patterns (*wen*) of the sky
> To ascertain the seasonal changes.
> Observe the patterns (*wen*) of man
> To transform the world."
> The temporal significance of writing (*wen*) is far-reaching indeed![128]

Although one might translate several of the occurrences of *wen* differently,[129] clearly Xiao Tong conceives of *wen* in the broad sense of "pattern," whether it be markings notched on wood or the astral "patterns of the sky." In this respect his concept of *wen* is similar to that expressed by Liu Xie in the first chapter of the *Wenxin diaolong*.[130] Xiao Tong's emphasis in most of the preface, however, is not on *wen* in its metaphysical and cosmological meaning, but rather on *wen* in the narrower sense of belles-lettres. Thus, he refers to the "*wen* of the *Sao* poets" and to the verse forms he calls "Three-syllable and Eight-character *wen*."[131] This use of *wen* could be translated simply 'writings.' However, one might also construe it in the specific Six-Dynasties sense of *wen* (rhymed writing, "poetry") as opposed to *bi* 筆 (plain writing, unrhymed writing, prose).[132]

In addition to *wen*, Xiao uses other terms that are virtually synonymous with each other to designate the particular type of works he includes in his anthology: *pianzhang* 篇章 (literary pieces), *pianhan* 篇翰 (literary works), *pianshi* 篇什 (poetic pieces), *hanzao* 翰藻 (literary elegance). All of

these expressions, which could loosely be translated as "belles-lettres,"[133] come close to conveying an idea of "pure literature." This notion of pure literature becomes especially apparent in Xiao's statements about the exclusion of important categories of writing from the *Wen xuan*. For example, in giving his reason for excluding the speeches of the famous Warring States and early Han persuaders Xiao asserts that their "matter" (*shi* 事) is different from "literary pieces" (*pianzhang*). Similarly, historical works "that record events" and are "chronologically organized," when compared with "literary works" (*pianhan*), "are not the same." On the other hand, genres usually found in histories such as the "Judgment" (*zan* 讚), "Treatise" (*lun* 論), "Postface" (*xu* 序), and "Evaluation" (*shu* 述), whose "matter (*shi*) is the product of profound thought," and whose "principles (*yi* 義) belong to the realm of literary elegance (*hanzao*)," even though they come from the histories, may be included with the "poetic pieces" (*pianshi*).[134]

Xiao Tong unfortunately does not explain what he means by "profound thought" and "literary elegance," and his formulation has been subject to much criticism and interpretation.[135] Whatever concept of literary value may be implied by these terms, one would be misreading Xiao's remarks to assume that he intended them as a disparagement of the categories he eliminated from the *Wen xuan*. For example, in speaking of the eloquence of the persuaders and great statesmen, he refers to their "beautiful language" (*mei ci* 美辭) and "gold essence, resounding like jade."[136] Thus, he apparently recognizes their aesthetic worth. His emphasis, at least with respect to the speeches and historical narratives, seems to be that they are somehow *different* from (but not necessarily inferior to) the things he calls *pianzhang*, *pianhan*, and *pianshi*. As Guo Shaoyu points out, all three terms "refer to single (*danpian*) literary works."[137] Another possible factor in his decision to exclude such works was that they were difficult to excerpt. This principle clearly governed Xiao's decision to eliminate extracts from the classics, for which he offers the highest praise:

> The works of the Duke of Zhou,
> And the writings of Confucius,
> Hang as high as the sun and moon,
> Compete with the mysteries of ghosts and spirits.
> As standards of filial piety and reverence,
> Preceptors of the human relationships,
> They cannot be "weeded or mowed,"
> Cut or trimmed.[138]

One must remember that Xiao's main purpose was to compile a "selection" of literature, and his task was to choose those works that could be most suitably anthologized. In the case at least of the classics, and perhaps

also the oratorical and historical works (i.e., narrative prose), he felt that one could not select from them without doing damage to the integrity of the work. In a sense, the *Wen xuan* does not represent a general concept of literature, as does the *Wenxin diaolong*, which encompasses all types of writing, including the classics, the apocryphal texts, the histories, and the "various masters" (*zhuzi* 諸子). Rather, it is a more modest formulation that confines itself to "anthology literature," meaning pieces (*pian*) of poetry and prose that have their own mode of existence independent of a larger work.[139]

By pointing out the likelihood that a work's mode of existence was a consideration in his selection, I do not wish to ignore the importance of aesthetic criteria. Xiao clearly made literary artistry the determining factor that led him to eliminate philosophical writings:

> The compositions of Lao and Zhuang,
> The works of Guan and Meng,
> Take establishing doctrine as their principal concern,
> And skillful writing is not of fundamental importance.[140]

Furthermore, the quality that distinguished genres such as the Judgment and Treatise from the histories in which they were contained was their "literary elegance." Xiao also recognized that an important function of literature was to entertain. For example, he compares the various pleasures one finds in different genres with the diverse enjoyment to be obtained from musical instruments and woven patterns:

> These numerous forms have risen like spear-tips,
> And various subgenres have appeared here and there.
> They may be compared to such diverse instruments made of clay or gourds:
> All provide pleasure for the ear.
> The zig-zag and meander designs are different,
> But both afford pleasure to the eyes.[141]

Xiao, like Liu Xie, also acknowledged the natural tendency of literature to become more ornamental and complex over time. To illustrate this point, he used the analogies of the development of the Grand Carriage (*Da lu* 大輅) from the simple pushcart, and the creation of ice from water:

> The crude cart is the prototype of the Grand Carriage,
> But does the Grand Carriage have the simplicity of the crude cart?
> Thick ice is formed by accumulated water,
> But accumulated water lacks the coldness of thick ice.
> Why is that?
> Generally it is because:
> Continuing the process increases ornament,
> Changing the basic form adds intensity.

Since things are like this,
Literature (*wen*) is appropriately so.[142]

The changes and complexities that Xiao refers to in this passage are the various literary forms that had developed. He devotes much of the preface to enumerating the names of certain genres. He does not, like Liu Xie, attempt to trace the origin of genres to the classics. For example, Liu, in his important chapter "Venerating the Classics," makes the following assertions about the prototypes of most of the generic categories he includes in the *Wenxin diaolong*:

As for the Treatise, Discourse, *Ci* 辭, and Preface, the *Changes* assumed the lead. As for the Edict, Decree, Memorial, and Presentation, the *Documents* produced the source. As for the Rhapsody, Eulogy, Song, and Encomium, the *Songs* established the foundation. As for the Inscription, Dirge, Admonition, and Prayer, the *Rites* lays claim to the beginning. As for the Chronicle, Biography, Oath, and Dispatch, the *Annals* are the root.[143]

The closest Xiao comes to establishing a classical genesis for a genre is in his remarks on the *fu*, which he traces to the Six Principles (*Liu yi* 六義) of the *Classic of Songs*:

As we come to the writers of the present,
Who differ from those of the past,
That form of the ancient *Songs*
Now has solely assumed the name *fu*.[144]

The "form of the ancient *Songs*" to which Xiao Tong alludes is the poetic "principle" of *Expositio* (*fu* 賦), that involves the technique of "direct presentation"[145] without the use of figurative language. Although Xiao expresses the common belief that the *fu* genre was related to the poetic principle *fu*, thus making it a "form of the ancient *Songs*," he also recognizes that as the genre developed it acquired qualities that separated it from the *Songs* and allowed it no longer to be called *shi*, but *fu*. In this respect, his views are identical to those of Liu Xie, who in his "Elucidating the *Fu*" chapter explains how the *fu* achieved its "independence."

As for the *fu*:
It received the mandate from the poets of the *Songs*,
And expanded its realm in the *Chuci*.
Thereupon:
Xun Kuang's "Ritual" and "Wisdom,"
Song Yu's "Wind" and "Fishing"
Then bestowed it with a name and title,
Thus marking its boundaries with the *Songs*.
The appendage of the Six Principles
Now has flourished and grown into a great state.[146]

This sketch of Xiao Tong's ideas on literature is admittedly fragmentary. Xiao Tong, as we have seen, was concerned primarily with defining anthology literature, and therefore one should not expect him to develop a comprehensive theory of literature in the manner of Liu Xie. Xiao Tong's views may well be the product of as much careful thought and analysis as Liu Xie demonstrates in his fifty-chapter work, but in the absence of any extended written exposition, one must assume that Xiao Tong was less interested in theory and more concerned with the practical task of selecting literary masterpieces and editing them for his anthology.

Content of the Wen xuan

The *Wen xuan* preface and Xiao Tong's extant remarks on literature are of only limited relevance as definitions of the genres included in the *Wen xuan*.[147] To obtain a more precise understanding of the criteria Xiao Tong applied in the process of selection, one must examine the *Wen xuan* itself. This large corpus of 761 pieces is divided into the following thirty-seven generic categories:

Genre	*Juan* Number	No. of pieces
1. Rhapsody (*fu* 賦)	1–19	55 + 1*
2. Lyric Poetry (*shi* 詩)	19–31	443
3. Elegy (*sao* 騷)	32–33	17
4. Sevens (*qi* 七)	34–35	24
5. Edict (*zhao* 詔)	35	2
6. Patent of Enfeoffment (*ce* 冊)	35	1
7. Command (*ling* 令)	36	1
8. Instruction (*jiao* 敎)	36	2
9. Examination Questions (*cewen* 策文)	36	13
10. Memorial (*biao* 表)	37–38	19
11. Letter of Submission (*shang shu* 上書)	39	7
12. Communication (*qi* 啓)	39	3
13. Accusation (*tanshi* 彈事)	40	3
14. Memorandum (*jian* 牋)	40	3
15. Note of Presentation (*zou ji* 奏記)	40	1
16. Letter (*shu* 書)	41–43	24
17. Proclamation (*xi* 檄)	44	5
18. Response to Questions (*duiwen* 對問)	45	1
19. Hypothetical Discourse (*she lun* 設論)	45	3
20. *Ci* 辭 †	45	2
21. Preface (*Xu* 序)	45–46	9
22. Eulogy (*song* 頌)	47	5
23. Encomium (*zan* 贊)	47	2

Genre	*Juan* Number	No. of pieces
24. Mandate through Prophetic Signs (*fu ming* 符命)	48	3
25. Treatises from the Histories (*shi lun* 史論)	49–50	9
26. Evaluations and Judgments from the Histories (*shi shu zan* 史述贊)	49–50	9
27. Treatise (*lun* 論)	51–55	14
28. Linked Pearls (*lianzhu* 連珠)	55	50
29. Admonition (*zhen* 箴)	56	1
30. Inscription (*ming* 命)	56	5
31. Dirge (*lei* 誄)	56–57	8
32. Lament (*ai* 哀)	57–58	3
33. Epitaph (*bei* 碑)	58–59	5
34. Grave Memoir (*mu zhi* 墓誌)	59	1
35. Conduct Description (*xing zhuang* 行狀)	60	1
36. Condolence (*diaowen* 弔文)	60	2
37. Offering (*ji* 祭)	60	3

*Zuo Si's "Preface to the Three Capitals Rhapsody" is counted as a separate piece.
†As Xiao Tong uses it here, *ci* is untranslatable. One piece is a "song," and the other is rhapsody.

Because of the loss of so many earlier genre anthologies, the question of the originality of Xiao Tong's classification system is difficult to answer. Professor Rao Zongyi has claimed that Xiao's main sources were Liu Xie and Ren Fang 任昉 (460–508).[148] The work by Ren Fang to which Rao probably refers is the *Origins of Literary Forms* (*Wenzhang yuanqi* 文章緣起), an account of the genesis of eighty-five literary genres. Unfortunately, the modern version of this work is suspected of being a forgery.[149] Thus, we are left with the *Wenxin diaolong* as the only work with which one can properly compare the *Wen xuan*.[150]

Liu Xie established a total of thirty-four general generic categories. (This number excludes the Classics and Apocrypha, which he does not discuss as genres.) The names of these categories do not correspond exactly to those of the *Wen xuan*. As the following chart shows, Xiao Tong uses only eighteen of Liu Xie's general generic names. If one includes the *fuming* (Mandate through Prophetic Signs) and *cewen* (Examination Questions), which are simply variant names for Liu Xie's *fengshan* (Essays on the Sacrifices) and *dui* (Answer) respectively, the number of corresponding categories can be increased to twenty. Most of the remaining *Wen xuan* generic designations can be accounted for by locating them under general categories such as *zawen* (Miscellaneous Writings), *zhao* (Edicts), *zou* (Presentations), and *shu* (Letters), that have many subdivisions.

Wenxin diaolong Category	Corresponding *Wen Xuan* Category	*Wenxin diaolong* Subdivision
1. *Sao* 騷	*Sao*	
2. *Shi* 詩	*Shi*	
3. *Yuefu* 樂府*		
4. *Fu* 賦	*Fu*	
5. *Song* 頌	*Song*	
6. *Zan* 讚	*Zan*	
7. *Zhu* 祝		*Jiwen* 祭文
8. *Meng* 盟		
9. *Ming* 銘	*Ming*	
10. *Zhen* 箴	*Zhen*	
11. *Lei* 誄	*Lei*	
12. *Bei* 碑	*Bei*	
13. *Ai* 哀	*Ai*	
14. *Diao* 弔	*Diao*	
15. *Zawen* 雜文		*Duiwen* 對問† *Qi* 七 *Lianzhu* 連珠
16. *Xie* 諧		
17. *Yin* 隱		
18. *Shi zhuan* 史傳		
19. *Zhuzi* 諸子		
20. *Lun* 論	*Lun*	*Xu* 序
21. *Shuo* 說		*Shangshu* 上書
22. *Zhao* 詔	*Zhao*	*Ling* 令 *Jiao* 敎
23. *Ce* 策	*Ce* (written 册)	
24. *Xi* 檄	*Xi*	
25. *Yi* 移		
26. *Fengshan* 封禪	*Fuming* 符命	
27. *Zhang* 章		
28. *Biao* 表	*Biao*	
29. *Zou* 奏		*Shangshu* 上書 *Tanshi* 彈事
30. *Qi* 啓	*Qi*	
31. *Yi* 議		
32. *Dui* 對	*Cewen* 策文	
33. *Shu* 書	*Shu*	
34. *Ji* 記		*Jian* 牋 *Xingchuang* 行狀 *Zouji* 奏記

*The *Wen xuan* includes *Yuefu* only as a subdivision of *Shi*.

†The *Wen Xuan*'s *She lun* is equivalent to the *Duiwen* of the *Wenxin diaolong*.

Although the *Wen xuan* has roughly the same number of generic categories as the *Wenxin diaolong*, it encompasses a much narrower range of literature. Not only does it exclude important types of writing such as the history, philosophy, and humor (*xie*), but several of its categories seem less general than comparable categories of Liu Xie's work. For example, the Response to Questions section in the *Wen xuan* contains only one piece, the "Response to the Questions of the King of Chu," a dialogue between Song Yu and King Xiang of Chu. Following it are three pieces in the Hypothetical Discourse category—Dongfang Shuo's 東方朔 (154–93 B.C.) "Response to a Guest's Objections," Yang Xiong's "Dissolving Ridicule," and Ban Gu's "Response to a Guest's Jest"—all of which are also dialogues between the author and an imaginary questioner. In the *Wenxin diaolong*, all of these works are classified under the single rubric of "Response to Questions."[151] By establishing the Hypothetical Discourse as a genre distinct from the Response to Questions, Xiao probably intended to stress the imaginary nature (hence the word *she*) of the Dongfang Shuo, Yang Xiong, and Ban Gu pieces, as opposed to the purported historical reality of the Song Yu piece.[152]

Xiao's penchant for drawing such fine distinctions seems to have led him to establish several categories that some scholars have criticized as illogical and unnecessary. The most obvious of these are the two categories he calls "Treatises from the Histories" and "Evaluations and Judgments from the Histories." The former group consists of critical essays that conclude certain sections of Ban Gu's *Han shu*, Gan Bao's 干寶 (fl. A.D. 317) *Jin ji* 晉紀 (Jin Annals), Fan Ye's 范曄 (398–445) *Hou Han shu*, and Shen Yue's *Song shu*. All of these pieces are called *lun* except for Ban Gu's appraisal attached to the biography of Gongsun Hong 公孫弘 (200–121 B.C.), which is called *zan* (Judgment). The Evaluations and Judgments from the Histories category restricts itself to the rhymed appraisals Ban Gu and Fan Ye wrote for each chapter of their histories. In the form of the title as given in the table of contents, all of these pieces are called *zan*,[153] which is the same term used as a separate generic category in chapter 47!

Although it might appear that Xiao Tong, by placing works titled *zan* in three different categories, was careless in his terminology,[154] he actually demonstrates a sensitivity to subtle distinctions that many Chinese taxonomists, in their obsession with names, were unable to make. The *zan* of chapter 47 are more in the nature of eulogies than critical appraisals. One is a rhymed encomium written for a portrait of Dongfang Shuo. The other is a series of rhymed eulogies for famous ministers of the Three States.[155] Ban Gu's *zan* in the Treatises from the Histories category is a prose discussion of major figures from the reign of Emperor Wu of the Former Han and properly belongs with pieces such as Fan Ye's "Treatise on the Twenty-

eight Generals of the Later Han," "Treatise from the Biographies of Eunuchs," and "Treatise from the Biographies of Hermits." Finally, the *zan* included among the Evaluations and Judgments from the Histories are short rhymed four-syllable pieces praising or criticizing a reign or historical figure.

Another category that the *Wen xuan*'s critics have found especially troublesome is the *fuming*, or Mandate through Prophetic Signs, which is represented in chapter 48 by Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (179–117 B.C.) "Essay on the *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices," Yang Xiong's "Criticizing Qin and Praising Xin," and Ban Gu's "Elaboration of the Canon." All of these pieces are panegyrics that enumerate wondrous omens and amazing portents as a means of extolling the virtues and accomplishments of the reigning emperor. Because their primary function was to praise, Zhang Xuecheng claimed that they should have been included among the Eulogies (*song*).[156] Although it is not clear why Xiao Tong uses the term *fuming* as the name of this genre,[157] he is not unique in placing these pieces in a separate category. His *fuming* category is equivalent to the *Wenxin diaolong* "*Feng* and *Shan*" section, which is confined to writings about the sacrifices and their connection with dynastic legitimacy. All three pieces in the *Wen xuan* are essays addressed to the emperor urging him to perform the *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices as a *rite de triomphe*, and perhaps because of their hortatory quality, Xiao Tong did not think it appropriate to classify them as eulogies. He did, however, recognize their affinity to other panegyrical genres, and he placed this category immediately after the Eulogies and Encomnia.

Xiao in fact seems to have attempted to arrange most of the genres in an order that recognizes generic affinities. Shu Zhongzheng, for example, has divided the thirty-seven genres into seven groups.[158]

1. Rhapsody, Lyric Poetry, Elegy, and Sevens: rhymed belles-lettres (*you yun zhi wen* 有韻之文).
2. Edict, Patent of Enfeoffment, Command, Instruction, Examination Questions: orders and instructions from the ruler to his subjects.
3. Memorial, Letter of Submission, Communication, Accusation, Note of Presentation, Letter, Dispatch: communications from inferior to superior or between equals.
4. Response to Questions, Hypothetical Discourse, and *Ci*, plus Preface.
5. Eulogy, Encomium, and Mandate through Prophetic Signs: panegyrics.
6. Treatises from the Histories, Evaluations and Judgments from the Histories, and Treatise, plus Linked Pearls.
7. Admonition, Inscription, Dirge, Lament, Epitaph, Grave Memoir, Conduct Description, Condolence, Offering: works praising virtue or grieving over the deceased.

Of these seven groups, 4 and 6 are the most difficult to explain. Group 4 is an especially tenuous formulation, for it is not clear how the *ci* and Preface relate to the dialogue genres, Response to Questions and the Hypothetical Discourse. Shu argues that the dialogues are forms of the *cifu* 辭賦 (rhapsody), hence the connection with *ci*. However, only one of the two *ci* qualifies as a rhapsody (Tao Qian's "Return"); the other (Emperor Wu's "Song of the Autumn Wind") is a "Chu Song," that would normally be classified as a *yuefu* or a "Miscellaneous Song."[159] I believe here we have an instance of Xiao Tong's being more concerned with name (i.e. the occurrence of *ci* in both titles) than form.

Even more tenuous is the relationship between the Preface and the other three members of the group. In the *Wen xuan* preface, Xiao Tong groups the Preface with *ci*, but does not explain the connection. All but two of the nine Prefaces in the *Wen xuan* are either prefaces to single poems or to collections of poems.[160] He possibly considered all of these genres loosely related to Lyric Poetry and Rhapsody and thus arranged them in an order that reflects their marginal affinity to the "poetic" genres.

One genre that does not seem to fit neatly with any category is the epigram genre known as *lianzhu* (Linked Pearls). Shu places it with the *lun* on the grounds that it resembles the analytical quality of the *lun*.[161] Indeed, several of the early accounts of the *lianzhu* stress its affinity with the *lun*. Fu Xuan 傅玄 (217–278), in a discussion of the origins and development of the genre, notes the resemblance of Cai Yong's 蔡邕 (133–192) *lianzhu* to the *lun*.[162] Shen Yue, who traces the origin of the *lianzhu* to Yang Xiong, remarks that his pieces were written in imitation of the *lun* on the Images (*xiang* 象) of the *Classic of Changes*.[163] The *lianzhu* in the *Wen xuan*, however, are represented by Lu Ji's fifty "Linked Pearls Expanded" (chapter 55). They are all short admonitory sayings intended for a ruler or his ministers. In this respect, the *lianzhu* is akin to the Admonition, which immediately follows it in the *Wen xuan*. Thus, the *lianzhu* seems to have affinities to two different groups of genres, and it was perhaps for this reason that Liu Xie classified it as one of his "mixed" (*za*) genres. The fact that it could fit in either group also suggests that one should not consider the distinctions drawn by Shu Zhongzheng as absolute, for it is possible to put certain genres into more than one grouping.[164] Whatever scheme one adopts, however, it is clear that each genre has some relationship to at least one other genre either directly preceding or following it.

If one were to identify a principal emphasis of the *Wen xuan*, one would have to say it is without question the poetic genres represented by Shu's Group 1. These four genres occupy thirty-five of the sixty *juan* in the anthology,[165] and of these thirty-five, nineteen belong to the *fu* and twelve to the *shi*. The importance of the *fu* and *shi* is also reflected in the fact that

they are the only genres divided into subgenres. The *fu* has fifteen subgenres and *shi* twenty-three, most of which represent specific thematic categories.

Category	Number of Pieces
FU	
1. Metropolises and Capitals (*Jing du* 京都)	8
2. Sacrifices (*Jiaosi* 郊祀)	1
3. Plowing the Sacred Field (*Geng ji* 耕籍)	1
4. Hunting (*Tianlie* 畋獵)	5
5. Recounting Travel (*Ji xing* 紀行)	3
6. Sightseeing (*Youlan* 遊覽)	3
7. Palaces and Halls (*Gong dian* 宮殿)	2
8. Rivers and Seas (*Jianghai* 江海)	2
9. Natural Phenomena (*Wuse* 物色)	4
10. Birds and Animals (*Niaoshou* 鳥獸)	5
11. Aspirations and Feelings (*Zhi* 志)	4
12. Sorrowful Laments (*Aishang* 哀傷)	7
13. Literature (*Lun wen* 論文)	1
14. Music (*Yinyue* 音樂)	6
15. Passion (*Qing* 情)	4
SHI	
1. Supplying Lost Poems (*Bu wangshi* 補亡詩)	6
2. Recounting Virtue (*Shu de* 述德)	2
3. Exhortation and Encouragement (*Quan li* 勸勵)	2
4. Poems of Presentation (*Xian shi* 獻詩)	3
5. Lord's Feast (*Gong yan* 公讌)	14
6. Farewell Banquet (*Zu jian* 祖餞)	8
7. Recitations on History (*Yong shi* 詠史)	21
8. One of One Hundred (*Bai yi* 百一)	1
9. Wandering in Transcendency (*Youxian* 遊仙)	8
10. Seeking the Recluse (*Zhao yin* 招隱)	3
11. Contra Seeking the Recluse (*Fan zhao yin* 反招隱)	1
12. Sightseeing (*Youlan* 游覽)	23
13. Singing One's Feelings (*Yonghuai* 詠懷)	19
14. Sorrowful Laments (*Aishang* 哀傷)	12
15. Presentation and Reply (*Zengda* 贈答)	72
16. Travel (*Xinglü* 行旅)	36
17. Military Campaigns (*Jun rong* 軍戎)	5
18. Suburban and Temple Sacrifices (*Jiaomiao* 郊廟)	2
19. Folk Songs (*Yuefu* 樂府)	40
20. Funeral Songs (*Wange* 挽歌)	5
21. Miscellaneous Songs (*Zage* 雜歌)	4
22. Miscellaneous Poems (*Zashi* 雜詩)	93
23. Miscellaneous Imitations (*Za ni* 雜擬)	63

It is not surprising that Xiao Tong should devote so much space to the *fu*, for it was the most important poetic genre of the Han dynasty, and along with the *shi* it continued to be the dominant literary form up to Xiao Tong's time. The fifty-five *fu* contained in the *Wen xuan* are a remarkably representative selection of major works. The selection encompasses almost the entire range of *fu* composition, and includes such masterpieces as Sima Xiangru's "Imperial Park," Yang Xiang's "Sweet Springs Palace," "Plume Hunt," and "Tall Poplars Palace" (chapters 7–8), Ban Gu's "Two Capitals" (chapter 1), Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78–139) "Western Metropolis" and "Eastern Metropolis" (chapters 2–5), and Zuo Si's "Three Capitals" (chapters 4–6). These works are among the longest in the *Wen xuan*, and also are considered among the most difficult poems ever written in Chinese. Sima Xiangru's *fu*, written at times in virtually untranslatable language, describe the hunting parks and hunting excursions of Han nobles and the emperor. They are the immediate antecedent of Yang Xiong's *fu* on the same subject. Although Yang Xiong and Sima Xiangru both use their *fu* subtly to remind the emperor that extravagant spectacles of this kind are unworthy of a sage ruler, their didactic intent is obscured by the seemingly laudatory portrayal of imperial might and virtue that occupies most of the piece. Yang Xiong concluded that the epideictic rhapsody, which emphasized florid verbal display and ornamental rhetoric, was an ineffective means of moral suasion, and he ceased writing *fu* that relied on indirect criticism and ambages to express the moral message.[166] Aware of Yang Xiong's criticism of the *fu*, Ban Gu, in his "Two Capitals," juxtaposes the ostentation of the Former Han capital of Chang'an with the moderation of the Later Han capital of Luoyang. He attempted to bestow upon the genre a eulogistic function, which Ban believed to be consistent with the poetic principles of the *Classic of Songs*. Zhang Heng, who must have been dissatisfied with Ban Gu's treatment of the subject, wrote two much longer rhapsodies on the Han capitals. In his treatment of Chang'an, Zhang pokes fun at the Former Han emperor's obsession with material comfort, his futile efforts to discover the "secret of immortality," and his infatuation with pretty young consorts. In his Luoyang rhapsody, Zhang describes in detail many of the important Eastern Han rituals, that were either omitted or only casually mentioned in Ban Gu's *fu*. Zuo Si's "Three Capitals," which is the longest *fu* in the *Wen xuan*, is an attempt to write a completely "factual" and "realistic" account of the capitals of the Three States of Shu 蜀, Wu 吳 and Wei 魏.[167] A protagonist for each of the three regions expounds at great length on the glories and merits of his metropolis, with Wei in the end being acknowledged as the city without peer.

Xiao Tong probably included these pieces principally because they were classics even in his own time, admired for the information they con-

tained as well as their grand style. To his credit, he did not confine his selection to masterworks by major writers only, and thus one finds in the *Wen xuan* a rich medley of *fu* written by a wide variety of poets. Because the *fu* often pretends to make an exhaustive, comprehensive definition of its subject, the *fu* selection can be considered a loosely organized compendium of information about a multiplicity of topics. Many of the categories in fact are identical to those used in later compendia such as the *Yiwen leiju*. Whether or not Xiao Tong intended his compilation as a compendium, in effect what he has done is to preserve model specimens illustrative of a given topic or theme. For example, the many *yongwu* pieces in the categories such as "Birds and Animals," "Natural Phenomena," and "Music" catalogue attributes and record lore. The pseudo-Song Yu's "Wind" describes wind from two points of view, that of the ruler and that of the common people. Pan Yue's "Autumn Inspirations" enumerates the various melancholy feelings associated with autumn. Xie Huilian's 謝惠連 (407 or 397–433) "Snow" and Xie Zhuang's 謝莊 (421–466) "Moon" use the personae of famous poets of the past to rhapsodize on the manifold qualities of snow and the moon. The *yongwu* pieces on birds and animals include Mi Heng's 禰衡 (173–198) story of a captive parrot ("Parrot"), Zhang Hua's 張華 (232–300) Taoist-inspired poem about the tiny wren, who is able to avoid capture ("Wren"), Yan Yanzhi's panegyrical treatment of a dappled horse ("Red-and-White Horse"), and Bao Zhao's similar piece on a troupe of performing cranes ("Dancing Cranes").

In spite of Xiao Tong's indifference to music, this category is one of the largest in the *fu* section. It contains the at times turgid descriptions of the panpipes and flute by Wang Bao 王褒 (fl. 58 B.C.) and Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166) ("Panpipes" and "Long Flute" in chapter 17), Xi Kang's 嵇康 (223–262) celebrated poem on the ancient Chinese zither ("Zither," chapter 18), and a short, charming piece on the *sheng* 笙 by Pan Yue ("Mouth Organ," chapter 18). A more general treatment of music occurs in Fu Yi's 傅毅 (?–ca. 90) "Dance," while Chenggong Sui's 成公綏 (231–273) "Whistling" is a discourse on a particular type of Taoist breathing exercise.

Written in an even more grandiose and elegant style, perhaps to match their subjects, are the *fu* on famous palaces and places. Yang Xiong's "Sweet Springs Palace" (chapter 7) contains a hyperbolic and exaggerated description of an important sacrificial complex located north of Chang'an. Both Wang Yanshou's 王延壽 (ca. 124–ca. 148) "Vast Hall of Numinous Light in Lu" and He Yan's 何晏 (190–249) "Hall of Great Blessings" (chapter 11) are especially noted for their attention to architectural detail. Great waterways are powerfully portrayed in Mu Hua's 木華 (fl. ca. 290) "The Sea" and Guo Pu's "The Jiang," which is a marvelous repository of lore about the great Yangzi River.

In addition to the pieces that are basically static descriptions, there are also a number of *fu* recounting journeys and excursions. Sima Xiangru's and Yang Xiong's *fu* report on the emperor's visit to the hunting park; Pan Yue's 潘岳 (247–300) "Sacred Field" (chapter 7) is an account of the ritual plowing of the field that supplied the emperor's sacrificial grain, and Yang Xiong's "Sweet Springs Palace" tells of an imperial visit to a sacrificial site. There are more personal travel narratives, such as Bao Zhao's piece about his visit to a ruin ("Weed-covered City," chapter 11), Wang Can's 王粲 (177–217) ascent to a high viewpoint ("Climbing a Tower," chapter 11), and the accounts of tours through historical sites by Ban Biao 班彪 (3–54), his daughter Ban Zhao 班昭 (ca. 49–ca. 120), and Pan Yue ("Northward Journey," "Eastward Journey," and "Westward Journey," chapters 9–10). Several of the journeys involve imaginary celestial wanderings (Zhang Heng's "Contemplating the Cosmos," chapter 15), a dream spirit voyage (Ban Gu's "Communicating with the Hidden," chapter 14), or even a mystical ascent of a sacred peak, as in Sun Chuo's 孫綽 (fl. 330–365) "Wandering on Mt. Tiantai" (chapter 11).

One large category titled "Sorrowful Laments" (chapter 16) contains a variety of pieces such as the plaint of a palace lady neglected by her lord (Sima Xiangru's "Tall Gate Palace"), lamentations over the death of friends (Xiang Xiu's 向秀 [ca. 221–ca. 300] "Recalling the Past," Lu Ji's "Sighing for the Departed," and Pan Yue's "Remembering the Past"), the sorrows of a woman whose husband had just died (Pan Yue's "The Widow"), and manifold feelings associated with frustration and parting (Jiang Yan's 江淹 [444–505] "Resentment" and "Separation"). The category titled "Passions" (chapter 19) includes the mildly erotic *fu* attributed to the pseudo-Song Yu ("Gaotang," "The Goddess," and "Deng Tuzi the Lecher") as well as Cao Zhi's 曹植 (192–232) famous poem on Fufei 宓妃, the goddess of the Luo River ("The Luo Goddess").

Although most of the *fu* are rather impersonal, in the section called *zhi* 志, which one may roughly translate as "Aspirations and Feelings," the poet explores questions that come directly from his own experience of life and expresses his personal aims and sentiments. In these pieces, the poet uses the *fu* as a vehicle to resolve a dilemma with which he is faced at a particularly disruptive stage of his life. The question of the choice between service to the state and the eremitic life figures prominently in virtually all of these rhapsodies. For example, Ban Gu's "Communicating with the Hidden" and Zhang Heng's "Contemplating the Cosmos" examine the possibility of escape from the world and conclude that it is better to persevere even though confronted by a hostile fate and environment. Zhang Heng's "Returning to the Fields" and Pan Yue's "Dwelling in Retire-

ment," on the other hand, celebrate the delights of leaving the turmoil of the court and returning to the country to live.

Several of the *fu* are in the form of verse essays that elaborate on a single idea or present a series of ideas about a single subject. A good example of the former is Jia Yi's 賈誼 (ca. 200–168 B.C.) "Owl," that in spite of the title, is not a *yongwu* piece about an owl, but a philosophical essay made up of extensive quotations from the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, all of which illustrate the common Taoist idea that life and death are part of the same process of transformation, and that life is nothing to cling to and death is nothing to fear. Lu Ji's "Rhapsody on Literature" is similar to "Owl" in its philosophizing about various aspects of literary creativity.

Although the *fu* in the *Wen xuan* represent a wide range of styles, there is a decided emphasis on the epideictic rhapsody that was the norm in the Han dynasty. In works such as Sima Xiangru's "Imperial Park," Yang Xiong's "Sweet Springs Palace," Ban Gu's "Two Capitals," and Zhang Heng's "Two Metropolises," the poets make extensive use of catalogues, difficult and rare graphs, repetition of synonyms, hyperbole, parallelism, and antithesis, all in an attempt to overwhelm the reader with a display of verbal virtuosity. This style continued to be used after the Han dynasty, and the *Wen xuan* selections from the post-Han era include a number of pieces that are as florid and elaborate as the Han examples. Zuo Si's "Three Capitals," in spite of its attempts at "realism," is replete with recondite allusions and recherché expressions. One of the most learned and difficult *fu* is Guo Pu's "The Jiang," that rivals Sima Xiangru's "Imperial Park" in lexical abstruseness.

In contrast to the grand, epideictic pieces, the *Wen xuan* also contains many *fu* that, if not written in a more straightforward manner, are at least less lexically taxing. These poems are mostly of a more personal, "lyrical" nature, such as Ban Biao's "Northward Journey," Ban Zhao's "Eastward Journey," Zhang Heng's "Returning to the Fields," Wang Can's "Climbing a Tower," and Pan Yue's "Autumn Inspirations." They tend to eschew difficult language, and virtually the only ornament they allow themselves is allusion. Most of the allusions, however, are relatively common.

Similar in style are some of the *yongwu* pieces, especially those such as Mi Heng's "Parrot," Zhang Hua's "Wren," Xie Huilian's "Snow," and Xie Zhuang's "Moon." Only in the more descriptive passages and in the *yongwu* compositions on musical instruments does one find the elaborate Han epideictic style. For example, portions of Wang Bao's "Panpipes" and Ma Rong's "Long Flute" are full of obscure descriptive binomes that are impossible to define precisely. There are also many pieces that, though written in a relatively plain diction, introduce complexity on the structural

level. Thus, Mi Heng's "Parrot" is not simply a poem describing a parrot, but "is the author's allegorical plea to be freed from his own captivity and allowed to return to the North."[168] Likewise, Zhang Hua's "Wren" is a Taoist allegory illustrating the advantages of "smallness and insignificance."[169] One of the most structurally complex pieces is Xie Huilian's "Snow," in which the snow is described from three (or possibly four) points of view.[170]

Although the *fu* corpus occupies a large portion of the *Wen xuan*, scholars have faulted it for the exclusion of purportedly significant works, whose omission from the anthology represents a serious lapse in Xiao Tong's judgment. For example, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101), who was one of Xiao Tong's most vociferous critics, complains about Xiao's failure to include Tao Qian's "Stilling the Passions," which Xiao had called a "slight flaw in a white jade disc,"[171] presumably for its prurient quality. Su notes that Tao's *fu* is no more "licentious" than the pseudo-Song Yu rhapsodies, which Xiao Tong did include.[172] Although the pseudo-Song Yu pieces are indeed tinged with eroticism, one must offer in the crown prince's defense the argument that, regardless of modern views on the subject, in Xiao Tong's time Song Yu was considered one of the inventors of the *fu* form, and for that reason alone his works deserve inclusion in the *Wen xuan*.[173] In addition, rhapsodies such as "The Gaotang Terrace" and even "Deng Tuzi the Lecher" have an ostensible didactic function (in the form of the moralistic ending), which a high-minded critic might consider excuse for any "lasciviousness" the poems might have.[174]

Xiao Tong, however, did not apply the criterion of "historical importance" in any consistent way in his *fu* selection. For example, he does not include any of the so-called *fu* attributed to the pre-Qin philosopher, Xunzi, whose rhymed riddles on ritual, wisdom, clouds, silkworms, and needles are the prototypes for the *yongwu* rhapsody.[175] The fact that they are preserved in a philosophical text, from which Xiao Tong refused to select, might explain their exclusion from the *Wen xuan*. One cannot, however, so easily explain the omission of other historically important pieces. Of the numerous examples one could cite, the most conspicuous omissions might be two rhapsodies on cities that antedate Ban Gu's "Two Capitals,"[176] one travel narrative that may have inspired Ban Biao's "Northward Journey,"[177] and at least one piece that is an antecedent to Ban Gu's "Communicating with the Hidden" and Zhang Heng's "Contemplating the Cosmos."[178] One might also argue that Cai Yong's 蔡邕 (133–192) "Recounting a Journey" ("Shu xing fu" 述行賦),[179] a long and interesting travelogue laced with sardonic commentary about the abuses of eunuchs, is every bit as worthy as Pan Yue's at times tedious "Westward Journey," which consumes an entire *juan* in the *fu* section. Less easy to justify on

literary merit, but important historically as the earliest examples of the *yongwu* rhapsody after Xunzi, are Ban Zhao's "Ostrich" ("Daque fu" 大雀賦), "Cicada" ("Chan fu" 蟬賦), and "Needle and Thread" ("Zhen lü fu" 鍼縷賦).[180] Another female poet who probably deserves inclusion is Emperor Cheng's 成 consort, Ban the Favored Beauty (Ban *Jieyu* 班倢伃 (ca. 48–ca. 6 B.C.).[181]

Among Six Dynasties *fu* writers, Xiao favors the works of Lu Ji, Pan Yue, Bao Zhao, and Jiang Yan. One reason for including so many of Pan Yue's *fu*, whose eight-piece corpus is the largest in the *Wen xuan*, is that he wrote on a wide variety of subjects that fit neatly into Xiao Tong's categories. One might, however, question the complete exclusion of writers like Lu Yun 陸雲 (262–303), Xie Lingyun, and Shen Yue, whose writings in other genres do appear in the anthology. All of them wrote excellent rhapsodies on a common Six-Dynasties topic, the joys of life in the mountains and countryside.[182]

It is rather easy to fault an anthologist for failing to include this or that piece, and it would be possible to draw up a long list of one's favorite rhapsodies that Xiao Tong omitted from the *Wen xuan*. However, if one considers how long most rhapsodies are, one quickly realizes that it would be impractical to preserve every "important" work in a general anthology. Thus, on balance, the *Wen xuan* offers an astonishingly good selection of *fu* masterpieces. Even later *fu* anthologies such as Zhu Yao's 祝堯 (*jin shi* 1318) *Gufu bianti* 古賦辯體 (Analyzing the Style of the Ancient Rhapsody) follow it rather closely.[183] The most serious defect of Xiao Tong's treatment of the *fu* does not lie in the selection but in the editing. Scholars have especially objected to his handling of the "prefaces" that introduce many of the pieces. In the case of the Song Yu rhapsodies, for example, what Xiao Tong labels a preface is actually part of the main text of the poem.[184] In other cases, Xiao Tong fails to distinguish between an author's preface and an "introduction" that is clearly not from the author's hand, but taken from a history or similar source. For example, the "preface" that introduces Jia Yi's "Owl" is actually extracted from Jia Yi's biography in the *Han shu*.[185] Similarly, the prefaces to Yang Xiong's "Sweet Springs Palace," "Plume Hunt," and "Tall Poplars Lodge" are drawn from his *Han shu* biography.[186] The preface to Sima Xiangru's "Tall Gate Palace" presents a special problem, for anachronisms in the text have led to suspicions that the entire piece is a forgery.[187] These lapses are not major and do not detract substantially from his presentation of the texts themselves, which except for a few interpolated lines, is of the highest quality.[188]

The scope of the *fu* selection appears even wider if one adds to it the pieces in the belles-lettres categories of Elegy and Sevens which, though placed in different generic groups, are virtually indistinguishable from

many of the works in the *fu* section.[189] The Elegy contains a selection of important works from the *Chuci*, most of which are the poems traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan. They include the famous poem of self-commiseration, "Encountering Sorrow"; six of the shamanistic "Nine Songs"; "Crossing the Jiang," that purportedly describes Qu Yuan's exile travels; "Divining a Home," in which a diviner advises Qu Yuan to maintain his resolve; and "The Fisherman," in which a recluse fisherman ridicules Qu Yuan's uncompromising posture. Credited to Qu Yuan's "disciple" Song Yu are five sections of the "Nine Arguments," a virtuoso portrayal of melancholy, and "Summoning the Soul," a series of lavishly described scenes intended to "summon back" the wandering soul of a sick or deceased person. The final work is "Summoning the Hermit," attributed to the Han noble, Liu An 劉安 (179–122 B.C.).[190] This poem catalogues the malevolent aspects of wild nature in an attempt to lure a recluse prince from his mountain lair.

In spite of the omission of several important Qu Yuan poems,[191] the *Chuci* elegies do provide good examples of the prototypes of several important later *fu* subgenres. "Encountering Sorrow" is the model for the "*fu* of frustration,"[192] in which the scholar-official expresses his resentment and anger against a benighted ruler who fails to recognize his worth. Rhapsodies such as Ban Gu's "Communicating with the Hidden" and Zhang Heng's "Contemplating the Cosmos" are essentially elaborations on this theme. "Summoning the Soul" is the immediate antecedent to the first of the Sevens poems, the "Seven Stimuli" by Mei Cheng (or alternately Mei Sheng) 枚乘 (?–140 B.C.). The name "Sevens" refers to the seven enticements presented by a court visitor to an ailing prince in order to rouse him from his sickbed. Mei Cheng's work inspired numerous similar seven-part poems, all of which used "Seven" in the title.[193] These pieces are written in a prolix, ornamental *fu* style, and usually use the same enticements (e.g., food, hunting, pretty women, music, gardens, and palaces), even though the person to whom they are offered varies from piece to piece. The other two Sevens poems in the *Wen xuan*, Cao Zhi's "Seven Communications" and Zhang Xie's 張協 (?–307) "Seven Commands," both offer a series of stimuli to a recluse in an attempt to entice him from his wilderness hermitage to take a position at court.

In addition to the Elegy and Sevens, the *Wen xuan* has a third genre, the Hypothetical Discourse (chapter 45), that has close affinities to the *fu*.[194] These pieces have the same dialogue framework, alternation between prose and verse, and extensive repetition of synonyms that are typical of most rhapsodies. The prototype of the form is Dongfang Shuo's "Reponse to a Guest's Objections," whose protagonist argues that since the creation of the empire, the worth of the talented man is no longer recognized or

appreciated, and thus it is better and safer for him to withdraw until his services are again required. Both Yang Xiong ("Dissolving Ridicule") and Ban Gu ("Reponse to a Guest's Jest") make similar arguments in their imitations of Dongfang Shuo's piece. Yang's composition attempts to justify his writing of the abstruse philosophical treatise, the *Taixuan* 太玄 (Great Mystery), in spite of the fact that it has not brought him promotion or recognition at court. Ban Gu's essay is a similar self-justification of his alleged failure as an official.

The largest generic category in the *Wen xuan*, at least in terms of number, is *shi* (Lyric Poetry). Although the 443-poem selection includes several different poetic types, including the "Chu Song,"[195] the four-syllable *Classic of Songs* pattern,[196] and a few seven-syllable pieces,[197] the majority of the poems is in five-syllable form. Five-syllable verse first appeared in the Han period, perhaps as a development from the popular ballads and folk songs,[198] and it eventually became the dominant form of *shi* poetry in the Wei-Jin era. Xiao Tong selects as the earliest examples of this form the poems attributed to Li Ling 李陵 (?–74 B.C.) and Su Wu 蘇武 (ca. 143 B.C.–60 B.C.), who lived in Central Asia for approximately two decades as prisoners of the Xiongnu 匈奴. In this respect, Xiao seems to follow Zhong Rong, who refers to Li Ling as the "first to set forth the category of the five-syllable poem."[199] However, the authenticity of the Li Ling/Su Wu poems was a debated question, even in the North-South Dynasties period.[200] Su Shi castigated Xiao Tong for including "spurious" poems in his anthology.[201] Although most modern scholars have accepted Su Shi's judgment,[202] it is probable that Xiao Tong's view was typical of the scholars of his time.[203] The same may be said of the "Song of Resentment" (chapter 27) attributed to Ban the Favored Beauty.[204]

Although Xiao Tong was willing to accept the Li Ling/Su Wu poems as genuine, he apparently had reservations about the group of nineteen five-syllable "Ancient Poems," which he treats as anonymous compositions. He thus differs from his contemporary anthologist Xu Ling, who attributes eight of the poems to the early Han writer Mei Cheng.[205] A slightly different view is offered by Liu Xie, who mentions, without giving his own judgment of the matter, that "some scholars" have attributed the "Ancient Poems" to Mei Cheng. He then adds that one of the pieces (no. 8 of Xiao Tong's order) has been attributed to Fu Yi of the Later Han dynasty. He thus concludes that the "Ancient Poems" are works that come from both Han periods, and thus by implication not all of them could be by Mei Cheng.[206] The consensus of modern scholarship in fact is that Mei Cheng could not have written any of these poems, and Xiao Tong was correct in assigning them to the anonymous category.[207]

Although the "Ancient Poems" are anonymous, they are not folk

songs, but rather poems by literati who were familiar with the popular song tradition known as *yuefu* 樂府. The term *yuefu* literally means "Music Repository," the name of the government bureau in charge of collecting, arranging, and composing music and lyrics for state ceremonies and court entertainment.[208] The name *yuefu*, then, was applied to both ceremonial pieces and folk ballads as well as pieces written in imitation of folk ballads.[209] The *Wen xuan* contains three anonymous *yuefu* songs (chapter 27) that are assumed to be from the Han period.[210] However, the first of these, "Watering My Horse at a Great Wall Grotto," Xu Ling attributes to a known poet, Cai Yong.[211] The second poem, "Song of Sorrow," is virtually identical to a *yuefu* Xu Ling assigns to Cao Rui 曹叡 (204–239), Emperor Ming 明 of the Wei dynasty.[212]

Fortunately, there is no serious doubt about the authenticity of the other *shi* pieces in the *Wen xuan*. As one would expect, the selection favors the Wei–Liang period when five-syllable verse finally achieved maturity in the hands of poets like Cao Zhi, Wang Can, and Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263). Cao, who was the third son of the founder of the Wei dynasty, has a total of twenty-four poems in the *Wen xuan*. All but two of these are in five-syllable lines. They include occasional pieces written for a banquet ("My Lord's Feast," chapter 20) or to bid farewell to friends who are about to depart on a long journey ("Sending off the Yings," chapter 20); a number of "poems of presentation" sent to associates and relatives (chapter 24), some of which express sorrow at the absence of a friend or frustration at the inability to be of service to the state; and several *yuefu* (in chapter 27) drawing upon folk ballad themes and techniques to describe a feast ("The *Konghou* Song"), a beautiful lady ("The Pretty Girl"), a stalwart warrior ("The White Steed"), or the cavalier life of young Luoyang aristocrats ("The Famous Capital"). Among his untitled poems ("Miscellaneous Poems, chapter 29), one finds a mélange of pieces expressing the nostalgic longing of a lonely traveler, the sorrows of a forsaken wife awaiting the return of her wandering husband,[213] and the "heroic words" (*kangkai yan* 慷慨言)[214] of a loyal and devoted official on a military expedition.

The verse of Wang Can, who was a member of the Cao family entourage, resembles that of Cao Zhi. Both men have poems on the three famous retainers who loyally consented to be buried with their lord, Duke Mu 穆 of Qin, upon his death in 621 B.C.[215] Wang's poems, like Cao Zhi's, also express the nostalgic longing of the scholar, forced by the ravages of war to wander far from home (notably his two "Seven Laments" in chapter 23). Wang has a series of five encomiastic poems celebrating the martial feats of Cao Cao his patron,[216] as well as a *pièce d'occasion*, "My Lord's Feast" (chapter 23), perhaps written in honor of Cao Cao.[217]

Ruan Ji's poems consist of seventeen of his eighty-two "Poems Singing

My Feelings."[218] This title, which is original with Ruan Ji, is also the name of one of the subcategories of *shi* poetry in the *Wen xuan*. This group of poems does not form a cycle, but is simply a collection of poems written over a long period of time. Most of them are filled with bitterness and resentment directed against the arrogance and corruption of the political and social elite of his time. However, much of Ruan Ji's social and political comment is cleverly hidden behind allusion and obliquity and it is difficult, even impossible at times, to discover the exact topical reference of his satire. A little over a century after his death, the poet Yan Yanzhi remarked, "Even though the purpose of his poetry rests with satire, his writing is full of concealment and evasion, and many ages later it becomes difficult to fathom his real feelings."[219] The tenor of Ruan's poems is the ephemerality of love (nos. 2, 4), life (nos. 3, 5), wealth, honor, and fame (nos. 5, 11); the perils and folly of political involvement (nos. 6, 9, 14); anxiety over the rapid passage of time (nos. 10, 13;) regret over a wasted youth (no. 8); affirmation of resolve in the face of adversity (no. 12); loneliness and "midnight anguish" (nos. 1, 13, 15);[220] and the dissolute behavior of the nobility (nos. 16, 17).

In addition to these subjects, several of his pieces (see especially nos. 5, 11, and 16) touch on the theme of *youxian* 遊仙 or "roaming into transcendency."[221] This subject was well-established in the *shi* of Cao Zhi, although strangely Xiao Tong did not choose to include any of Cao's *youxian* poems in the *Wen xuan*, even though he had a category for them.[222] The *youxian* section contains the poems of two Jin dynasty poets, He Shao 何劭 (ca. 236–301) and Guo Pu. These poems often portray the mystical journey of a Taoist master into the supernal haunts of the immortals. They also draw heavily upon the terminology of alchemy and allude frequently to breathing exercises and elixirs that confer long life. In most poems of this type, however, the poet uses the journey through space on a quest for immortality simply as a means of representing his desire to avoid worldly entanglements. Poets such as Guo Pu, who has seven of his series of fourteen "Roaming into Transcendency Poems" in the *Wen xuan*, do not write primarily about a "quest for immortality," but rather about their discontent with conventional society and their desire to escape from it.[223]

In this respect, the *youxian* poems are similar to the subgenre that follows them in the *Wen xuan*, *zhaoyin* 招隱 or "Seeking the Recluse" (chapter 22).[224] These poems for the most part present eremitism as a preferable alternative to the conventional ideal of service to the state. In addition, many of the poems introduce nature as a refuge from the turmoil of civilized society. This theme was especially common in Jin dynasty poetry, and most of the major poets of this period wrote on the subject.[225]

Xiao Tong, however, chose to represent the *zhaoyin* theme with ex-

amples from only two poets, Lu Ji and Zuo Si. Lu and Zuo, along with Pan Yue, were among the most admired Western Jin poets in Xiao Tong's time.[226] They were all versatile writers. Zuo Si is best known for his poems on historical themes ("Yong shi" 詠史), eight of which are included in chapter 21. In these poems through subtle use of historical allusion Zuo criticizes his society. The selection from Pan Yue includes his famous three-part poem lamenting the death of his wife ("Grieving for the Deceased," chapter 23), an occasional poem written for an outing at Shi Chong's 石崇 (249–300) Golden Valley (Jingu 金谷) estate ("Written for the Golden Valley Gathering," chapter 20), and four poems in the "Travel" section ("Written at Heyang Prefecture" and "Written at Huai Prefecture") in which the speaker, who is an official stationed in a remote area, looks out from a high vantage point over the distance that separates him from his home and expresses a desire to perform his official duties well.

If the size of his *Wen xuan* corpus means anything, Lu Ji was one of Xiao Tong's favorite poets. His fifty-two poems make up the largest *shi* selection in the anthology. In addition to his "Seeking the Recluse" poem, he has a large number of poems in the "Presentation and Response" category. The prevailing subject of these poems along with several poems in other categories ("Going to Luo," "Written on the Road to Luo," chapter 26) is separation. The persona is sad either because he must bid farewell to a good friend who is about to depart on a long journey, or he himself is traveling far away and feels nostalgic for home and friends.[227]

The majority of Lu's poems are imitations of earlier poems. They include the twelve imitations of the "Ancient Poems" in the "Miscellaneous Imitations" category (chapter 30) and a substantial portion of his seventeen *yuefu* (chapter 28).[228] Xiao Tong in fact seems to place a high value on imitative verse. The "Miscellaneous Imitations" contains a total of sixty-three poems, making it one of the largest sections of *shi* poetry. In addition, as in the case of Lu Ji, many of the *yuefu* are imitations of earlier *yuefu*. Thus, the eighteen poems by Bao Zhao contain eight *yuefu* (chapter 28), all of which are designated as "imitations" (*dai* 代, literally 'in place of,' 'after') in Bao's collected works,[229] three imitations of the "Ancient Poems," one poem emulating the style of the Jian'an writer Liu Zhen 劉楨 (ca. 270–217), and one piece modeled after a *yuefu* topic once used by Lu Ji.[230] Xiao Tong, however, did not include any examples of Bao's best known *yuefu* series, the eighteen poems "Imitating 'The Hardships of Travel'" ("Ni Xinglu nan" 擬行路難).[231] He instead seems to prefer Bao's poems on martial themes, and he includes poems on such subjects as frontier life ("The Song of Bitter Heat"), the aged warrior reflecting upon his youthful border campaigns ("Songs of Dongwu" and "Departing from the North Gate of Ji"), a fugitive knight ("Playground of the Brotherhood of

Young Rowdies"), and a former civilian officer who late in life joins the army ("Imitating the Ancient Poems," no. 3).

Also included in the "Miscellaneous Imitations" are Xie Lingyun's eight poems titled "Imitating the Poems of the Wei Crown Prince's Gathering in Ye" and Jiang Yan's thirty "Poems in Miscellaneous Styles." The latter series, which constitutes all but two of Jiang Yan's poems collected in the *Wen xuan*, contains pieces modeled after the style of various Han through Song dynasty poets. Almost every poet who occupies a prominent place in the *Wen xuan* is represented in Jiang's imitations.[232] Xie Lingyun's poems are modeled after the pieces written at the celebrated banquets given by Cao Pi when he was Crown Prince of Wei. In each of the poems, Xie assumes the persona of one of the participants, who included the members of the salon known as the "Seven Masters of Jian'an."

These imitation pieces, however, represent a small portion of Xie's verse in the *Wen xuan*, which amounts to forty poems.[233] Most of his poems are in the "Sightseeing" and "Travel" categories (chapters 22 and 26), and as to be expected from the leading landscape poet of his time, almost all of them are nature poems in which he tells of scaling steep cragged peaks, wading through roaring mountain torrents, sailing across windswept lakes, and strolling through cool pine forests. Xie was one of the most admired and imitated poets of the Qi-Liang era, and it is not surprising that Xiao Tong devoted so much space to his verse.[234] There is, however, no evidence that Xiao was the "leader" of a Xie Lingyun school.[235]

Xiao did, however, include a number of pieces by poets who wrote landscape verse in the Xie Lingyun style. The *Wen xuan* contains eleven poems by the "Upper Rank" Jin poet Zhang Xie, whose highly descriptive style Zhong Rong deemed similar to that of Xie Lingyun.[236] Many of Zhang's poems, which focus on the stark and even perilous aspects of nature, seem to have some of the same terror of the landscape that occasionally appears in Xie's own poetry.[237] Poets with a smaller number of poems, but who are mainly known as landscape poets, include Xie Hun 謝混 (?–412) and Yin Zhongwen 殷仲文 (?–407).[238] In the twenty-one-poem corpus of Yan Yanzhi, whose name was often paired with Xie Lingyun's in Xiao Tong's time,[239] one finds several pieces, which though not considered "pure landscape poems," do contain many lines that describe natural scenes.[240]

There are, however, significant lacunae in the *Wen xuan*'s selection of landscape verse. It does not, for example, contain any of Bao Zhao's landscape poetry, which was a major part of his poetic production.[241] As we have already seen, the Bao Zhao represented in the *Wen xuan* writes more about the battlefield than "mountains and streams." It is possible that Xiao Tong was merely echoing the judgment of Zhong Rong, who in

enumerating the "most striking works of five-syllable verse," mentions only Bao's poems about "guarding the frontier,"[242]

Somewhat more difficult to explain is the surprisingly small space accorded to another great nature poet, Tao Qian. Xiao Tong includes only eight of Tao's poems, which is a shockingly small number for the greatest Chinese poet after Qu Yuan and before Li Bo and Du Fu.[243] Of these pieces, two ("On First Being Made Adjutant to the Pacifying General, Written While Passing through Qu'e" and "Seventh Moon of the Year *Xinchou*, Having Gone on Leave I Return to Jiangling, Traveling through Tukou at Night," both in chapter 26) are on a common Tao Qian theme, the distaste for official service and the desire to return to "gardens and fields" as soon as possible. The other poems are all excerpted from poem series or cycles: the third of his three "Funeral Songs" (chapter 28); two "Miscellaneous Poems," which are actually poems number five and seven from "Twenty Poems after Drinking Wine"; the first of the seven "Recitations on Impoverished Gentlemen"; the introductory poem to the thirteen-poem series, "Reading the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*"; and poem number seven from his nine "Imitating the Ancient Poems." The "Miscellaneous Poems" and "Reading the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*" express the bucolic contentment of the country farmer-scholar that is so commonly associated with Tao Qian's verse. It is puzzling, however, why Xiao failed to include more of his "field and garden" poems such as "To Secretary Guo" ("He Guo zhubu" 和郭主簿) and his five-poem masterpiece of pastoral verse, "Returning to My Garden and Field Dwelling" ("Gui yuantian ju" 歸園田居).[244]

The small number of Tao Qian poems in the *Wen xuan* is especially perplexing considering that Xiao was an ardent admirer of Tao's verse. He was the first to edit Tao's works, and in his preface to this collection, he lavishly praised him as a writer without peer:

> His writings stand above the crowd. His verbal embellishments (*cicai* 詞采) are exceptionally refined. Untrammeled, resplendent, they alone surpass all manner of writing. Cadenced and rhythmic, crisp and clear, nothing can compare with them.[245]

Xiao also wrote a biography of the poet that is now part of Tao's collection.[246]

How, then, does one account for Xiao's neglect of one his most respected poets? The only explanation I can offer is that Xiao in this case was following contemporary opinion rather than his personal preference. Tao Qian simply was not considered a major poet in this period. Zhong Rong's placing him in the "Middle Rank" is probably a reflection of the less-than-enthusiastic appreciation of Tao's poetry in Qi-Liang times.[247] For ex-

ample, neither Xiao Zixian nor Shen Yue mentions Tao in his discussion of important poets of the Jin and Song periods.[248] Another sixth century editor of Tao's works, Yang Xiuzhi 陽休之 (509–582), although admiring Tao's "exquisite and unusual phrases," claims his "verbal embellishments are not outstanding."[249] In spite of Xiao Tong's laudatory words about Tao's verbal embellishments, perhaps it was the hermit poet's seemingly simple phraseology and lack of "verbal ornament" that did not appeal to the Qi-Liang predilection for the "ornate and gaudy" style. Even the conservative Zhong Rong finds that Tao "hardly has any masterful phrases."[250] However, he does single out lines from Tao's "Imitating the Ancient Poems" and "Reading the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*" as examples of the "elegant and florid, fresh and gaudy" style, which one does not usually associate with a "farmer" poet.[251] That both of these pieces are among those included in the *Wen xuan* suggests that Xiao Tong's selection conformed to the ornamental style that his Liang dynasty contemporaries admired.

A major exemplar of that style is Xie Tiao, whose *Wen xuan* corpus consists of twenty-one poems, second only to Jiang Yan among the Qi-Liang poets. Xie was one of the leading Yongming era poets and is well-known for his *yongwu* pieces, most of which were composed while he was a member of Xiao Ziliang's Western Residence salon.[252] Xiao Tong, however, does not include any of these pieces, but selects mainly from Xie's landscape poems, a good portion of which come from the time he served as governor of Xuancheng.[253] Xie Tiao's landscape in many ways resembles that of his illustrious predecessor, Xie Lingyun, and possibly because of that resemblance, Xiao Tong included such a large number of the younger Xie's poems.[254]

Knowing Xiao Tong's avowed distaste for the "ornate" style,[255] one might not expect the *Wen xuan* to contain so many Yongming era poems; nevertheless, in addition to Xie Tiao, the *shi* section also has thirteen poems by Zhong Rong's bête noire, Shen Yue. However, these pieces, like those of Xie Tiao, consist mainly of landscape poems.[256] Only two are *yongwu* poems, and they are the only *yongwu* poems in the anthology.[257] Xiao seems deliberately to exclude the most "ornate" and "frivolous" specimens of Yongming poetry. For example, the *Wen xuan* has none of the erotic or palace-style poems that are found in the *Yutai xinyong*.[258] Nor does it contain any of the sensuous, erotic songs of the Southern Dynasties *yuefu*, which were probably a formative influence on palace-style verse.[259] One might conclude, therefore, that the *shi* corpus in the *Wen xuan* represents a compromise selection that rejected the extremes of the "frivolous and precious" palace style, but did not completely repudiate all recent, innovative verse. Unfortunately, among Xiao Tong's literary remains there are no remarks

on prosody, and so we do not know whether or not he approved of Shen Yue's prosodic theories. The fact that he selected some of Shen's poems for his anthology may indicate that, whatever his views on tonal regulations, he did not find Shen Yue's verse as repulsive as did Zhong Rong.

Except for the downgrading of Tao Qian and the inclusion of the highly suspect Li Ling/Su Wu poems, the Lyric Poetry selection has not been a controversial one. One cannot, however, say the same for the prose genre portion, which has received much of the criticism leveled against the anthology over the centuries. Most of this criticism has been focused on what some scholars have considered to be omissions of significant works.[260] For example, missing from the Preface section is Wang Xizhi's 王羲之 (321–379; alt. 303–361) "Preface to the Third Day, Third Moon Eupatorium Pavilion Poems" ("San yue san ri Lanting shi xu" 三月三日蘭亭詩序), that is one of the most famous landscape essays in Chinese literature.[261] Although various explanations have been offered to explain the absence of Wang's preface, including Xiao Tong's alleged objection to certain stylistic flaws, the most likely possibility is that a copy of the preface simply was not available in Xiao Tong's time.[262]

The prose selection has also been criticized for inclusion of works of dubious literary merit or authenticity. Among examples of the latter, one might cite Li Ling's "Letter to Su Wu" (chapter 41), the authenticity of which is even less probable than that of the Li Ling/Su Wu poems,[263] and the "Preface to the *Hallowed Documents*" (chapter 45), attributed to Kong Anguo 孔安國 (fl. 126–117 B.C.).[264] Equally questionable is the attribution of the "Preface to the Mao Version of the *Classic of Songs*" to Confucius' disciple Bu Shang 卜商 (507–420 B.C.).[265] These attributions, however, were commonly accepted in Xiao Tong's time, and one would not expect his anthology to depart from the established tradition.

The works that are allegedly unworthy of a distinguished collection of the "purest blossoms" of literature consist mainly of sycophantic panegyrics addressed to powerful persons, urging them to assume honored titles or the throne itself.[266] They are pieces such as Ruan Ji's "Memorandum on Behalf of Zheng Chong, Exhorting the King of Jin" (chapter 40) and Ren Fang's "Command of the Xuande Empress" (chapter 36) urging reputed "usurpers" to accept honors and titles in anticipation of their eventual accession to the throne.[267] One suspects that the objections to such writings were based more on content than style, for they are written in an elegant, graceful prose whose only flaw might be an excessive reliance on allusion.

Xiao Tong seems particularly to favor the writings of Ren Fang, whose nineteen-piece corpus is by far the largest in the *Wen xuan*. During the Qi-Liang period, Ren was known as the prose counterpart of Shen Yue.[268] Like the Song prose writer Fu Liang 傅亮 (374–426), who has four

prose compositions in the *Wen xuan* (two instructions in chapter 36 and two memorials in chapter 38), much of his writing consists of works commissioned by others. The memorials by Fu and Ren are all specimens of compositions written on behalf of high officials or distinguished members of the nobility, and there is little in their *Wen xuan* works that is personal in nature.

One must turn to the Memorials, and especially the Letters, of the Han, Wei, and Jin periods to find a personal expression that almost approaches the lyricism of poetry. Zhuge Liang's 諸葛亮 (181–234) "Memorial on Dispatching the Troops" (chapter 37), along with offering political and military advice to the young ruler of Shu, presents a testament of past devotion and a vow of future fidelity. Cao Zhi's two memorials (chapter 37) are both personal pleas addressed to his brother's successor, Cao Rui. One requests an appointment that will allow him to prove his loyalty to the state, and the other seeks relaxation of the regulations prohibiting contact among "imperial relatives" (i.e., Cao Zhi's brothers and cousins). One of the most moving memorials is Li Mi's 李密 (224–287) "Memorial Expressing My Feelings" (chapter 37), in which Li recounts how filial devotion to his aged grandmother, who raised him after his widowed mother remarried, requires him to refuse an appointment. Declining an appointment is the subject of two other memorials from the same period, Yang Hu's 羊祜 (221–278) "Memorial Declining the Palatine" (chapter 37) and Yu Liang's 庾亮 (289–340) "Memorial Declining the Directorate of Palace Writers" (chapter 38).

The Letters in the *Wen xuan* express a wide range of personal sentiments. The Han examples (chapter 41) include Sima Qian's eloquent defense of his decision to suffer the degrading punishment of castration rather than commit suicude, so that he might continue writing his history ("Letter in Answer to Ren Shaoqing"); Yang Yun's 楊惲 (?–54 B.C.) masterful justification of the eremitic life ("Letter in Answer to Sun Huizong"); and Kong Rong's 孔融 (153–208) urgent plea to Cao Cao to rescue his friend Sheng Xian 盛憲 from the hands of Sun Ce 孫策 (175–200), who was about to murder him ("Letter Discussing Sheng Xiaozhang"). Chapters 40 and 42 consist almost entirely of letters and memorials by Wei period writers who were either members of the imperial family (Emperor Wen of Wei and Cao Zhi) or associated with it (Ruan Yu 阮瑀 [ca. 165–212], Wu Zhi 吳質 [177–230], Po Qin 繁欽 [?–218], and Ying Ju 應璩 [190–252]. Many of these epistles are somewhat informal and discuss pleasant outings, games, music, a precious jade, and above all, literature.[269] Chapter 43 contains Xi Kang's famous letter to Shan Tao 山濤 (205–283), in which he mocks the social conventions of his time, and a letter attributed to Xi's disciple Zhao Zhi 趙至 (ca. 247–283),[270] who

describes in almost poetic language his travels through the harsh terrain of northeast China and Manchuria. Unlike the selection of memorials, the *Wen xuan* has only two letters from the Liang period. The first is Qiu Chi's 丘遲 (464–508) elegant parallel prose epistle to Chen Bozhi 陳伯之 (fl. 505), attempting to convince him to surrender to the Liang. The second is a letter by Liu Jun addressed to the deceased Liu Zhao 劉沼 (ob. ca. 510), who before his death had written a letter expressing his objections to Liu Jun's essay on fate (see chapter 54, "Treatise on Fate").[271]

Two compositions in the Letter category seem out of place: Liu Xin's "Dispatching a Letter Berating the Erudites of the Ministry of Ceremonies," which is a defense of the Old Text versions of the Classics that he championed, and Kong Zhigui's 孔稚珪 (447–501) "Dispatch to North Mountain," a parallel prose "proclamation" addressed to the former hermit, Zhou Yong 周顒 (?–485), whom he accuses of hypocrisy for violating his vow forever to remain in his North Mountain hideaway. Technically, both of these works are examples of the Dispatch (*yiwen* 移文), which is closely related to the Proclamation.[272] The fact that their placement does not follow the usual chronological sequence suggests that the *Wen xuan* originally may have included a Dispatch category, which somehow dropped out of the text.[273]

Related to the Letter and Memorial is the Letter of Submission (chapter 39). All of these works are rhetorical essays addressed to an emperor or a king, and they closely resemble the suasive discourse that Xiao Tong claimed he had excluded from the *Wen xuan*. Although these pieces differ from the *Intrigues of the Warring States* persuasions in not assuming the framework of a speech, nevertheless all but one (Jiang Yan's "Letter of Submission to the King of Jianping") are written by Qin and Han counterparts to the traveling persuader of the Warring States period. Li Si's 李斯 (?–208 B.C.) "Submitting a Letter to the Qin First Emperor" is in fact a plea to the emperor not to expel the itinerant "guest" advisers from other states.[274] Four of the letters are by Zou Yang 鄒陽 (ca. 206–129 B.C.) and Mei Cheng, who have been called the Han "remnants" of the School of Politicians (*Zongheng jia* 縱橫家), a loose appellation for Warring States writers and thinkers who specialized in rhetoric.[275] Three of their compositions attempt to persuade Liu Pi 劉濞, King of Wu 吳 (reg. 195–154 B.C.), to abandon his plans for revolt. The best known of these pieces, however, is Zou Yang's elegant epistle addressed to Liu Wu 劉武, King of Liang 梁 (reg. 168–144 B.C.) defending himself against malicious charges that had resulted in his imprisonment. This letter, written in an embryonic form of parallel prose, was probably the model for Jiang Yan's "letter of submission," which was also a prison epistle making a similar appeal to his patron, Liu Jingsu 劉景素 (ob. 476). Contemporaneous with Zou's and Mei's

works, but addressed to an emperor, is Sima Xiangru's sternly worded letter of submission warning Emperor Wu of the perils of hunting.

Just as Xiao Tong did not completely expel suasory writings from his anthology, he did not eliminate all philosophical discourse. Although he did not select excerpts from the major pre-Qin masters such as Mengzi, Zhuangzi, Xunzi, or Han Feizi, he did devote almost five chapters to the Treatise (*lun*), which includes a variety of expository essays discussing problems of moral and political philosophy. At least two of the treatises, Jia Yi's "Finding Fault with Qin" (chapter 51) and Emperor Wen of Wei's "On Literature" are found in works generally placed under the "[philosophical] masters" rubric.[276] The thinkers represented here have been classified mainly as "Confucian" (*Rujia* 儒家).[277] At least one essay (Xi Kang's "Treatise on Nourishing Life") takes a distinctly Taoist position. There are even two pieces, written in a dialogue framework reminiscent of Warring States persuasion, that one *Wen xuan* authority has labeled writings of the School of Politicians (*Zongheng jia*).[278]

Many of the treatises are similar in content. For example, Jia Yi's "Finding Fault with Qin," Ban Biao's "Treatise on the Mandate of Kings," Cao Jiong's 曹冏 (fl. 243) "Treatise on the Six Eras," and Lu Ji's "Treatise on the Destruction of a State" all explore the reasons for the rise and fall of a kingdom and touch on the basis of dynastic legitimacy. The essays of Li Kang ("Treatise on Cycles and Fate") and Liu Jun ("Treatise on Fate") (chapter 53) both argue that destiny and chance often determine the events of human existence. Other topics include proofs for the possibility of longevity and immortality (Xi Kang's "Treatise on Nourishing Life," chapter 53); the deleterious influence of divertissements such as chess (go) (Wei Zhao's "Treatise on Chess," chapter 52); literature (Emperor Wen of Wei's "'On Literature' from the *Classical Treatises*," chapter 52); a defense of the ancient investiture system (Lu Ji's "Treatise on the Five Rank Feudal Lords," chapter 54); and the capriciousness of personal attachments (Liu Jun's "The Treatise on Severing Relations Expanded," chapter 54).

Although these treatises are expository essays, most of them rely in varying degrees upon parallelism, which is a common feature of the prose pieces in the *Wen xuan*. For example, Li Kang's "Treatise on Cycles and Fate" uses balanced phrasing throughout the entire piece with virtually no interruption of the parallel pattern.

> Order and disorder run in cycles;
> Success and failure rely on fate;
> High position and low depend upon time.
> Therefore:
> As a cycle is about to reach its peak,
> Inevitably there appears a sage and discerning ruler.

With a sage and discerning ruler,
Inevitably there will be loyal and worthy ministers.
As for how they happen to meet:
They do not seek each other out, but come together naturally.
As for how they happen to gain mutual affinity:
Without being introduced, they feel a natural affinity.
As the ruler leads, they are bound to join in;
As the ministers devise plans, he is bound to follow.
Their way and virtue are mysteriously the same;
However things bend and twist, they are always in perfect accord.
Whether in failure or success, he never doubts their intentions;
Calumny and slander cannot sunder their relationship.

[*Wen xuan* 53.7a–b]

This prose style was of course highly esteemed in Xiao Tong's time, and one would expect his anthology to contain model examples of the form. Interestingly enough, parallel prose is not confined to a few genres, but is found throughout the prose section. The most noteworthy specimens include Liu Kun's "Memorial Urging the Accession" (chapter 37), Qiu Chi's "Letter to Chen Bozhi," Kong Zhigui's "Dispatch to North Mountain," Yan Yanzhi's "Offering for Qu Yuan" (chapter 60), and Xie Tiao's "Being Appointed Secretary to the Central Army, Memorandum Bidding Farewell to the King of Sui" (chapter 40). One even finds extended parallelism in works of the early Han period (Zou Yang's "Submitting a Letter from Prison Clarifying Myself," chapter 39) or in the historical appraisals (Shen Yue's "Treatise from the 'Biography of Xie Lingyun' in the *Song History*" chapter 50).

If, however, one were to identify a section of the *Wen xuan* in which the parallel style seems to dominate, that section would undoubtedly be the last five chapters, which contain many of the threnodic genres such as the Dirge, Lament, Epitaph, Grave Memoir, Condolence, and Offering. A large number of these works are from the brush of Pan Yue, Yan Yanzhi, and Ren Fang, who were among the most accomplished masters of the elegiac style in the Southern Dynasties. Being intended to honor the deceased, these pieces are written in an elegant, even ornamental style. Euphonic considerations, at least to the extent of using rhyme and regular meter, are important in some pieces. For example, Pan Yue's "Lamenting the Eternally Departed" (chapter 57), written to mourn his deceased wife, uses the Chu "Song Style." Jia Yi's "Condolence for Qu Yuan" (chapter 60), which is really a *fu*,[279] contains a mixture of "Song" and "*sao*" meter. The only grave memoir, Ren Fang's "Grave Memoir for the Wife of Master Liu" (chapter 59), is made up entirely of rhymed tetrasyllabic lines.

The epitaphs, dirges, and offerings all have prose prefaces followed by

rhymed eulogies for the deceased. The prefaces, and the one "Conduct Description," a long necrology of Xiao Ziliang written by Ren Fang (chapter 60), record details about the person's life. They are the only examples of extended narration in the anthology. Of the five epitaphs, two are by Cai Yong ("Epitaph for Guo Youdao" and "Epitaph for Chen Taiqiu," chapter 58), who is probably China's most admired writer of stone inscriptions.[280] The "Stele for the Dhūta Temple" by Wang Jin 王巾 (or Zuo 左), (ob. 505) is an anomaly in that it was written to commemorate the construction of a temple. The entire piece, including the preface, consists of Buddhist terms balanced against phrases from Taoist or Confucian works, and one scholar has referred to it as "an example of Buddhist parallel prose."[281]

Of the eight dirges, four are by Pan Yue. His dirge written upon the death of his father-in-law Yang Zhao 楊肇 (ob. 275) ("Dirge for Yang Jingzhou," chapter 56) is an elegant, moving tribute to a man whom he obviously admired greatly. An equally affecting piece is Pan's dirge for his good friend, the poet Xiahou Zhan 夏侯湛 (243–291) ("Dirge for the Regular Attendant Xiahou," chapter 57). The dirge selection in fact seems to emphasize elegies to famous men of letters. Cao Zhi's "Dirge for Wang Zhongxuan" (chapter 56) and Yan Yanzhi's "Dirge for Summoned Scholar Tao" (chapter 57) mourn the deaths of two renowned poets, Wang Can and Tao Qian. Included among the "Offerings" is Yan Yanzhi's much praised "Offering for Qu Yuan" (chapter 60). Ostensibly written on behalf of an official stationed in the Miluo River area, this brief lament, like Jia Yi's Qu Yuan condolence, is also an expression of the author's personal frustration and indignation.[282]

Other forms of "panegyrical writing," which are not death laments, occur among the Eulogies (*song*) and Encomia (*zan*) in chapter 47. The distinction between these two genres is not always clear. For example, Yang Xiong's tribute to the Han general Zhao Chongguo 趙充國 (137–52 B.C.) placed in the *song* category ("Eulogy for Zhao Chongguo"), and Xiahou Zhan's similar piece on the Han court wit Dongfang Shuo, assigned to the *zan* section ("Encomium for a Portrait of Dongfang Shuo"), were both written for portraits.[283] Similarly, Lu Ji's series of rhymed eulogies for Liu Bang's thirty-one political and military advisers ("Eulogy for the Meritorious Courtiers of Han Gaozu") is indistinguishable from Yuan Hong's 袁宏 (328–376) tetrasyllabic praise songs written for twenty heroes of the Three States period ("Encomia from the Preface on Famous Courtiers of the Three States"). There are even several pieces that seem to use the medium of praise to convey a moral message to the emperor, much in the fashion of a memorial.[284] One piece that also does not easily fit with the other eulogies is Liu Ling's 劉伶 (ob. post-265) "Eulogy on the Virtues

of Wine," which is a humorous tribute to the thing that this notorious dipsomaniac loved above all else.

The *Wen xuan* also contains other genres, which in contrast to the Eulogy and Encomium, offer blame rather than praise. For example, chapter 40 has three "Accusations," all of which are letters of impeachment detailing the alleged misdeeds of prominent officials. Although there are many early examples of this form, Xiao limited his selection to pieces from his own era.[285] Even more disparaging accusations can be found among the war Proclamations (chapter 44), which contain strongly worded attacks directed against enemy leaders. One of the most vituperative of these pieces is Chen Lin's "Proclamation to Yuzhou, Written on Behalf of Yuan Shao," which severely castigates Cao Cao. Chen Lin's "Proclamation to the Generals and Troops of Wu" is almost as vicious in its denunciations of the Wu general Sun Quan 孫權 (182–252)

More moderate and disciplined is the tone of the official compositions written in the name of an emperor, empress, or noble (Chapters 35–36). Only two of these pieces, the Edicts by Emperor Wu of the Han, are actually credited to the person who issued them. Rather, most of the pieces are works of writers who were commissioned to compose them. Xiao Tong must not have placed a high value on these genres, for each category consists of only a few pieces. Thus, even though there was an abundance of imperial edicts from which to select, the only examples the *Wen xuan* gives are the aforementioned ones by Emperor Wu of the Han. Similarity of subject matter might have determined the selection of some pieces in other related genres. For example, Pan Xu's 潘勖 (ca. 165–215) "Patent of Enfeoffment Authorizing the Nine Bestowals on the Duke of Wei" and Ren Fang's "Command of the Xuande Empress" exhort dynastic founders to accept ennoblement. Both of the Instructions written by Fu Liang (chapter 36) are decrees, one ordering the refurbishment of a temple, and the other urging the restoration of a grave.

The largest number of imperially issued compositions is contained in the category called Examination Questions. These pieces consist of a series of problems to which young men designated as "flourishing talents" (*xiucai* 秀才) were asked to respond. Those whose answers were adjudged superior could receive official appointment. There are two sets of five questions, each written on behalf of Emperor Wu of Qi by Wang Rong, and one set of three questions composed for Emperor Wu of Liang by Ren Fang. The questions cover such topics as agriculture, punishment, currency changes, calendrical reform, abolition of government offices, promotion of personnel, policies for uniting the empire, and the promotion of Confucian teaching. The pieces are written in an elegant style, and make frequent allusions to classical texts, undoubtedly to test the candidate's learning.

An elevated style also occurs among three loosely related genres, the Linked Pearls, Admonition, and Inscription (chapters 55–56), which all share the qualities of brevity, conciseness, and a monitory tone. Although the Linked-Pearls section comprises fifty pieces, it is represented by one author, Lu Ji, whose "Linked Pearls Expanded" contains a series of short aphorisms stipulating the principles of conduct for a ruler and his ministers. The same terse style occurs in the *Wen xuan*'s only admonition, Zhang Hua's "Admonition of a Female Scribe," that uses the persona of the Empress's "lady recorder" (*nü shi* 女史) to warn palace ladies, and especially the Empress, not to abuse their power.[286] Why Xiao Tong selected Zhang Hua's piece is somewhat puzzling, particularly in view of the fact that there were more famous Han examples of the form that he could have chosen.[287]

The selection of the inscriptions is a bit more comprehensive, even though it excludes specimens by the prolific Han inscription writer Li You 李尤 (ca. 55–135).[288] Two of the pieces are monitory inscriptions. Cui Yuan's "Desk Inscription" is a short rhymed composition counseling against intemperance and immoderation. Zhang Zai's 張載 (fl. ca. 290) "Sword-gate Pass Inscription," carved at the narrow gap where the road from Shaanxi enters Sichuan, cautions would-be insurrectionaries that the steep Shu defiles are not impregnable, and they should curb their lust for rebellion.[289] Other inscriptions are more laudatory. Ban Gu's "Inscription for the Ceremonial Mounding at Mt. Yanran" is a tribute to the general Dou Xian's 竇憲 (ob. 92) victory over the Northern Xiongnu.[290] The short six-line inscription in "Song style" meter is preceded by a long preface, part of which is rhymed. The two pieces by Lu Chui celebrate the construction of a new stone gateway marker ("Stone Gateway Marker Inscription") and a new water clock ("Inscription for the New Water Clock").[291] Like Ban Gu's piece, both inscriptions are introduced by long prose prefaces.

In addition to the prefaces that introduce many of the *fu*, inscriptions, and threnodic genres, there are also the works included in the Preface category itself (Chapters 46–47). Some of these pieces are virtually indistinguishable from the essays in the Treatise section, and it is perhaps for this reason that Liu Xie treated the preface in his "Lun shuo" chapter.[292] For example, Lu Ji's "Preface to the 'Rhapsody on the Heroic Man'" is an exposition on the folly of smugness and complacency on the part of a high official, who is in constant danger of losing his position of power and influence, or even his life.[293] Huangfu Mi's 皇甫謐 (215–282) "Preface to the 'Three Capitals Rhapsody,'" which was written as an introduction to Zuo Si's *fu* on the capitals of the Three States, is actually a short treatise on the nature and history of the rhapsody. Du Yu's "Preface to the *Zuo Commentary to the Annals*," in addition to providing a textual history of the

Annals of the state of Lu and Zuo Qiuming's 左丘明 (6th century B.C.) purported commentary to it, offers an elucidation of the five principles Confucius allegedly applied in his "praise and blame" (*bao bian* 褒貶) interpretation of historical events. Even the "Preface to the Mao Version of the *Classic of Songs*" and the "Preface to the *Hallowed Documents*" can be considered short disquisitions on the basic principles essential to a proper interpretation of two of the most important classics.

Representing a distinct contrast to these rather somber, scholarly tracts is Shi Chong's "Preface to the 'Song of Longing to Return,'" which is a short lyrical essay about the joys of retirement in the country. In its celebration of the delights of feasting and singing with friends in a pleasant natural setting, this preface resembles Shi Chong's preface on a Lustration Festival gathering at his Golden Valley estate, which Xiao Tong did not include in the *Wen xuan.*[294] As examples of prefaces on this theme, Xiao Tong chose two pieces by Yan Yanzhi and Wang Rong ("Preface to the Third Day of the Third Moon Winding Waterway Poems").[295] Written in an elegant, parallel prose style, these prefaces are more panegyrical tributes to the emperors who hosted the gatherings than pure landscape essays that focus on the pleasure and beauty of the scene. A similar encomiastic essay is the latest preface Xiao Tong selected, Ren Fang's "Preface to the *Collection of Wang Wenxian.*" This piece was written after the death of Ren Fang's patron Wang Jian 王儉 (452–489), who was one of the most prominent scholars and officials of the Song and Qi dynasties. Ren actually says very little about Wang's literary production and occupies most of the piece with a long laudatory biography detailing Wang's accomplishments as an official.

The principles that determined Xiao Tong's choice of prose works are less apparent than those he applied to his selection of *fu* and *shi*. The prose corpus is much more diverse than the *fu* and *shi* portions of the anthology, and one would be hard pressed to discover a unifying standard that could be applied to all pieces. I have the impression that Xiao's intention was to provide examples of as many forms as possible (with the exception, of course, of the classics, histories, and masters), even if it meant in some cases including works of lesser literary merit. Certain genres such as the Patent of Enfeoffment, Command, Instruction, Note of Presentation, and even the Grave Memoir and Conduct Description, all of which are represented by only one piece, have less appeal than the Letters, Treatises, and Memorials that occupy the largest portion of the prose section. In the case of some genres, such as the Patent of Enfeoffment, a highly specialized form of writing of which not many examples were available, Xiao Tong obviously did not have a large number of quality specimens from which to pick. One could thus perhaps account for the inclusion of so-called "inferior" speci-