

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF THE SCALLOP:
ANTHROPOMORPHIC BIOGRAPHY, ‘PULU,’
AND THE NORTHERN SONG DISCOURSE
ON THINGS

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In the latter half of the eleventh century, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101, *jìnshì* 1057) wrote a biography of a provincial literatus named Jiang Yaozhu 江瑤柱, who was admired by local people but was unable to make a name for himself outside of his hometown. Su describes him as being handsome, talented, and creating precious pearls. As one reads on, it becomes clear that Jiang Yaozhu is not a human being, but rather a scallop.¹ The biography also turns out to be a treatise on the scallop’s biology and cultural history. Su Shi’s description of this handsome scallop-literatus belongs to a controversial genre that I

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1. Su Shi, “Jiang Yaozhu zhuan” 江瑤柱傳, in *Su Shi wenji* 蘇軾文集, ed. Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 2:13.427. “Yaozhu” would be a rather unusual name for a gentleman. Before the Song, the word *yaozhu* (“jade column”) usually referred to the wooden pegs of a “jade zither” (*yuqin* 玉琴), an epithet of the *qin* 琴, a type of string instrument popular among Song literati. Although the image of a “jade column” aptly captures the physical properties of the scallop’s translucent jade-like color and the cylindrical shape of its abductor muscle, this biography seems to be the earliest source, to the author’s knowledge, where *yaozhu* is used as nomenclature for the scallop.

will call “anthropomorphic biography,” consisting of accounts of the lives of objects rather than real historical figures.² An anthropomorphic biography is a double text: a biography of a person’s life and deeds, and a treatise containing specific knowledge of an object. In other words, the characters and their stories in the anthropomorphic biography are fictional constructs, and writers made innovative use of material knowledge in their fabrication of human lives.

This underlying material foundation of anthropomorphic biography shows a pronounced connection with a genre of writings called *pulu* 譜錄 (“manual,” “catalogue,” “treatise”), which proliferated during the latter half of the eleventh century. A *pulu* manual is a sort of object-specific encyclopedia dedicated to collecting, classifying and disseminating material knowledge about various things. Like the anthropomorphic biography, the manual exhibits an unprecedented enthusiasm in making sense of the material world, from describing the minute specificities of biological organisms to tracing the cultural history of objects. Both *pulu* and anthropomorphic biographies were produced and consumed with unprecedented enthusiasm in the eleventh century; the participants of this material discourse were not limited to the literati community (although literati comprised the majority), they ranged from the emperor to commoners.

The Song was a “thingly” world. Su Shi’s scallop-literatus can only make sense as part of an intellectual shift towards the validation of the material world. The mid-eleventh century was an intriguing historical moment when

2. In Chinese anthologies and literary criticism, the anthropomorphic biography is commonly referred to as *jiazhuan* 假傳 (“pseudo-biography”) or, occasionally, *wuzhuan* 物傳 (“biography of things”). Zhang Zhenguó 張振國 identified Xu Shizeng’s 徐師曾 (1517?–1580?) treatise on literary genres, *Wenti mingbian xushuo* 文體明辨序說, as the earliest source of the term *jiazhuan*; see “Zhongguo gudai jiazhuan wenti fazhan shi shulun” 中國古代假傳文體發展史述論, *Huanan shifan daxue xuebao* (*Shehui kexue ban*) 華南師範大學學報 (社會科學版), 2012.2: 109–13. The term *jia* 假 (“fake,” “pseudo-”) emphasizes the mimetic relationship between the anthropomorphic biography and the traditional biographic genre. The subject of the anthropomorphic biography is an entirely fictional construct based on the material attributes of an object, and its historical veracity is also a literary construct, a bricolage of piecemeal anecdotal histories that are pertinent to the material object in question. The literary trope of animate objects, however, has a tradition that precedes the emergence of anthropomorphic biography. The *Zhuangzi* 莊子, for instance, is filled with stories featuring talking animals; the satirical tradition of so-called *paixie* 俳諧 (“parody” or “comedy”) typically personifies animals and inanimate objects. For a history of personified objects in literature, see Zhu Shangshu 祝尙書, “Lun Song ji niren zhizhao” 論宋季擬人制詔, in *Songdai wenxue tantao ji* 宋代文學探討集 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2007), 140–52.

important developments in many different aspects of Song literary culture intersected in the “discourse on things.” In addition to the *pulu* manual and the anthropomorphic biography, this discourse manifested in different literary genres and social practices. The late Yoshikawa Kōjirō observed in Song poetry a new concern with mundane events of the everyday.³ When discussing the changing representation of flowers in classical poetry, Kawai Kōzō shared Yoshikawa’s insight, noting a shift from understanding flowers as a general concept in the Tang, to referencing names of specific species in the Song.⁴ But the interest of Northern Song literati in the material world had reverberations far beyond poetic specificity. Ronald Egan has persuasively argued that the rise of botanical treatises in Ouyang Xiu’s 歐陽脩 (1007–1072, *jinsi* 1030) generation contributed to a new aesthetic model, in which the appreciation of sensuous beauty coexisted with the traditional moral discourse that suppressed it.⁵ Furthermore, as Stephen Owen demonstrated with Ouyang Xiu’s self-identification as the Layman of the “Six Ones” (*liuyi* 六一, the five sets of objects he owned plus himself), ownership of certain scholarly implements became indispensable part of a scholar’s social identity in Northern Song literary discourse.⁶

Following these scholars’ recent findings, this article examines the emergence of the “discourse on things” in the eleventh century. It first delineates the “culture of famous things” that emerged during the Song empire’s unification and commercialization. The imperial court’s appetite for local tributary products motivated scholar-officials serving in the regional bureaucracy to document practical knowledge about local goods, resulting in the rise of the new *pulu* genre. The circulation of *pulu* manuals made local material knowledge available to readers in other parts of the empire, which in turn inspired more writers to document products in their own localities. The material knowledge that was disseminated through the *pulu* provided a rich repertoire of sources for the creative fabrication of object-human double identities in the

3. Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎, *Sōshi gaisetsu* 宋詩概説, *Chūgoku shijin senshū* 中國詩人選集, *Ni-shū* 二集 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1962), 1:19–27.

4. Kawai Kōzō 川合康三, *Kanshi no ressun* 漢詩のレッスン (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2014), 49–50.

5. For a discussion of Song botanical treatises, see Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 110–61.

6. Stephen Owen, “Happiness, Ownership, Naming: Reflections on Northern Song Cultural History,” *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China* 5.1 (2011): 3–24.

anthropomorphic biography. The careers of these object-human characters reveal how thinking through things made Song writers realize the materiality and vulnerability of their own fates as the empire's servants.

Locating the revival of the biography of things in the contemporary practice of producing *pulu*, this article demonstrates that, contrary to prevailing assertions of the catalogues and manuals as forms of private indulgence, they served as a means for peripatetic scholar-officials in their regional posts to communicate with the court, to participate in local government, and to accelerate the integration of the local into the state. This article argues that the *pulu* and the anthropomorphic biography are mirror images of each other, exposing two complimentary yet paradoxical dimensions of Song literary culture: *pulu* suggest mid-eleventh century literati's unproblematic confidence in the imperial system as imperial subjects, while the anthropomorphic biography exposes a deep distrust in the proposition that human beings could enhance their value by becoming imperial subjects who self-identify as members of the empire.

The Culture of Famous Things and Tributary Products

The culture of famous things emerged just as the Song commercial economy was booming: advances in agriculture and handicraft produced a large surplus of local specialties, which was then shipped to distant markets through efficient water transportation; as a result, individual prefectures and counties became increasingly associated with their specialized products.⁷ The commodification of things profoundly changed the network of social and economic relationships. During the Song, surplus tributary products were redistributed through markets and made accessible to ordinary consumers. Lychees, for instance, which had once been a mark of exclusive imperial privilege in the Tang, had become a common street food in Song capital cities.⁸ During an

7. See Joseph P. McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu, "Economic Change in China, 960–1279," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part Two: Sung China, 960–1279*, ed. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 368–70.

8. Meng Yuanlao's 孟元老 (c. 1090–1150) *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄, the nostalgic account of the Northern Song capital Bianjing 汴京 (modern-day Kaifeng), listed various lychee products on the market, although most of these references seem to be processed lychee products: lychee jam (*lizhi gao* 荔枝膏), dried lychees (*gan lizhi* 干荔枝), and sugared lychees (*tang lizhi* 糖荔枝). See Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu*, in *Dongjing menghua lu wai sizhong* 東京

age of increasing commercialization, when local products became tributary goods, this signified their broader accessibility rather than exclusivity. The cultural value of the object had become associated with its circulation in the empire's commercial networks.

When discussing the expansion of the commercial market during the Northern Song, Joseph McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信 cited an anonymous Song list of the "top things in the empire" (*tianxia diyi* 天下第一).⁹ The list enumerated local specialties which enjoyed an empire-wide reputation: inkstones from Duan Creek in Guangdong, tree peonies from Luoyang, tea from Fujian, brocade from Sichuan, rice-paper produced in the Wu region, and lychees from Fuzhou. Intriguingly, many of the listed objects were also the subject matters of Song manuals and anthropomorphic biographies. It is possible that the commercial popularity of these objects

夢華錄外四種, ed. Zhou Feng 周峰 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1998) 2.14, 6.39–41, 8.53–54. In a memoir of the Southern Song capital Lin'an 臨安 (modern-day Hangzhou), there are descriptions about fresh lychees sold on the market: "Newly picked lychees from Fuzhou would arrive to be presented to the court. Some were presented as gifts to court nobles, and the rest would be sold in marketplaces. The fresh red ones were the best, some were rusty red; some arrived by ship, some by land routes. Lychees would be on the market until the eighth month." 福州新荔枝到進上, 御前送朝貴, 遍賣街市。生紅爲上, 或是鐵色。或海船來, 或步擔到。直賣至八月。 See Xihu laoren 西湖老人, *Xihu laoren fanshenglu* 西湖老人繁盛錄, in *Dongjing menghua lu wai sishong*, 104.

9. Joseph P. McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu, "Economic Change in China, 960–1279," 368–70, citing *Xiuzhong jin* 袖中錦, Siku quanshu cunmu congshu 四庫全書存目叢書 ed. (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe chubanshe, 1995), *Zi bu* 子部 101:385. In extant editions of the text, it is attributed to a certain Northern Song author known pseudonymously as the "Old Man of Great Peace" (*Taiping laoren* 太平老人). The identity of the author and the provenance of this text are unclear. It is possible that the epithet "Taiping" 太平 is associated with the early Northern Song Emperor Taizong's 太宗 (r. 976–997) Taiping xingguo 太平興國 (976–984) reign era, a span of eight years during which three imperially-sponsored compilation projects—all named after the reign title—were completed: the categorical compilation *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, the story-collection *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, and the national gazetteer *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記. However, there are reasons to favor a later dating of the text. One of the objects on the list—a Koryŏ celadon of secret color (*Gaoli mise* 高麗秘色)—was mentioned in Xu Jing's 徐競 (1091–1153) *Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing* 宣和奉使高麗圖經, a report of the 1122 Song embassy to Koryŏ. Xu displays admiration for a type of celadon ware he describes as *feise* 翡色 ("emerald color"). Xu's observation probably predated, or was contemporary with, the popularity of this Koryŏ celadon ware during the Song. Hence, the *Xiuzhong jin* list may be dated to the early twelfth century. For a study of Northern Song *leishu* compilations and their political functions, see Johannes L. Kurz, "The Compilation and Publication of the *Taiping yulan* and the *Cefu yangui*," *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 2007: 39–76.

encouraged their presence in literature, but literary texts also participated in the commodification of local objects. *Pulu* manuals and the anthropomorphic biographies created a sense of cultural identity, an aura for famous goods, which fueled consumers' desire for these objects. But the two kinds of texts operated in contrasting ways. On one hand, *pulu* folded the local products into an empire-wide network of circulation, by disseminating material literacy and equipping consumers with skills and techniques needed for identifying the right product from a variety of competing commodities. On the other, anthropomorphic biographies created memorable characters and stories by creatively melding the impersonal material knowledge that was documented in the descriptive and rather lackluster language of the manuals. These biographical accounts represented a process of "singularization," in which an object was de-commodified, as authors made sense of the object by relocating it within the context of a specific social and cultural fabric.¹⁰

The popularity of these commodities was intertwined with their monarchical prestige: an overwhelming majority of objects that inspired dedicated manuals were tributary goods from local regions to the throne.¹¹ *Pulu* authors would often remark on the object's prestige as an item of imperial tribute. For example, In his *Account of Luoyang Peonies* (*Luoyang mudan ji* 洛陽牡丹

10. By "singularization," I am using Igor Kopytoff's term: singularization is a cultural process, whereby the object, after having been exchanged and brought to a new setting, becomes de-commodified in the new setting, with the possibility of later recommodification. The anthropomorphic biography restored the singularity of things by giving a personality to the object and by imagining the social and the inner life of the object-person. See Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodification as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91.

11. A notable exception to this trend was the composition of *pulu* of the chrysanthemum, a symbol of public withdrawal, during the Southern Song. The *Chrysanthemum Catalogue* (*Ju pu* 菊譜) by Shi Zhengzhi 史正志 (*jinsi* 1151) and *Fan Village's Chrysanthemum Catalogue* (*Fancun ju pu* 范村菊譜) by Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126–1193, *jinsi* 1154), were both dedicated to the local varieties of chrysanthemums in Suzhou 蘇州, and were both written after their authors had retired from public life and returned to their hometowns. Information on regional tributary goods can be found in sections on "Tributary Goods" (*gongwu* 貢物) in local gazetteers; elsewhere, when tributary goods were mentioned, it was often in the context of their being exempted from tribute. For example, an edict issued by Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100–1126) in the sixth month in 1125 gave a list of tributary items whose required quantities were exempted or reduced. See Emperor Huizong, "Jianba zhulu gongwu zhao" 減罷諸路貢物詔, in *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, ed. Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Liu Lin 劉琳 (hereafter QSW; Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006) 166:3621.232–35.

記), Ouyang Xiu makes a point of recounting how Luoyang's peonies entered the imperial tribute system:

Luoyang is six post stations away from the Eastern Capital (Bianjing). In the past, Luoyang did not present flowers to the court. This custom first started when the former Grand Councilor and the current Prefect of Xuzhou, Li Di 李迪 (971–1047, *jinsi* 1005) served as the Regent (of Luoyang).¹²

洛陽至東京六驛，舊不進花。自今徐州李相迪爲留守時，始進御。

Every year, a military officer is dispatched; he rides on horseback, and after a day and a night, he will reach the capital. What is presented is no other than several stems of Yao Yellows and Wei Flowers. They would fill the bamboo basket with vegetable leaves and cover the flowers to prevent them from shaking on horseback; they would seal the stems with wax, so that the flowers last for several days.¹³

歲遣衙校一員，乘驛馬，一日一夕至京師。所進不過姚黃、魏花三數朵。以菜葉實竹籠子，藉覆之使馬上不動搖，以蠟封花蒂，乃數日不落。

The peony's elevated status as a potential object of monarchical desire manifested itself in the elaborate process of "presenting flowers" (*jinhua* 進花). Special personnel were selected for the task; only a few peonies of the best varieties—Yao Yellows (*Yao huang* 姚黃, yellow peonies of the Yao Family) and the Wei Flowers (*Wei hua* 魏花, peonies of the Wei Family)—were selected to be "presented" at the imperial court. Elaborate procedures were involved in making sure the flowers would stay intact throughout the rapid

12. Li Di twice served as the Grand Councilor in 1020 and 1033–1035; in the interim, he served as the Regent of Luoyang (*Luoyang liushou* 洛陽留守) from 1029 to 1031. Li served as Prefect of Xuzhou 徐州 during the Jingyou 景祐 reign era (1034–1038), which matches Ouyang's description. See his biography in Toghto 脫脫, ed., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 310.10171–75; see also *Song shi*, 211.5457–59. Another piece of evidence is an entry in Wang Pizhi's 王鬪之 (b. 1031, *jinsi* 1067) *biji* collection *Mianshui yantan lu* 澗水燕談錄, which mentions Li Di by his posthumous name: "Luoyang is six post-stations away from the capital Bianjing. In the old days, it had not presented peonies to the court. When Lord Li Wending was the Regent of Luoyang, he started the custom of presenting flowers to the court." 洛陽至京六驛，舊未嘗進花，李文定公留守，始以花進。See Wang Pizhi, *Mianshui yantan lu*, *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記 ed. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2006) 2.4:8.81.

13. Ouyang Xiu, "Fengsu ji" 風俗記, *Luoyang mudan ji*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Luoyang mudan ji wai shisanzhong* 宋元譜錄叢編洛陽牡丹記外十三種, ed. Wang Yun 王雲 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2016), 6–8.

horse ride from Luoyang to the capital. Elsewhere in the empire, the process of preparing Fujian's tea leaves for them to be presented as the annual tribute required the workers to purify their bodies first:

Before, the workers recruited to handle the tributary tea in Fujian were for a long time required to shave their hair; but from then on, they are only required to wrap their heads with a turban and wash their hands before processing the tea leaves; they are also provided with new clean clothes.¹⁴

先是，研茶丁夫悉剃去鬚髮，自今但幅巾，先滌手爪，給新淨衣。

The workers were processing tributary goods for presentation at court, whereas *pulu* writers were processing knowledge about these objects. These writers “handled” the tributary object with intellectual inquisitiveness, by investigating local products, selecting the best, and inscribing cultural meaning to them through writing.

As we will see below, these tributary goods also became popular subjects of anthropomorphic biographies. The life stories of these animated objects usually involve an episode in which the object-character is recommended to the court and has an audience with the emperor; on the figurative level, this is analogous to the object's becoming an imperial tributary item. The subjects of anthropomorphic biographies also encompassed a broader variety of everyday commodities that circulated outside of the tributary system. These things range from food and drinks (noodles, herbs, pickle juice, tofu, carrots) to domestic appliances (bamboo coolers, copper heaters, mirrors, pillows, bamboo mats, lamps), and from market currencies (copper coins and paper money) to objects of hobbies (kites, swords, seals, chess boards and pieces). These objects became part of the culture of things not for their monarchical prestige, nor were they in any way exotic or strange. Rather, they were special precisely because they were familiar things in the everyday domestic life of literati and common people alike.¹⁵ The inclusion of the everyday objects expanded the anthropomorphic biography genre to account for lives other than court officials.

14. See the entry for the ninth month of the second year of the Zhidao 至道 reign era (996) in Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 2:40.853.

15. Among these items, the foodstuffs appeared in Southern Song memoirs such as the *Dongjing menghua lu* as commonplace commodities in urban markets.

*Material Knowledge and Local Integration
in the Eleventh Century*

As discussed earlier, local specialties constitute the majority of the subjects of *pulu* manuals and a large portion of the subjects of anthropomorphic biographies from the Northern Song. A notable commonality shared by these objects is that all—except for the Luoyang peony—were local specialties from the south and southwest. This celebration of southern local identity is especially salient when read against the background of historical geography: by the last quarter of the tenth century, the Song empire had managed to reclaim most of the southern territory that had previously been split into regional kingdoms after the collapse of the Tang.¹⁶ The priority of the dynastic founders was to effectively integrate these conquered regions into the new political order: in other words, to designate a place for the local regions within the imperial system, and to establish the empire's supreme authority over the local.

The empire's legitimizing efforts took textual form in two kinds of state-commissioned compilation projects: geographical compilations such as map-guides (*tujing* 圖經) and gazetteers (*difangzhi* 地方志), which aimed at gathering and processing information about the local territories and their resources, as well as encyclopedias (*leishu* 類書), which aimed at systematically ordering all knowledge.¹⁷ *Pulu* authors' explicit interest in the empire's regions and localities suggests that this genre belonged to these corpora of texts that promoted the integration of localities into the empire. While smaller

16. The Song successfully reclaimed the kingdoms of Jingnan 荆南 (907–963) in Jiangling, Later Shu 後蜀 (934–965) in Chengdu, Southern Han 南漢 (917–971) in Guangzhou, Southern Tang 南唐 (937–975) in Nanjing, and WuYue 吳越 (907–978) in Hangzhou. However, it never managed to annex Vietnam in the south or recover the Sixteen Prefectures ceded to the Khitan Liao 遼 dynasty (916–1125) in the north.

17. James Hargett's pioneering study on gazetteer writing shows that by the Northern Song, in response to the needs of governing the empire from Kaifeng and new economic developments, gazetteers and map-guides on all levels were expected to be both detailed and comprehensive. See "Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers and Their Place in the History of *Difangzhi* Writing," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (hereafter *HJAS*) 56.2 (Dec. 1996): 405–42. Peter Bol has argued that these new developments in Southern Song gazetteer writing were part of the rise of what he called "a local history," and suggested that it signaled a significant shift in the Southern Song literati's way of life, in that local society instead of the imperial court had then become the center of their concern. See "The Rise of Local History: History, Geography, and Culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou," *HJAS* 61.1 (Jun. 2001): 37–76. On the compilation of Northern Song *leishu*, see Kurz, "The Compilation and Publication of the *Taiping yulan* and the *Cefu yuangui*."

in scale, *pulu* showed the same pronounced local orientation that informed the gazetteers and map-guides, combined with the interest in systematizing knowledge of the world that influenced the compilation of encyclopedias.

Especially relevant to the growing desire for local material knowledge in the Northern Song were gazetteers and cartographic compilations, both of which were constantly revised with updated information. Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–979) and subsequent Northern Song emperors issued imperial edicts every few years to order all Prefects and Circuit Intendants to submit up-to-date maps and documents of their local regions. As has been explained in recent scholarship by Fan Lin, while the practice of collecting local information was not new, the Northern Song court's efforts were unprecedented in their scale and penetration.¹⁸ The gazetteer project was taken to an entirely new level with the establishment of the Bureau of the Maps and Records of the Nine Regions (*jiuyu tuzhi ju* 九域圖志局) at the court, which was dedicated to gazetteer and cartographic compilation.¹⁹ As Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100–1126) emphasized in his response to one of the editors, Qiang Yuanming 強淵明 (*jinsi* 1085), the purpose of making maps and gazetteers was “in order to receive tribute” 致其貢.²⁰ This imperial interest in local territories mobilized clerks and officials serving in all levels of local government to collect local information, or to use Huizong's words, “to know the names of all mountains and rivers, marshes and lakes, grains and millet, birds and beasts under the heavens, and what the land is fit for” 以周知天下山川、藪澤、黍稷、鳥獸之名，與土地之所宜. In gazetteer compilations, the raw data gleaned from the peripheries were then processed into organized knowledge at the central bureau by court officials. The scholar-officials inserted themselves into this imperial enterprise by producing texts about local goods that were desired by the court. *Pulu* authors' documentation of local products was instrumental

18. Fan Lin, “The Local in the Imperial Vision: Landscape, Topography, and Geography in Southern Song Map Guides and Gazetteers,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 23 (2017): 10–39.

19. The fact that scholar-officials had served in this office was frequently mentioned in funerary inscriptions (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘) from this period. This massive gazetteer and cartographic revision project, however, did not see its own completion before the Office of Maps and Records of the Nine Regions was shut down during Huizong's Xuanhe 宣和 reign era (1119–1125). See Feng Jiwu 馮集梧 (late 18th century), “Ba Yuanfeng *jiuyu zhi*” 跋元豐九域志, in Wang Cun 王存 and Feng Jiwu 馮集梧 ed., *Yuanfeng *jiuyu zhi** 元豐九域志 (1784 ed.), 3–5.

20. Emperor Huizong, “Qiang Yuanming qihe gongbao *jiuyu zhi* wenzi chiyuan guan yubi” 強淵明乞劾供報九域志文字遲延官御筆, QSW 164:3568.149.

in filling the imperial repository with the best things from throughout the empire; they processed the raw materials from the peripheries, turning them into systematic, digestible knowledge.

Pulu Authors

In the eleventh century, the writing of *pulu* about local specialties was explicitly a cultural practice with political implications. There are about a hundred extant *pulu* texts from the Song period, and many more are no longer extant.²¹ The proliferation of these texts necessitated the establishment of a dedicated bibliographical category called *pulu* in the Southern Song bibliophile You Mao's 尤袤 (1127–1194, *jinshi* 1148) library catalogue *Suichu tang shumu* 遂初堂書目.²²

Individual examples of Song *pulu* frequently have titles that contain the terms *pu* 譜 (“manual,” “catalogue”), *lu* 錄 (“record”), *ji* 記 (“account”), and sometimes *lüe* 略 (“brief introduction”). Amongst these possible title terms, there are differences in emphases and structures: a *pu* is often structured like a genealogy that lists all varieties of the species, with minimal description and in some cases accompanied by illustrations; a *ji* tends to present pragmatic details, including techniques of cultivation and customs of appreciation, in the form of prose essays; a *lu* is often a combination of a *pu* and a *ji*, presenting information in the list format but containing more detailed descriptions.

The majority of *pulu* authors during the Northern Song, especially the first generations in the eleventh century, were peripatetic scholar-officials who landed local government posts after having passed the *jinshi* examination. Coming from outside these jurisdictions, they were not sufficiently familiar with the local conditions to be personally involved in collecting local information. In fact, a major reason for the compilation of map-guides was to aid their administrative efforts. Being stationed in the peripheries, they were not part of

21. Gu Hongyi 顧宏義, “Zongxu” 總序, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cha lu wai shizhong* 宋元譜錄叢編茶錄外十種, ed. Tang Xiaoyun 唐曉雲 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2015), 1–8.

22. For the history of the *pulu* genre as a bibliographic category, see Dong Censhi 董岑仕, “*Suichu tang shumu pulu lei yanjiu*” 《遂初堂書目》譜錄類研究, *Beijing daxue Zhongguo gudian wenxian yanjiu zhongxin jikan* 北京大學中國古文獻研究中心集刊 16 (2017): 48–80. See also Martina Siebert, *Pulu: “Abhandlungen und Auflistungen” zu materieller Kultur und Naturkunde in traditionellen China* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006).

the editorial team at the bureaus in the capital, but they were certainly aware of the imperial interest in local knowledge. Wang Guan 王觀 (*jinshi* 1057), for instance, was known to have presented a “Rhapsody on Yangzhou” (“Yangzhou fu” 揚州賦) to the court when he served as the magistrate of Jiangdu county 江都縣 in Yangzhou, which allegedly won him the imperial recognition of a “red pocket with silver fish-shaped tally” 緋衣銀魚 (an honorary token equivalent of the fifth rank).²³ During his tenure in Jiangdu, Wang Guan also composed a *pulu* of Yangzhou’s herbaceous peony, the *Catalogue of Yangzhou Peonies* (*Yangzhou shaoyao pu* 揚州芍藥譜). Wang Guan’s case indicates that writing about the locality offered a way for scholar-officials serving in regional administration to re-insert themselves within the imperial gaze.

Like Wang Guan’s *pulu* for the Yangzhou peony, most Northern Song *pulu* texts were written by scholar-officials during their official tenures at the prefectural and county levels. Take for example the first generation of *pulu* writers, who passed the *jinshi* examination in 1030 and were assigned local posts. Ouyang Xiu’s *Account of Luoyang Peonies* was first conceived when he served on the staff of the Regency in the western capital, Luoyang;²⁴ Cai Xiang 蔡襄 (1012–1067, *jinshi* 1030) was a native of Fujian, but his two *pulu* works on Fujian specialties, the *Record of Tea* (*Cha lu* 茶錄) and the *Lychee Catalogue* (*Lizhi pu* 荔枝譜), were not written until he served as the Transport Commissioner of Fujian Circuit (*Fujian lu zhuanyun shi* 福建路轉運使) and Prefect of Fuzhou 福州.²⁵ Similarly, Shen Li 沈立 (1007–1078, *jinshi* 1030) composed the *Account of the Crabapple Flower* (*Haitang ji* 海棠記) and the *Incense Catalogue* (*Xiang pu* 香譜), both about Chengdu’s famous specialties, during his tenure as the Magistrate of Hongya county 洪雅縣 in Chengdu *fu* 成都府.²⁶

23. The editors of the *Siku quanshu* cited *Jiajing Weiyang zhi* 嘉靖維揚誌 in their brief synopsis of Wang Guan’s *Catalogue of Yangzhou Peonies*: “During his tenure, he composed the *Rhapsody of Yangzhou* and presented to the court, which received great praise from the emperor. He was bestowed with the red pocket with silver fish-shaped tally.” 在任爲揚州賦上之，大蒙褒賞，賜緋衣銀章。See *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要, Wenyuange *Siku quanshu* ed. (hereafter SKQS; Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), 3:115, 505–6.

24. Ouyang Xiu, “Huapin xu” 花品序, in *Luoyang mudan ji*, 2–3.

25. Cai Xiang discussed the compositional circumstances in the prefaces to *Lizhi pu* 荔枝譜 and *Cha lu*. See *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cuzhi jing wai shisanzhong* 宋元譜錄叢編促織經外十三種, ed. Liao Lianting 廖蓮婷 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2017), 140–41; and *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cha lu wai shizhong*, 11.

26. Shen Li’s preface to *Account of the Crabapple Flower* is cited in a thirteenth century

Among the duties of local officials, their most important tasks, besides ruling on legal cases as judges, were collecting taxes and tribute on behalf of the imperial court. It was likely through performing these tasks that the officials gained knowledge about local products, which would have been instrumental for composing their *pulu*. Based on the authors' prefatory remarks, they saw writing about local specialties as a way to fulfill and to demonstrate to the court that they had fulfilled the responsibilities as diligent public servants of the empire. Even Han Yanzhi 韓彥直 (b. 1131, *jinsi* 1148), the son of Han Shizhong 韓世忠 (1088–1151), one of the four eminent generals in the Southern Song's resistance to the Jurchen, felt obliged to write a *pulu* for Wenzhou's 溫州 famed tangerines while serving as the Prefect there in 1179. In his preface to the *Record of Tangerines* (*Ju lu* 橘錄), Han speaks of the compilation of the text as an instrument to fulfill his public responsibilities as an official serving Wenzhou:

A guest offered me Nishan tangerines and said: "These tangerines are surely not inferior to lychees. Lychees now have their own catalogue, which is circulating together with the catalogues of peonies. Only no one has written a catalogue for tangerines. You love the tangerines so much, and the tangerines are waiting for you [to write about them]. You cannot refuse."

而客乃有遺予泥山者，且曰：“橘之美當不減荔子。荔子今有譜，得與牡丹、芍藥花譜並行，而獨未有譜橘者。子愛橘甚，橘若有待於子，不可以辭。”

Therefore, I compose the catalogue for the tangerines, and wishfully append it to the works of Master Ouyang (Xiu) and Master Cai (Xiang). With this writing, I make known that Wenzhou's scholars are among the best in the empire; it is not just about tangerines.²⁷

予因爲之譜，且妄欲自附於歐陽公、蔡公之後。亦有以表見溫之學者足以誇天下，而不獨在夫橘爾。

The interlocutor's exhortation portrays the tangerines as "waiting for" the writer: it would be unfair for both the tangerines and the scholars of Wenzhou

pulu, the *Crabapple Flower Catalogue* (*Haitang pu* 海棠譜) by Chen Si 陳思 (fl. mid-thirteenth century), and fragments of *Xiang pu* are cited in Chen Jing's 陳敬 (Southern Song) work of the same title. See *Haitang pu*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Luoyang mudan ji wai shisanzhong*, 49–85; *Chen shi xiang pu* 陳氏香譜 (SKQS ed.), 844.239–348.

27. Han Yanzhi, *Ju lu*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cuzhi jing wai shisanzhong*, 148–49.

to languish in local obscurity. Their values need to be “made known.” The implication is that only by finding a place in the “empire,” by being recognized as “among the best in the empire,” can their value be defined.

The analogy Han Yanzhi made between “Wenzhou’s scholars” and “Wenzhou’s tangerines” is reminiscent of the *yongwu* 詠物 (“poetry on things”) tradition, in which objects are represented as a metaphor for talented courtiers, whose fates depend on their values as the emperor’s useful “things.” But it is not with the local object that Han identifies himself. Rather, he sees himself as a disinterested mediator between the state and the locality. Because of his affiliation with the local government, he knows the value of the things and people of the locality; his sense of responsibility as their prefect prompted him to make their value known to the outside world. Han communicates that by composing this *pulu*, he is carrying out his responsibilities as the emperor’s good servitor: to scout out local talent to staff the empire’s offices, and to discover valuable products to fill the empire’s storehouses.

The eleventh-century practice of writing *pulu* also involved negotiating the sociopolitical meaning of literary writing, as Zeng Anzhi 曾安止 (1048–1098, *jinsi* 1076) explains his motives for composing his *Rice Manual* (*He pu* 禾譜):²⁸

Lately, scholar-official aficionados have gathered materials about various kinds of peonies, lychees, and tea, and have written books and manuals to boast to the people of the marketplace. As far as I am concerned, agriculture is what the government prioritizes. There is a variety of rice crops, but no one has gathered (materials about) them—this is regrettable.

近時士大夫之好事者，嘗集牡丹、荔枝與茶之品，爲經及譜，以夸於市肆。予以爲農者，政之所先，而稻之品亦不一，惜其未有能集之者。

When the Lord of Qinghe, Biaochen, served as the Area Commander-in-Chief of Jiangxi, he entrusted me with the task.²⁹ Biaochen at the time was finishing

28. Zeng Anzhi, *He pu*, annot. Cao Shuji 曹樹基, in “*He pu jiaoshi*” 禾譜校釋, *Zhongguo nongshi* 中國農史 3 (1985): 74–76. The extant text of the *Rice Manual* contains the following: an introductory overview of the rice cultivation and significance in the Jiangnan region, a section on its cultivation (*yundao* 藝稻), a section on agricultural rituals (*qibao* 祈報), and a section providing information on the varieties of rice strains (*hepin* 禾品). For an overview of the *Rice Manual* and a biography of the author Zeng Anzhi, see Cao Shuji, “*He pu* jiqi zuozhe yanjiu,” 84–91.

29. It is unclear who the Lord of Qinghe (courtesy name Biaochen) was. Cao Shuji identified

up his tenure, yet he considered it a shame not to be broadly learned in things. The country people's affairs are lowly and laborious, yet he went around to visit and consult them, and he is never tired of doing that—this is someone who investigates the root of things. I admire his intention and write this for him. The Court Gentleman of Manifest Virtue, Zeng Anzhi, (writes this) preface.³⁰

適清河公表臣持節江右，以是屬余。表臣職在將明，而恥知物之不博。野人之事，爲賤且勞，周爰咨訪，不自倦逸，可謂善究其本者哉。予愛其意，而爲之書焉。宣德郎曾安止敘。

Zeng Anzhi's preface shows his discontent with the commercial popularity of Ouyang Xiu's and Cai Xiang's manuals on commercial objects such as "peonies, lychees and tea."³¹ He argues that that *pulu* writers have neglected rice, an agricultural product of higher political priority.³² His discontent reveals the underlying ideology that literary writing should reflect the hierarchy of things: certain objects are more important and therefore worthier of being written about.

But Zeng seems also to have sensed that literary writing does more than simply reflect the existing value system: it confers cultural value upon things. In the new commercial networks of the Song, such cultural value, mediated through literature, could be easily translated into monetary value in the form of market prices. Exchanges between literature and commerce had empowered the commercial market to become an alternative locus of value, where the value of things was judged by their circulation and the profit they generated in

Biaochen as Zhong Qingqing 鐘清卿 of Jingde 旌德 (modern-day Xuancheng 宣城, Anhui), a contemporary of Zeng Anzhi. Cao's hypothesis is based on Zhong's *jinshi* record and his career as recorded in the *Jingde xianzhi* 旌德縣志, which was printed in the first half of the nineteenth century, but Zhong's *jinshi* date in the source is erroneous, and the source did not mention Zhong had served near Taihe where Zeng lived, nor could it explain the title of "Lord of Qinghe." See "He pu jiaoshi," 78.

30. Zeng Anzhi, *He pu*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cuzhi jing wai shisanzhong*, 163–64.

31. Although multiple catalogues on each of these products existed by the end of the eleventh century, what Zeng had in mind were probably the most frequently-circulated: Ouyang Xiu's *Account of Luoyang Peonies*, Cai Xiang's *Record of Tea*, and the *Lychee Catalogue*. Ouyang Xiu's and Cai Xiang's works were frequently mentioned in later *pulu* works as the flagships of the genre. See Ouyang Xiu, *Luoyang mudan ji*, 1–8; Cai Xiang, *Lizhi pu*, 140–47; *Cha lu*, 11–15.

32. As Shiba Yoshinobu pointed out, by the Northern Song, grain had become an important commodity on the national market, but unlike other commodities, grain was not always freely traded. Apart from being the main source of state taxation, grain distribution was controlled by the government to ensure adequate supplies for officials and the military. See Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū* 宋代商業史研究 (Tokyo: Kazama shobō, 1968), 142–66.

the process, rather than their usefulness to the empire. This posed a potential challenge to the authority of the court as the sole arbiter of values. Previously, grain had been prioritized over other crops because of its central place in the imperial taxation system.³³ The traditional value system that subordinated commerce to agriculture—and, by extension, cash crops to grain crops—was the same system that conferred value in the form of examination degrees and official titles upon scholars like Zeng Anzhi. Seeing the commercial market as potentially disrupting that hierarchy, Zeng, as a product of the old system, felt the urge to defend it. Ironically, he could only do so by writing a *pulu* for what he thought was the empire's single most important staple crop. However unsatisfied Zeng Anzhi had been with the choice of subjects of popular *pulu*, his discontent speaks to a sense of sociopolitical urgency that the authors of *pulu* considered their writings to have.

The composition of *pulu* for local products remained primarily a venue for local officials to participate in the empire-wide discourse and reenter the imperial gaze until later in the twelfth century, when *pulu* texts started to be composed by local literati who neither attempted the civil service examination nor had a public record of bureaucratic service. Compared to *pulu* by magistrates and prefects, this new variety of *pulu* texts displayed a pronounced sense of locally-centered confidence. Wang Zhuo 王灼 (b. 1105), known otherwise as a critic of song lyrics (*ci* 詞), was a native of Suining 遂寧 and likely never left Sichuan throughout his entire life. Wang wrote a *Catalogue of Sugar Crystals* (*Tangshuang pu* 糖霜譜)—solid sugar blocks made from extracting and crystalizing sugar cane juice—claiming the superiority of Suining's cane sugar over competing products elsewhere in the empire: “That our sugar crystals are the sweetest of all: isn't this because our land is supreme?” 糖霜之甘擅天下, 非土之特秀也歟?³⁴ Although Suining's sugar was a tributary product, Wang Zhuo's *pulu* mentioned it only casually.³⁵ One is tempted to argue that

33. Zeng might not have been aware of the increasing importance of commercial taxes as a major source of state cash revenues—comparable to revenues made from state monopolies of tea, salt, and liquor—during the eleventh century; see Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 218–35.

34. Wang Zhuo, “Yuanwei diyi” 原委第一, in *Tangshuang pu* 糖霜譜 (SKQS ed.), 844:840–41.

35. “At the beginning of the Xuanhe reign era, the Grand Councilor Wang Fu (1079–1126) created the Office of Provisions [to process goods for imperial tribute]. In addition to its regular tributary items, Suining offered thousands of *jin* of sugar annually.” 宣和初, 宰相王黼創應奉司。遂寧常貢外, 歲進糖霜數千斤。See Wang Zhuo, *Tangshuang pu*, 843.

by Wang Zhuo's time, local things had begun to gain value independent from imperial recognition. Elsewhere in the empire, Xiong Fan 熊蕃 (fl. first half of twelfth century), a local literatus from Fujian, wrote a *Record of Beiyuan Tributary Tea during the Xuanhe Reign-Era* (*Xuanhe Beiyuan gongcha lu* 宣和北苑貢茶錄). Although Xiong repeatedly advertised the imperial prestige of local tea as a tributary good, he was actually expressing his regional pride as a Fujianese literatus.³⁶ In other words, he was not writing to advertise Fujian's tea to the court; he was writing because the empire depended on Fujian for its tea.³⁷

Later *pulu* authors often used the genre to curate private catalogues of collectibles and other objects of aesthetic connoisseurship.³⁸ When the writing of *pulu* shifted from scholar-officials to local literati, this signaled a change in the function of this genre. However, the eleventh-century *pulu* practice as a form of public sociopolitical intervention, represented in Zeng's discontent with the genre's predisposition to the pursuit of commercial profits and echoed in the claims of many other *pulu* authors, must be taken seriously in order to understand the origins of the practice of writing *pulu*.³⁹

Pulu Readers and Circulation

The contemporary readership of *pulu* texts during the Northern Song consisted of commoners, scholar-official colleagues, and potentially, an imperial audience. In some cases, *pulu* texts were written with an explicit monarch

36. Xiong Fan, *Xuanhe beiyuan gongcha lu*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cha lu waishizhong*, 47–67.

37. The new emphasis on local identity in the *pulu* practice of the twelfth century echoed what scholars have identified as the Song literati's "localist turn" in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. See footnote 17, and Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750–1550," *HJAS* 42.2 (Dec. 1982): 365–442; Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

38. For a thorough discussion of the role of late-Ming manuals in the cultivation of a refined sensibility, see Wai-ye Li, "The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility," *T'oung Pao* 81.4/5 (1995): 269–302.

39. *Pulu* texts were also studied as textual evidence for the Song dynasty's "scientific developments." The most well-known case would be Joseph Needham, who studied botanical *pulu* texts in researching the development of horticultural techniques in China. See Needham, Lu Gwei Djen, and Huang Hsing-Tsung, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 6: Biology and Biological Technology; Part 1: Botany* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 355–439.

in mind. In the memorial that serves as the preface to his *Record of Tea*, Cai Xiang made it clear that the text was intended for Emperor Renzong:

The Gentleman for Court Service, the Right Exhorter and Imperial Diarist, your humble subject Cai Xiang presents: previously I presented a memorial to the court and was honored by Your Majesty, who spoke highly of the first-grade dragon tea I presented when I served as Transport Commissioner of Fujian.

朝奉郎右正言同修起居注臣蔡襄上進。臣前因奏事，伏蒙陛下諭臣先任福建轉運使日，所進上品龍茶，最為精好。

After retiring from court, I considered that even for something as trivial as herbs and plants, once they are recognized by Your Majesty and put in appropriate place, their use can be thoroughly exploited. The ancient Lu Yu's *Classic of Tea* did not include the varieties produced in Jian'an. Ding Wei's *Catalogue of Tea* only discussed the picking and making of tea leaves; as for tea-making and connoisseurship, nothing is mentioned.

臣退念草木之微，首辱陛下知鑒，若處之得地，則能盡其材。昔陸羽《茶經》，不第建安之品；丁謂《茶圖》，獨論采造之本，至於烹試，曾未有聞。

I then wrote a few entries which are concise and easy to understand; I edited them into two volumes and titled it the *Record of Tea*. I prostrate myself in veneration that if in leisure Your Majesty would occasionally grace the book with your perusal, your humble subject would be thrilled with honor and utmost reverence.⁴⁰

臣輒條數事，簡而易明，勒成二篇，名曰《茶錄》。伏惟清閒之宴，或賜觀采，臣不勝惶懼榮幸之至。

When Cai Xiang served as the Transport Commissioner of Fujian Circuit in 1046, he took as his responsibility to ensure the quality of the imperial tea supply. Processing tea for imperial use was one responsibility of the Transport Commissioner of Fujian Circuit, where Cai Xiang served in 1046. He invented the “small dragon tea cake” (*xiao longtuan* 小龍團) and presented it to the court.⁴¹ Emperor Renzong, a known connoisseur of tea, was so pleased with

40. Cai Xiang, “Zi xu” 自序, in *Cha lu*, 11.

41. Cai Xiang speaks about his offering tea to the court in the preface to “Zao cha” 造茶, a poem in the poetic series “Beiyuan shiyong” 北苑十詠: “In that year I remade ten *jin* of new tea [and presented it to the court]. It was of exceptional quality and was praised by the emperor as

the quality of Cai's invention that he conferred the imperial title of "top-grade dragon tea" upon it and decided that he would want it every year. In the preface to his *pulu*, Cai Xiang portrays himself as both the emperor's loyal servant presenting desirable objects and as a writer presenting knowledge that complements the material experience.

The extant version of Cai Xiang's *Record of Tea* has a fascinating textual history. It was a recovered text, not the original version that Cai presented to the throne. It has a second preface, which is now attached to the extant version as a colophon:⁴²

When your subject served as the editor of the Imperial Diary during the Huangyou reign era (1049–1054), I reported to Emperor Renzong. The Son of Heaven repeatedly inquired about the tributary tea from Jian'an and how it should be properly prepared. I thought that even though discussing tea was a matter within the imperial compound, it was not a confidential matter. I then composed two volumes of the *Record of Tea* and presented it to the court.

臣皇祐中修起居注，奏事仁宗皇帝，屢承天問以建安貢茶並所以試茶之狀。臣謂論茶雖禁中語，無事於密，造茶錄二篇上進。

Later I served as the Prefect of Fuzhou. There, my own copy of the manuscript was stolen by my secretary, and I could no longer recall (the text) from memory. The magistrate of Huai'an County, Fan Ji, bought it and printed copies of the text to circulate among aficionados, but (that text) is full of errors.

後知福州，爲掌書記竊去藏稿，不復能記。知懷安縣樊紀購得之，遂以刊勒行於好事者，然多舛謬。

In the colophon to the extant version, Cai Xiang recounted how he had kept a copy of the original text in the local archive of Fuzhou prefecture when he was serving as Prefect. The manuscript was stolen from there by his Chief Secretary, and it was later sold to a county magistrate, who circulated reproductions of the imprint among aficionados, most likely in the form of woodblock prints.⁴³ In the colophon, Cai Xiang recounted the tearful moment when he re-encountered the stolen text fraught with errors:

'top-grade dragon tea.' It continued to be offered to the court annually." 其年改造新茶十斤，尤極精好，被旨號爲上品龍茶，仍歲貢之。See *Duanming ji* 端明集 (SKQS ed.), 1090:2.354–55.

42. Cai Xiang, "Hou xu" 後序, in *Cha lu*, 15.

43. Although *kanle* 刊勒, the term Cai Xiang used, is ambiguous, and could mean both "to carve into a woodblock" (*kanmu* 刊木) and "to carve an inscription on stone" (*leshi* 勒石),

Thinking back on the late emperor's recognition and favorable treatment of me, I could not help but shedding tears when holding the copy (of the *Record*). I corrected the errors and fixed the text, and had it carved into stone, in order to perpetuate its transmission. On the twenty-sixth day of the fifth month, in the first year of the Zhiping reign era (1064), the State Finance Commissioner and Supervising Secretary, your humble subject Cai Xiang, recorded (this).⁴⁴

臣追念先帝顧遇之恩，攬本流涕，輒加正定，書之於石，以永其傳。
治平元年五月二十六日，三司使給事中臣蔡襄謹記。

Abhorring the textual errors in this stolen version, although he could “no longer recall” what he wrote, Cai had the text “corrected” and “fixed.” By mid-eleventh century, Cai Xiang had made a name for himself as a calligrapher, and Emperor Renzong was known to be an aficionado of his works.⁴⁵ It was likely the artistic value of the calligraphy (and potential commercial profit) that invited the theft of Cai's *Record of Tea* and facilitated the unintended circulation of its copies outside of the prefectural archive. Nevertheless, this unauthorized copy was the origin of perhaps the most popular *pulu* text in Song literary history.

in this case it likely meant woodblock printing. Woodblocks were generally cheaper and more accessible than stone inscriptions, but more prone to damage by natural forces. Elsewhere, Cai Xiang commented on the preference for woodblock printing in Fujian due to the lack of good stone in the region: “In the Min region (Fujian) there is no fine stone. [People] made imprints in hard wood. Often my calligraphy [has been carved into a woodblock], but most carvings lose resemblance with the original.” 閩中無佳石，以堅木刊字，往往有予筆跡，模刻多或失真。 See Cai Xiang, “Ping shu” 評書, QSW 47:1016.163.

44. Cai Xiang, “Hou xu,” 15.

45. Emperor Renzong commissioned Cai's calligraphy for several inscriptions. This is mentioned in Cai Xiang's funerary inscription written by Ouyang Xiu: “(Cai Xiang was) good at calligraphy and painting, but he took his work seriously and would not casually write for people. For this reason, even a fragment from his writing, people would cherish it. Emperor Renzong especially loved and thought highly of [his works].” 工於書畫，頗自惜，不妄為人書，故其殘章斷稿，人悉珍藏。而仁宗尤愛稱之。 The popularity of Cai Xiang's calligraphy accounted for the wide circulation of both his two *pulu* texts and Ouyang's *Account of Luoyang Peonies*. Ouyang Xiu wrote in the colophon to the *Account* that Cai Xiang normally declined requests for his calligraphy for the purpose of inscribing them in stone, but that he “only liked writing out my texts” 不肯與人書石，獨喜書余文。 Ouyang Xiu then listed the seven of his texts (including the *Account of Luoyang Peonies*) that Cai Xiang wrote and had carved into stone, and that Cai had sent a messenger delivering the rubbings made from the stone inscriptions to him. See Ouyang Xiu, “Duanmingdian xueshi Cai gong muzhiming” 端明殿學士蔡公墓志銘, QSW 35.756:377–80; “Mudan ji bawei” 牡丹記跋尾, QSW 34.718:76.

A late twelfth-century brush-note collection (*biji* 筆記), Fei Gun's 費袞 *Liangxi manzhi* 梁谿漫志, cited a lost colophon to a version of the text which quoted Cai Xiang's contemporary Fu Bi 富弼 (1004–1083) as criticizing Cai for doing "just what a concubine would do to show love for her master" 僕妾愛主之事.⁴⁶ As one would expect from the increasingly moralizing discourse of the twelfth century, which deployed Fu Bi as a mouthpiece for voicing condemnation of Cai's ethical lapses, it was unsurprising that Southern Song literati would judge Cai's *pulu* as an instrument to curry imperial favor. However, for Cai Xiang, his presentation of tea and his compilation of the text were more of a means of fulfilling his responsibilities to the emperor. When discovering what happened to his manuscript, Cai was less bothered by merchants making a profit from selling his calligraphic works than perturbed by the corruption of the text, since he had written it for Renzong, who was a connoisseur of tea and was eager to learn about the subject. For Cai, unlike his twelfth-century critics who cited Fu Bi's moralizing judgment, his interactions with the late emperor formed memories of an ideal ruler-subject relationship, of which the text served as a memento.

Scholar-official colleagues, as well as local people of the prefectures and counties where the *pulu* writers served, comprised a large proportion of the readership of *pulu*. For instance, the *Catalogue of Putian Lychees* (*Putian lizhi pu* 莆田荔枝譜) by Xu Shimin 徐師閔, the Magistrate of Xinghua county 興化縣 in Fujian circuit, was inscribed on the wall of the "Pure Heart Hall" (*Qingxin tang* 清心堂) in the county yamen.⁴⁷ A "pure heart," or "purifying

46. Fei Gun, "Chen Shaoyang yiwen" 陳少陽遺文, in *Liangxi manzhi*, *Quan Song biji* ed. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), 5.2:8.216–17. The colophon was attributed to Chen Dong 陳東 (1086–1127), an Imperial University (*taixue* 太學) student and a voice of resistance against the Jurchen invasion, who was executed in 1127 for criticizing Emperor Gaozong's 高宗 (r. 1127–1162) decision to abandon the resistance and relocate to the south. See Charles Hartman and Cho-ying Li, "The Rehabilitation of Chen Dong," *HJAS* 75.1 (Jun. 2015): 137–59. Fei Gun marveled at the unusual survival of Chen Dong's colophon, especially given that Chen's "literary writings were rarely seen in the world" 其為文世所罕見. The *Siku quanshu* editors disputed the credibility of this critique by pointing out that first, the criticism attributed to Fu Bi in Chen Dong's colophon was also cited in *Qunfang pu* 群芳譜, but there it was attributed to Ouyang Xiu. Second, making fine tea for the imperial court was "part of the responsibilities" 修舉官政之一端 of the Circuit Transport Commissioner. Third, given Ouyang Xiu's relationship to Cai Xiang and his colophon to Cai's *Record of Tea*, it would be very unlikely that Ouyang held such criticism, and even less likely that he would venture it publicly against Cai. See *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 3:115.500.

47. "Xinghua fu guji kao" 興化府古跡考, in *Xinghua fubu huikao* 興化府部彙考, in

one's heart," was one of the seven rules for civil officials issued by Emperor Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 997–1022) in 1009, and had become a popular name for office halls since then.⁴⁸ Xu's catalogue was carved into this hall, alongside the names of local *jinshi* candidates and a poem by an earlier magistrate; all three texts were about local "tribute" (*gong* 貢) to the court. In this case, the *pulu* text functioned as a commemoration of the locality as a reserve for the empire's material and human resources.

Still, beyond bureaucratic colleagues and local residents, the most important reading audience of *pulu* was the community of *pulu* authors themselves. In the eleventh century, *pulu* had developed into a tradition of its own, largely because authors were actively reading and making use of earlier *pulu* texts. Some claimed in their prefaces that their intention was to expand on earlier *pulu* of the same object; they would list extant *pulu* texts of this object and explain their reasons for adding a supplementary one. Others saw their work as an effort to emulate earlier *pulu* writers by adding a new object to the corpus of *pulu*.⁴⁹

During the eleventh century, *pulu* texts circulated at different levels of exposure, from being widely disseminated throughout the empire to being limited to a narrow social circle. At one end of the continuum were more popular *pulu* texts that enjoyed empire-wide circulation, such as Ouyang Xiu's *Record of Luoyang Peonies* and Cai Xiang's *Record of Tea and Lychee Catalogue*. These were likely commercialized (as Cai's colophon showed) and circulated in the forms of manuscript copies, rubbings, or prints.

At the opposite end of the continuum were texts like the *Rice Manual* by Zeng Anzhi, which only exists in manuscript form, and was only known to the author's family and a few friends. Zeng was the magistrate of Pengze county 彭澤縣 in northern Jiangxi before vision loss left him unfit to serve.⁵⁰ Zeng had shown the manuscript to the famous literatus Su Shi, who stopped by to visit

Qinding gujin tushu jicheng 欽定古今圖書集成, ed. Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1977), Fangyu huibian, zhifang dian 方輿彙編, 職方典 14:1084.9731.

48. Emperor Zhenzong, "Wenchen qitiao bingxu" 文臣七條並序, *QSW* 13:262.149.

49. See, for example, Han Yanzhi's preface to his *Record of Tangerines* (discussed above), where Han explicitly posits himself as following the tradition of Ouyang Xiu and Cai Xiang.

50. A brief account of Zeng Anzhi's life can be found in his funerary inscription, written by Huang Lü 黃履, "Song jinshi xuan delang Yizhong gong muzhiming" 宋進士宣德郎移忠公墓志銘. Cao Shuji 曹樹基 offered an annotated version of the text in his "He pu jiaoshi" 禾譜校釋, *Zhongguo nongshi* 中國農史 1985.3: 83–84. For a brief description of Zeng Anzhi's career as the Magistrate of Pengze county, see Cao Shuji, "He pu jiqi zuozhe yanjiu" 禾譜及其作者研究, *Zhongguo nongshi* 1984.3: 84–91.

on his exile to Guangdong in 1094.⁵¹ Zeng requested a preface from Cheng Qi 程祁, a *jinshi* candidate who was selected through the prefectural exam in which Zeng had served as the exam supervisor in 1081. Unfortunately, however, Zeng died before he could have the manuscript copied for Cheng. Another six years passed before Cheng eventually acquired a copy of the manuscript and wrote a preface for it. Even though the *Rice Manual* was mentioned by Su Shi, was prefaced by Cheng Qi, and was listed in contemporary biographies, the manuscript was considered lost until fragments of the text resurfaced in 1983 with the discovery of the Zeng clan's genealogy in Taihe county 泰和縣, Jiangxi.⁵²

Most *pulu* texts lay somewhere in the middle of the continuum: some of them were inscribed in public spaces, some were referenced in later manuals that dealt with the same subject. Outside of the *pulu* genre, fragments of *pulu* texts were also frequently cited in local gazetteers and encyclopedias to describe regional specialty products (*wuchan* 物產). The various ways in which processes of local integration and public communication in the Northern Song involved the mobilization and consumption of *pulu* texts illuminate the role of material knowledge in mediating the construction of a local identity. But more than disseminating information, *pulu* authors' very act of documenting

51. In his preface to the "Song of the Seedling Horse" ("Yangma ge" 秧馬歌), Su Shi gave an account of the encounter: "I passed by Luling and met with the retired Court Gentleman of Manifest Virtue, Master Zeng Anzhi, who showed me his manuscript, the *Rice Manual*. His prose is elegant, his account detailed and meticulous, however there is something missing—there is no catalogue of agricultural tools. When I was in Wuchang, I saw the peasants there all riding the seedling horse. Its belly was made of elm wood to make it smooth, its back from catalpa wood to make it lightweight, and its belly resembles a little boat . . . therefore I composed a "Song of the Seedling Horse" and append the song to the end of the *Rice Manual*." 過廬陵，見宣德郎致仕曾君安止，出所作《禾譜》，文既溫雅，事亦詳實，惜其有所缺，不譜農器也。予昔遊武昌，見農夫皆騎秧馬，以榆棗為腹欲其滑，以楸梧為背欲其輕，腹如小舟 . . . 作《秧馬歌》一首，附於《禾譜》之末云。Su Shi, "Yangma ge bing yin" 秧馬歌並引, in *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集, ed. Wang Wen'gao 王文誥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 6:38.2051–52. For an account of Su Shi's banishment to Guangdong in 1094, see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 213–21.

52. The Southern Song bibliography *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 records a five-juan edition of the *Rice Manual*; see Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (1179–1262), *Zhizhai shulu jieti*, ed. Xu Xiaoman 徐小蠻 and Gu Meihua 顧美華 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 10.296. Regarding the rediscovery of the *Rice Manual*, see Cao Shuji, "Bei Song nongshu *He pu* de bufen neirong zai Jiangxi Taihe xian faxian" 北宋農書《禾譜》的部分內容在江西泰和縣發現, *Nongye kaogu* 農業考古 1984.1: 151.

material knowledge and making it the theme of a literary genre reveals a shift in their understanding of what constituted knowledge, and the mechanisms of its production.

Sources of Material Knowledge in Pulu

The titles of *pulu* frequently contain terms that denote authority: apart from the aforementioned *pu*, *lu*, and *ji*, other key title terms included *shuo* 說 (“treatise”), *shi* 史 (“history”) and sometimes *jing* 經 (“classic,” “canon”). In *pulu*, claims of authority manifested themselves through their authors’ assertions of expertise, accuracy, and the credibility of the sources of knowledge. Notably, in *pulu* writings such claims of authority are not presented as originating from the author or the classical canon. Instead, *pulu* writings valorize the authority of the local—local geography, local people and even the objects themselves—by foregrounding the *pulu* writers’ affinities with a given locality as the sources of material knowledge.⁵³

Autobiographical prefaces to *pulu* often emphasize the author’s first-hand experience in the regions where these local specialties were produced. They gleaned knowledge about these objects from the empirical experience of being in contact with their materiality while they were physically present. For example, in his preface, Han Yanzhi explains the circumstances under which he composed the *Record of Tangerines*. He remembers growing up in the north and never having seen a tangerine tree but notes that “I have had the experience of buying tangerines from the merchant boats, although I have not seen a good one” 然嘗從橘舟市橘，亦未見佳者。He adds that: “last autumn, I served as Wenzhou’s Prefect, where I saw the orange’s blossoms with my own eyes and tasted the fruit two times” 去年秋，把麾此來，得一親見花而再食其實。⁵⁴ Han’s repeated emphasis on “seeing with my own eyes” hints at his prioritization of empirical experience over textual knowledge.

53. Recent scholarship has shed light on how the economic, social and material practices of the southern regions shaped Song culture. See Hugh R. Clark, *Portrait of a Community: Society, Culture, and the Structures of Kinship in the Mulan River Valley (Fujian) from the Late Tang through the Song* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007). In a recent article on the four writing implements of the literati’s studio from the Southern Tang, Ng Pak-Sheung 伍伯常 emphasizes the regional cultural identity that informed literati studio objects and shaped Song literati culture. See “A Regional Cultural Tradition in Song China: The Four Treasures of the Study of the Southern Tang (*Nan Tang wenfang sibao*),” *JSYS* 46 (2016): 57–117.

54. *Ju lu*, 148–60.

Authentic knowledge about the objects, as is often presented in the *pulu* texts, can only be obtained from directly encountering the object through the senses. Sometimes objects are presented as having an agency that acts to enlighten the observer. For example, as Han Yanzhi describes a specific species of mandarin orange, the *zhen'gan* 真柑: "the gardener picked and presented it to me. Their color and flavor illuminate the room; when you break it, it oozes a fragrant mist. Even a northerner who has not seen it before will immediately know this is a *zhen'gan*." 園丁采以獻, 風味照座, 擘之則香霧噴人。北人未之識者, 一見而知其爲真柑矣。⁵⁵ Here, Han portrays encountering the materiality of the object as a source of knowledge. The material properties of the object—the lustrous color and fragrant mist of the mandarin orange—reveal its identity as the *zhen'gan* (lit. "the real orange"). The orange teaches the person about itself. At the moment of encountering (seeing, smelling, breaking, tasting) the object, the learner, despite being an inexperienced and oblivious northerner, suddenly recognizes the object's true identity. *Pulu* authors made references to textual records as well, but rather than taking them as unquestionable truth, these authors saw them more as a kind of book knowledge that awaits to be confirmed or falsified through direct encounter with the material objects.⁵⁶

Pulu authors routinely declared their affinity with the land by physically "going about visiting places and consulting local people" (*zhouyuan zifang* 周爰咨訪). In his preface to the *Rice Manual*, Zeng Anzhi uses this term to describe the efforts of the Commander-in-Chief of Jiangxi, who first proposed the idea of *Rice Manual* to him. The preface (dated 1133) to Du Wan's 杜綰 (fl. early twelfth century) *Yunlin Catalogue of Rocks* (*Yunlin shipu* 雲林石譜, hereafter *Yunlin Catalogue*), describes the author as actively visiting places to investigate different rockery in order to compile the catalogue: "the country's territory is vast; what I have heard and seen may still leave out some things, and I have not surveyed all classics of mountains and records of places; when I seek them out (in the future), I will add them to the volume." 幅員之至遠, 聞見或遺, 山經地誌, 未能淹該遍覽, 尙俟訪求,

55. *Ju lu*, 150. Xiaofei Tian kindly pointed out (personal communication, 26 April 2020) that part of the description is lifted from Liu Jun's 劉峻 (462–521) "Letter Accompanying the Gift of Tangerines" ("Song gan qi" 送柑啓).

56. For example, when *pulu* authors try to explain the origin of names, they sometimes quote the *Erya* 爾雅; they would also cite poetry and anecdotal sources in *pulu* to give the objects a cultural history.

當附益之。⁵⁷ The extant edition of the *Yunlin Catalogue* records more than 110 different kinds of rocks from across the empire. The description of each type of rock includes meticulous details concerning its material properties, including its place of origin, mining method, shape and color, texture and sound, permeability, pattern, luster, as well as aesthetic and practical value. The level of specificity in Du's accounts of their materiality indicates that such knowledge comes from physically holding and touching the stones.

The notion of travelling the land to encounter objects is often coupled with the notion of spiritual concentration, where the mind encounters the object in the physical world, measures it and translates it into new knowledge. In his preface to the *Lychee Catalogue*, Cai Xiang claims expertise from his own local experience in Fujian, but emphasizes his role as an active investigator and collector:

My hometown is Puyang (modern-day Putian, Fujian), and I have served in the local offices of both Quanzhou and Fuzhou; I have traveled back and forth from my hometown (to the capital) in the last decade, and every time I encountered a particularly good one (lychee), I would have the workman make sketches from the live objects. When I have gathered many, I named and described them—this is how it all started.⁵⁸

予家莆陽，再臨泉、福二郡，十年往還，道由鄉國，每得其尤者，命工寫生。稔集既多，因而題目，以為倡始。

“Making a sketch from the live object” (*xiesheng* 寫生) indicates a search for descriptive accuracy, and Cai describes the properties of various lychees with painterly precision:

The *Chenzi* 陳紫 (from the Chen family's trees) lychee is broad at the top, with a round bottom; the larger ones could be as much as one *cun* and five *fen* (roughly 4.7 centimeters) in diameter. Its aroma is clear and far-reaching, its color fresh purple, its shell thin and flat, its flesh thick and lustrous, its rind in peach-blossom blush, its seed like a clove seed. When one peels it, it looks like a

57. Kong Chuan 孔傳, “*Yunlin shipu xu*” 雲林石譜序, in Du Wan 杜綰, *Yunlin shipu* 雲林石譜, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Yunlin shipu wai qizhong* 宋元譜錄叢編雲林石譜外七種 ed. Wang Yun 王雲, Zhu Xuebo 朱學博, and Liao Lianting 廖蓮婷 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 2015), 35. For an introduction of the author Du Wan and the provenance of the text, see Edward H. Schafer, *Tu Wan's Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest: A Commentary and Synopsis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 13–28.

58. *Lizhi pu*, 140–41.

crystal; when one eats it, it dissolves like crimson snow. The taste is so exquisite that it is impossible to describe it.⁵⁹

其實廣上而圓下，大可徑寸有五分。香氣清遠，色澤鮮紫，殼薄而平，瓢厚而瑩，膜如桃花紅，核如丁香母，剝之凝如水精，食之消如絳雪，其味之至，不可得而狀也。

In the case of lychees, an accurate description encompasses the temporal urgency with which they needed to be eaten immediately after being picked. The idea that only fresh lychees are authentic lychees is evident in Cai's derision of the tributary lychees that were once presented to the Tang court:

Luoyang's lychees were delivered from Lingnan (Guangdong), while Chang'an lychees were from Ba and Shu (Sichuan). Although it was called "fresh tribute," however fast the postal delivery was, these were only the not-yet-rotten leftovers; few retained their original color, fragrance, and taste. As for fresh raw lychees, the entire Middle Kingdom had not yet seen one.⁶⁰

洛陽取於嶺南，長安來於巴蜀，雖曰鮮獻，而傳置之速，腐爛之餘，色香味之存者亡幾矣，是生荔枝，中國未始見之也。

Therefore, it is only by capturing the fruit while it is still fresh on the trees that Cai can ensure what he has gathered is truly the best of the best. As Cai makes it clear, precise botanical illustration serves as a way of collecting the best species of lychees, and with a fruit that becomes rotten so soon, capturing images of fresh lychees on the branches and translating them to verbal descriptions may be the only viable way of conveying the authentic sensory experience of savoring fresh lychees to those without proximity to them.⁶¹

Celebrating the Local in Pulu

Pulu frequently categorize objects according to their regional identities. Some books specifically deal with products from one locality. For example, Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽脩 *Luoyang mudan ji* is dedicated to species of tree

59. *Lizhi pu*, 141–42.

60. *Lizhi pu*, 140–41.

61. Some *pulu* did present objects with both texts and images, but since drawings were not as easy to carve or print, the *pulu* that originally had drawings were more likely to be transmitted without them. See Dong Censhi, "Fanhua shi, xiu cheng pu, xie cheng tu: Songdai pulu zhong de tulu" 繁華事，修成譜，寫成圖——宋代譜錄中的圖錄, *Wenjin xuezhì* 文津學志 11 (2018): 142–53.

peonies cultivated in Luoyang, while Lu You's 陸遊 *Catalogue of Tianpeng Peonies* (*Tianpeng mudan pu* 天彭牡丹譜) is specifically about the Sichuan variety. Similarly, the *Catalogue of She Inkstones* (*Shezhou yanpu* 歙州硯譜, dated 1066) celebrates Anhui's inkstones and craftsmanship, whereas the *Catalogue of Inkstones from Duan Creek* (*Duanxi yanpu* 端溪硯譜, with a colophon dated 1183 that suggests composition during the 1130s) describes the Guangdong variety, which rose to fame during the Tang.⁶²

The celebration of local identity in *pulu* takes many forms but manifests itself most conspicuously in commonplace claims of one regional product's superiority over other, often traditionally more established, regional varieties. In his *Lychee Catalogue*, Cai Xiang undermined the established reputation of Guangdong and Sichuan lychees promoted by the Tang poets Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (673–740) and Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), asserting that “those (Guangdong and Sichuan) lychees are mostly of the early-maturing variety, whose flesh is thin and taste is sour; their best ones are only comparable to the lychees of lower grades produced in eastern Min (Fujian)” 大率早熟, 肌肉薄而味甘酸, 其精好者僅比東閩之下等. Furthermore, Cai claimed that neither Zhang Jiuling nor Bai Juyi had ever encountered “real lychees” (*zhen lizhi* 真荔枝).⁶³

The notion of regional competition includes processes of creating boundaries through exclusion and inclusion. By claiming rivalry over—or resemblance with—a more canonical object, the rules of exclusion could be manipulated to facilitate the inclusion of things that had been traditionally excluded from a body of writing. Shen Li, for instance, begins his *Account of the Crabapple Flower* by taking issue with the absence of literary writing about the flower. He remembers that “Emperor Zhenzong once wrote ten poems about the various flowers in the imperial garden, and made the crab-apple flower the subject of the first poem” 眞宗皇帝御製後苑雜花十題, 以海棠爲首章. For Shen, this bestowal of monarchical prestige proves that “the crab-apple flower can rival the peony, and in the western region (Sichuan) it is unrivaled” 海棠足

62. Dorothy Ko discusses inkstone connoisseurship in the Northern Song and in late imperial China; and for technical background of inkstone making, Ko also gives a detailed account of contemporary stonecutters. See *The Social Life of Inkstones: Artisans and Scholars in Early Qing China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 49–80.

63. *Lizhi pu*, 140–41. For the representation of the Guangdong lychee in Tang poet Zhang Jiuling's 張九齡 “Rhapsody of the Lychee” (“Lizhi fu” 荔枝賦), see Paul Kroll, “Zhang Jiuling and the Lychee,” *Tang Studies* 30 (2012): 9–22.

與牡丹抗衡，而可獨步於西州。⁶⁴ Han Yanzhi's *Record of Tangerines* makes a similar claim about Wenzhou's tangerines as being just as worthy of literary treatment as Luoyang's peonies and Fujian's lychees.

To account for the diversity of local species, *pulu* writers made nuanced distinctions amongst different varieties in the region, by enumerating the names of objects. Here, the rhetoric of distinction serves inclusive rather than exclusive purposes because nomenclatural distinctions give each object a unique place within a group of similar objects. For instance, Lu You's *Catalogue of Tianpeng Peonies* lists twenty-one varieties of red peonies; many of the names are concrete images with poetic evocations that are associated with various hues of the color red: *Xiangyun* 祥雲 ("Auspicious Clouds"), *Shaoxing chun* 紹興春 ("Shaoxing Spring"), *Yanzhi lou* 胭脂樓 ("Rouge Boudoir"), *Zui Xishi* 醉西施 ("Drunken Beauty"), and *Caixia* 彩霞 ("Rosy Wisps"). To cite another example, in the *Catalogue of She Inkstones*, inkstones are distinguished by the natural patterns on the surface of the rocks, and the same patterns are further divided into multiple varieties. There are thirteen varieties within the category of *Luowen* 羅紋 inkstones (inkstones with line-patterns resembling ripples caused by a slight breeze); based on the size of the rippling lines, there are *Jiaosi luowen* 絞絲羅紋 ("silk-threads ripples") and *Shuasi luowen* 刷絲羅紋 ("fine brush-hair ripples"). The variety of inkstones with patterns that look like bigger waves is named *Jiaolang luowen* 角浪羅紋 ("wavy ripples"); and the variety with additional tiny bright spots is called *Jinxing luowen* 金星羅紋 ("golden-star ripples").⁶⁵

The nomenclature of objects in Song *pulu* writings commonly emphasizes the local identity or *terroir* of objects: their *chu* 出 ("origin"). Du Wan's *Yunlin Catalogue* has more than a hundred entries that name each type of rock by its native region. Local origin becomes an attribute of the object. In catalogues that feature specialty products from a single region, species were sometimes identified with their owners. The best varieties of lychees in Cai Xiang's catalogue are named after the households where the particular lychee trees were grown: *Chenzi* 陳紫 ("Chen Family's Purple"), *Jianglü* 江綠 ("Jiang Family's Green"), *Fangjia hong* 方家紅 ("Fang Family's Red"), *Youjia zi* 游家紫 ("You Family's Purple"), *Xiao Chenzi* 小陳紫 ("Little

64. Shen Li, "Haitang ji xu" 海棠記序, cited in *Haitang pu*, 49–50.

65. Tang Ji 唐積, *Shezhou yanpu* 歙州硯譜, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Wenfang sipu wai shiqi zhong* 宋元譜錄叢編文房四譜外十七種, ed. Zhu Xuebo 朱學博 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2015), 176.

Chen Family's Purple"), *Songgong lizhi* 宋公荔枝 ("Lord Song's Lychee"), *Lanjia hong* 藍家紅 ("Lan Family's Red"), *Zhoujia hong* 周家紅 ("Zhou Family's Red"), *Hejia hong* 何家紅 ("He Family's Red"), and *Fashi bai* 法石白 ("Fashi Temple's White").⁶⁶ Each name is a composite of two elements: the surname of the family or temple that owns the trees, and the distinctive color of the lychee's shell. The level of local specificity in the nomenclature of things places the reader in the locality, on the very spot where these fruits were grown. By bestowing a sense of intimate familiarity upon otherwise impersonal material knowledge, the author displays his credentials as a connoisseur of the lychee. In this case, the locality means more than an attribute of a commercial product: the emphasis on the local origin in the distribution of material knowledge in the *pulu* manuals creates a local identity that encompasses both the object's common properties (Fujian's lychees are superior to other regional competitors) and its individual characteristic (the Chen Family's Purple lychee has a different character from the You Family's Purple lychee).

Although salesmanship may not have been their explicit intention, *pulu* writers arguably pioneered early practices of advertising products in a competitive market. By creating local identities for products, *pulu* manuals turned their origins, as well as the local customs related to their production and consumption, into cultural and commercial assets. *Pulu* writers often ranked the quality of goods on the basis of their *terroir*. Gao Sisun's 高似孫 (1158–1231) *Brief Account of Crabs* (*Xielüe* 蟹略), for example, has a section on the "Gradations of Crabs" ("Xiepin" 蟹品), where crabs are arranged into different grades according to their origins: *Luoxie* 洛蟹 ("Luoyang crabs"), *Wuxie* 吳蟹 ("Wu region crabs"), *Yuexie* 越蟹 ("Yue region crabs"), and others.⁶⁷ The *Yunlin Catalogue of Rocks* similarly arranges different types of rocks based on their original geographical locations.

References to local customs often take the form of ethnographic descriptions of the local peoples and cultures that were pertinent to the production and consumption of their specialty product. Ouyang Xiu, for example, portrays Luoyang's festive celebration of the peony blossoms:

As per Luoyang custom, most locals are fond of peony blossoms. In springtime, people in the city, the noble and the poor alike, all wear peonies—even those

66. *Lizhi pu*, 144–45.

67. Gao Sisun, *Xie lüe*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Cuzhi jing wai shisanzhong*, 20–67.

who are carrying loads. During the blossoming season, literati and common people vie with one another to go sightseeing.

洛陽之俗，大抵好花，春時城中無貴賤，皆插花，雖負擔者亦然。花開時，士庶競爲遊遨。

Often, they set up tents and curtains at old temples or disused residences where there are gardens and ponds. They could hear each other's music and songs. The most populated places are the Moon Pond Dike, the Zhang Family's Garden, Tangdi Ward, the street to the east of Temple of Longevity, and Guo Ling's Residence. This goes on until the flowers fall.⁶⁸

往往於古寺廢宅有池臺處爲市，並張幄幕，笙歌之聲相聞。最盛於月陂堤、張家園、棠棣坊、長壽寺東街與郭令宅。至花落乃罷。

Here the tone is at once objective and intimate. The author takes the position of an ethnographer, the objective observer from the outside, reporting about Luoyang customs to the outsiders. Yet Ouyang's emphasis on the mingling of people across social boundaries ("the noble and the poor alike"), the length of the celebration ("until the flowers fall") and the enumeration of specific local place names all combine to present the consumption of peonies as a unique Luoyang experience. The lure of the peony becomes so much more than the consumption of an object; it is the desire for "authentic," local experience that anticipates modern specialty tourism. One consumes peonies to experience Luoyang's springtime, a season-long festival of music, dances, food and drink, a vacation when normal social regulations are temporarily suspended.

Pulu writers often refer to the remarks and practices of *turen* 土人 ("natives") and *xiangren* 鄉人 ("villagers") as authentic knowledge. Surely, this is a way for authors to claim the authority of the material knowledge they are distributing through the *pulu*; nonetheless, writers' dependence on local sources to obtain this knowledge in effect assigned a level of authority to local people.

68. Ouyang Xiu, "Fengsu ji" 風俗記, in *Luoyang mudan ji*, 6–8. Ronald Egan discusses this passage at length and points out that Ouyang's references to popular customs, urban culture, and commercial market here are unique and unseen in his other, more conventional, works. See Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, 133–39. Christian de Pee also considers Ouyang Xiu's description of Luoyang peony festival to be unusual in that it included commoners and markets—what were usually invisible in transmitted texts—in literary representation. See "Wards of Words: Textual Geographies and Urban Space in Song-Dynasty Luoyang, 960–1127," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52.1 (2009): 85–116.

When explaining the origin of the “Dongting orange” (*Dongting gan* 洞庭柑), Han Yanzhi notes: “the villagers say that its seed is originally from Dongting mountain, and that is how it acquired the name” 鄉人謂其種自洞庭山來，故以得名。⁶⁹ Naming is an act of authority; conferring names on previously unnamed objects defines their identities. Han explains the curious name of a certain “fresh branch orange” (*shengzhi gan* 生枝柑), again from the villagers’ point of view: “the villagers leave it on the branch because it lasts a long time; they wait for it to sweeten, then snap it along with the leaves (on the branch), put it on the plate and it looks fresh and lovely; therefore they name it *shengzhi*” 鄉人以其耐久，留之枝間，俟其味變甘，帶葉而折，堆之盤俎，新美可愛，故命名生枝。⁷⁰

When it comes to evaluating the products’ uses and values, local people’s practices also matter to *pulu* authors. In his description of the “vermillion orange” (*zhugan* 朱柑), Han reports that “the villagers do not appreciate it, and would not use it to entertain guests or offer as sacrifice” 然鄉人不甚珍寵之，賓祭斥不用。⁷¹ Elsewhere, in the *Yunlin Catalogue*, Du Wan portrays the natives as creative craftsmen, who could make appropriate use of the different types of stones based on their material properties. Their practical creativity transforms the stones into aesthetically pleasing and useful artifacts. With the dark “ink jade stones” 墨玉 which are light-weight, the natives “make belt rings and other useful objects” 帶胯或器物 that are “extremely moist and lustrous” 極潤。⁷² With the “agate stones” from Zhenzhou, they pick the ones that are “extremely large, pure white, with multi-colored patterns resembling brush threads, mild and translucent; the natives skillfully make use of the natural patterns, polish it and make Buddhist statues out of it” 有絕大而純白者，五色紋如刷絲，甚溫潤瑩徹，土人擇紋采斑爛點處，就巧碾成佛像。⁷³ In all of these cases, *pulu* authors portray the locals as the authoritative sources of knowledge. Not only do the locals define objects by naming them, but the ways in which the villagers make use of objects give them appropriate places in the social and cultural domains.

69. *Ju lu*, 151.

70. *Ju lu*, 150.

71. *Ju lu*, 151.

72. Du Wan, “Moyu shi” 墨玉石, in *Yunlin shipu*, 31.

73. Du Wan, “Liuhe shi” 六合石, in *Yunlin shipu*, 28.

Things in Pulu: Belonging to the Empire

Referencing local experience buttressed *pulu* authors' claims of authority, but more importantly, it implied an effort to find a place for the local through the discourse on things. The judgment of local producers and consumers sometimes represented a system of values and methods of value-making that is quite independent from—or even contradicts—literati taste. Du Wan's *Yunlin Catalogue*, for example, notes that the natives have their own criteria regarding the values of different stones. In discussing Lizhou rocks 澧州石, a type of jagged rockery in curious shapes from Lizhou (modern-day Hunan), Du notes that “the natives do not know their value, but scholar-officials often take them home to decorate their rock gardens; some quite resemble the magnificent peaks of Yandang Mountain” 土人不知貴，士大夫多攜歸裝綴假山，頗類雁蕩諸奇峰。⁷⁴ Here, Du measures the local people's failure to recognize the true aesthetic value of the rocks against the standard that was apparently set by scholar-officials.

Two further episodes from the *Yunlin Catalogue* concerning Jiangzhou rocks 江州石 accentuate the fluidity of an object's commercial and aesthetic values:

There are several kinds of rocks from Hukou in Jiangzhou; some are taken from the water and others from the water margins. One species has a dark green surface, some are in the forms of mountain peaks and rocky valleys, some resembles the shapes of various creatures. One other species is flat and thin, almost like a wooden slab, with perforating “eyes” (holes) that look like they were gouged out by a sharp knife. The pattern of these rocks is like brush hairs, with a nuanced luster; knock it and it makes a sound.

江州湖口石有數種，或在水中，或產水際。一種青色，渾然成峰巒岩壑，或類諸物狀；一種扁薄嵌空，穿眼通透，幾若木板，似利刀剗刻之狀。石理如刷絲，色亦微潤，扣之有聲。

A native of Hukou, Li Zhengchen, collects this kind of stone, which was praised by Dongpo (Su Shi), who named one of them “Nine Glories Mountain in a Jug;” he also said (in a poem): “with a hundred in gold I will return to buy this fine beauty.”⁷⁵ But the various peaks of these rocks sometimes form singular and artistic structures, and when linked together they become increasingly foraminate.

74. Du Wan, “Lizhou shi” 澧州石, in *Yunlin shipu*, 7.

75. This line is from Su Shi's poem “Huzhong jiuhua” 壺中九華. Stephen Owen translates and offers a fascinating reading of this poem in his *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 143–62. For a study on the image of

This type of rock is plentiful in Li's collection. By chance, their reputation grew because of an eminent scholar's recognition. Now they have returned to the imperial depository for a long time.

土人李正臣蓄此石，大爲東坡稱賞，目爲“壺中九華，”有“百金歸買小玲瓏”之語。然石之諸峰，間有作來奇巧者，相粘綴以增玲瓏。此種在李氏家頗多，適偶爲大賢一顧彰名，今歸尙方久矣。

There is yet another kind (of rock). Standing tall and straight, they form one or two peaks, some form three or four peaks that are high and steep. It has no distinct foothill, but there is a front and back (side) to the rock; the rock's head and tail look at one another and differ in size. The locals often attach a stone base to it and decorate it by gluing to it crushed stones with a shellac varnish. In that way they make potted mountains for sale. This is just like monks arranging sacrificial objects on a Buddhist altar in facing rows—quite tasteless.⁷⁶

又有一種，挺然成一兩峰，或三四峰，高下峻峭，無拽腳，有向背，首尾相顧，或大或小。土人多綴以石座，及以細碎諸石膠漆粘綴，取巧爲盆山求售，正如僧人排設供佛者，兩兩相對，殊無意味。

Du's account indicates the malleability of the object's value and the various forces that claim authority over its construction. Assessments of the aesthetic value of the rockery, especially in the case of the “Nine Glories Mountain in a Jug,” are made in the locality, as a consequence of historical contingency as much as the local collectors' intentional cultivation and deliberate connoisseurship.

In the first story, the local collector in Jiangzhou, presumably of merchant status, likes these jagged rocks and hoards them. Li Zhengchen might see the rocks' commercial potential based on his judgement of their aesthetic value, but this potential is only realized after Su Shi's literary endorsement. By naming the rockery “Nine Glories Mountain in the Jug,” Su Shi evokes the cultural significance of both the Nine Glories Mountain as a space of spiritual transcendence, as well as the herb-selling Daoist immortal Hugong's 壺公 Jug as a utopia; through these allusions he inscribe cultural significance in the local merchant's stone collection. The miniature rockery now acquires a cultural identity and becomes a portable utopia.⁷⁷

this rockery in Su Shi's poetry, see Yao Hua 姚華, “Su Shi shige de ‘qiuchi shi’ yixiang tanxi” 蘇軾詩歌的“仇池石”意象探析, *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產 2016.3: 155–65.

76. Du Wan, “Jiangzhou shi” 江州石, in *Yunlin shipu*, 7–8.

77. See Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, 143–62. Ronald Egan discusses the issue

The cultural meaning of an object is itself valuable, but the commercial market marks the values of things only in terms of their prices. The rules of the market penetrated even into the poetic representation, and Su Shi had to measure his desire in monetary terms: he was willing to pay “a hundred in gold” in order to own it.⁷⁸ At the same time, Su Shi’s desire for the rock acts as a form of currency; although he failed to purchase the rock, his poetic “investment” in the rock elevated its value, and the story ends with the rock being collected by the imperial treasury. Here, the court is not the arbitrator of taste; rather, it follows and endorses a judgment of a literary man. But Du Wan’s use of *gui* 歸 (“to return”) denotes a sense of belonging, implying an underlying ideology that all things in the empire belong to the emperor.

Although imperial sanction endowed the merchant’s rocks with monarchical prestige, once the rocks found a place in the imperial collection, they were no longer in commercial circulation. If the first case, in which Su Shi sought to buy Li Zhengchen’s stone, is a successful example of a local object gaining imperial significance and thereby becoming de-commodified, the second case about Jiangzhou natives making potted rockery gardens for sale is an example of a failed attempt at commodification. Du Wan ridicules the local artisans making potted rockery as “tasteless,” likening them to “monks arranging sacrificial objects on a Buddhist altar in facing rows;” in other words, they were judged as being rigid and lacking aesthetic ingenuity.

Du’s sneering at these local profit-driven artisans was consistent with the assumptions of a literati aesthetic sensibility that worshipped natural,

of possession as is manifested in the series of poems about the Qiuchi Rocks; see *The Problem of Beauty*, 220–36. Xiaoshan Yang discusses the set of poems on the “Qiuchi Rocks” in the context of gift exchange; see his *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 179–96.

78. *Baijin* 百金 (lit. “a hundred in gold”) is used in Su Shi’s poem as more of a hyperbolic gesture of the high value he attached to the rockery, rather than a specific amount of money in a practical sense. Both “hundred” (*bai* 百) and “gold” (*jin* 金) are vague, general terms which could mean many things. In the Song economic historical context, *jin* could refer to “metal,” “silver,” or “gold;” furthermore, due to the absence of a measuring word here, *baijin* can indicate prices that vary from a hundred copper coins to a hundred units of silver or gold. Generally, decorative rocks in the Song could be relatively pricey. For an examination of the measurement and the purchasing power of “gold” and “silver” in the Song, see Wang Shengduo 汪聖鐸, *Liang Song huobi shi* 兩宋貨幣史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003), 2:892–946. For more examples of textual references to the prices of decorative rocks in the Song, see Cheng Minsheng 程民生, *Songdai wujia yanjiu* 宋代物價研究 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2008), 293–95. Cheng takes *baijin* in this case to mean “a hundred *liang* of silver.”

spontaneous originality and categorically rejected human-made artifacts. But Du's choice of metaphor is ironic. On one hand, these sacrificial objects are the material expressions of the Buddhist monks' deliberate effort to search for a place outside of the sociopolitical order, to define for themselves a system of meaning and value making that is indifferent to—or even defiant of—imperial authority. Yet, on the other hand, the potted rockery was made by Jiangzhou natives who were seeking recognition that was rejected by the authority of literati taste. Both these cases place literati—Su Shi in the former case, Du Wan in the latter—in a position as mediators between the local and the imperial court. When literati discover these rocks from Jiangzhou as raw materials for connoisseurship and consumption, they give a voice to the locals, but sometimes this gesture of inclusion is predicated on an act of exclusion, as their aesthetic sanction often is confined within the boundary of predefined literati aesthetic sensibilities and cultural values.

Anthropomorphic Biography in the Context of Pulu

The *pulu* genre foregrounds material knowledge. Writing, circulating, and reading *pulu* manuals in the eleventh and twelfth century fostered a cultural sphere for learned men to invest themselves in the investigation, documentation, and dissemination of material knowledge. Song literati's fascination with objects extended to their creative undertakings in other domains, as exhibited in its ubiquitous traces in the development of the anthropomorphic biography genre during the Song. While skillful (and in most cases, deliberately playful) manipulation of material properties remains the primary compositional strategy of the genre, the Song anthropomorphic biographies display prominent textual and dialogic connections to the contemporary *pulu* texts.

Although the beginning of the genre is often attributed to Han Yu's 韓愈 (768–824) “Biography of Mao Ying” (“Mao Ying zhuan” 毛穎傳), about a writing brush,⁷⁹ the genre only gained momentum in the late eleventh

79. Han Yu, “Mao Ying zhuan,” in Liu Zhenlun 劉真倫 and Yue Zhen 岳珍 ed., *Han Yu wenji huijiao jianzhu* 韓愈文集彙校箋注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010) 26.2717–30. This is an account of a man who rose from obscurity to the position of Palace Secretariat, and who turned out to be an animated writing brush. Han Yu's piece caused quite a sensation amongst mid-Tang intellectuals, who were scandalized at his impropriety of using literary writing, a solemn vehicle of moral teaching, for frivolous verbal banter. In his pioneering work on Han Yu's humorous literature, James Hightower translated and discussed Han Yu's “Biography of Mao Ying” and Liu

century.⁸⁰ A total of six anthropomorphic biographies accounts for two-thirds of works classified in the biographical genre in Su Shi’s extant collected writings.⁸¹ Other writers in the Song also created an array of double-identity characters.⁸² Contemporary notes from the early twelfth century suggested that these writings were already circulating in printed anthologies and were popular to the point that their inclusion therein would promote book sales.⁸³

Zongyuan’s 柳宗元 (773–819) defense of it; see his “Han Yu as a Humorist,” *HJAS* 44 (1984): 5–27. See also Kawai Kōzō, “Tawamure no bungaku: Kan Yu no ‘gi’ o megutte” 戯れの文学——韓愈の「戯」をめぐる, *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō* 日本中国学会会報 37 (1985): 149–62.

80. In the three centuries in between Han Yu and Su Shi, this type of biography might have been composed—and some eight texts did survive—but they were rarely discussed. For discussions of the eight other anthropomorphic biographies attributed to pre-Song writers, see Lin Fang 林芳, “Mingqian jiazhan yanjiu” 明前假傳研究 (M.A. thesis, Zhejiang shifan daxue, 2015), 26–34.

81. The six anthropomorphic biographies feature a scallop, an inkstone, an orange, noodles, and medicinal herbs. There have been questions about Su Shi’s authorship of these works, notably from Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148, *jinshi* 1097) and Chen Shan 陳善 (fl. 12th century). Although both critics seemed to have based their criteria on the linguistic register of the works—that they are too “vulgar” (*lou* 陋)—they differed in their judgment regarding which works count as vulgar. This should suggest the shaky ground upon which these critics were standing. In his brush-note collection *Bishu luhua* 避暑錄話, Ye Mengde wrote: “In recent years, biographies of so-called ‘Lord of Wen and Tao,’ ‘Huang Gan,’ ‘Lu Ji,’ ‘Jiang Yaozhu,’ and the ‘Lord of Ten Thousand Shi’ are too numerous to count. As for the claim that Su Zizhan (Su Shi) was the author, absurd and mediocre people vied with one another to give credence to the story. How is it possible that Zizhan would be so vulgar?” 近歲溫陶君、黃甘、緣吉、江瑤柱、萬石君傳，紛然不勝其多，至有託之蘇子瞻者，妄庸之徒，遂爭信之。子瞻豈若是之陋耶？Ye was the son of the sister of Chao Buzhi 晁補之 (1053–1110, *jinshi* 1079), one of Su Shi’s literary followers, and his agenda was to defend the master by disclaiming works that were unfit for his reputation. See Ye Mengde, *Bishu luhua*, ed. Xu Shiyi 徐時儀, *Quan Song biji* ed. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2006), 2.10: *xia* 下. 338–39. In *Menshi xinhua* 捫虱新話 (completed 1149–1157), Chen Shan attributes the “Biography of Ye Jia” (“Ye Jia zhuan” 葉嘉傳) to a native of Fujian named Chen Biaomin 陳表民, and he supposes that of the six anthropomorphic biographies, only the “Biography of Jiang Yaozhu” is a genuine work by Su Shi. See Chen Shan, *Menshi xinhua*, ed. Zha Qinghua 查清華, *Quan Song biji* ed. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), 5.10: 6.54. These works have a relatively secure place in the late-eleventh- to early-twelfth-century literati cultural milieu, and judging from Ye Mengde and Chen Shan’s notes, they seem to have already been placed within Su Shi’s collected works.

82. For a list of extant anthropomorphic biographies attributed to Song writers, see Lin Fang, “Mingqian jiazhan yanjiu,” 69–71; a slightly different list is also provided in the appendix of Ho Shang-Jung 何尚融, “Songdai jiazhan yanjiu” 宋代假傳研究 (M.A. thesis, National Tsing Hua University, 2018).

83. Chen Shan speculated that some of the anthropomorphic biographies had been added to Su Shi’s literary anthology by profit-driven booksellers: “In my opinion, works like ‘Drunken Town’

Moreover, imitation works composed by Korean literati started to appear in the neighboring kingdom of Koryŏ 高麗 (918–1392) from as early as the twelfth century, suggesting that its literary impact extended beyond the borders of the Song Empire.⁸⁴ Later in the thirteenth century, other variations on the anthropomorphic biography—comic versions of prose genres including the edict (*zhizhao* 製詔), the admonition (*zhigao* 製誥), the letter of thanks for appointment (*xiebiao* 謝表), and the letter declining an appointment (*cibiao* 辭表)—which centered around the imaginary appointments of these animated objects, became a popular discursive practice in literary communities.⁸⁵

Despite its popular reception amongst Song and Korean literati in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the anthropomorphic biography remained frowned upon in the critical tradition until the early twentieth century, when scholars found in it one Chinese counterpart of the European “novel.”⁸⁶

and the ‘Account of the Sleeping Town’ are vulgar and shallow, they are by no means Dongpo’s works. Some said Dongpo only authored the ‘Biography of Jiang Yaozhu,’ and all others are false attributions. The book market these days often chases trends, adding, modifying and replacing [authentic texts] in order to sell books fast, and the bureau does not ban such practices.” 予觀坡集中如《醉鄉》《睡鄉記》之類，鄙俚淺近，決非坡作。或云坡只有《江瑤柱傳》，他皆非是。今市書肆，往往逐時，增添改換，以求速售，而官不禁也。 See *Menshi xinhua*, 6.54.

84. Some of the earliest works are considered to be the “Biography of Qu Chun” 麴醇傳 (wine) and the “Biography of Kong Fang” 孔方傳 (a copper coin), found in the Korean literatus Im Ch’un’s 林椿 (twelfth century) *Sōha sōnsaeng chip* 西河先生集 (Manuscript, Harvard-Yenching Library Special Collections), vol. 5. For a survey of anthropomorphic biography writings produced in Chosŏn 朝鮮 dynasty (1392–1910) of Korea, see Li Shanchan 李衫嬋, “Chaioxian Gaoli jiazhuan ti wenxue yanjiu” 朝鮮高麗假傳體文學研究 (Ph.D. diss., Zhongyang minzu daxue, 2012). There are also extant manuscripts of anthropomorphic hagiography (where objects become immortals) written by Japanese writers from the late eighteenth century, which suggest a prominent connection with the Song anthropomorphic writings.

85. Hou Tujian 侯體健 discusses an anthology of such works from the mid-thirteenth century; see “Fudiao de xixue: *Wenfang siyou chushou ji* de xingshi chuangzao yu wenxueshi yiyi” 複調的戲謔：《文房四友除授集》的形式創造與文學史意義, *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊 2018.2: 123–32. See also Liu Chengguo 劉成國, “Songdai paixie wen yanjiu” 宋代俳諧文研究, in *Zhongguo gudai wenzhangxue de chengli yu zhankai* 中國古代文章學的成立與展開, ed. Wang Shuizhao 王水照 and Zhu Gang 朱剛 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2012), 213–28.

86. Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 considered Han Yu’s “Biography of Mao Ying” an “attempt to write novel in *guwen*.” See “Han Yu and the Tang Novel,” *HJAS* 1 (1936): 39–43. Wang Yunxi 王運熙 considered the genre as descended from the Chinese *chuanqi* 傳奇 (“romance”), a tradition different from *guwen* 古文 (“ancient-style prose”). See “Lun Tang chuanqi yu guwen yundong de guanxi” 論唐傳奇與古文運動的關係, in *Han Wei Liuchao Tangdai wenxue luncong* 漢魏六朝唐代文學論叢 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 256–66.

Recent research on the genre has continued to embed these texts in Chinese literary history, but have shifted their emphasis upon a narrative of the genre's evolution from the Tang until the early twentieth century, reading these texts against their sociopolitical contexts.⁸⁷ While these studies have corrected the early twentieth-century assertion that the genre was an inferior form of fiction, they largely operated under a presumed mimetic relationship between literary texts and the social realities they reflected. But rather than mirroring its historical context, anthropomorphic biography sustained a discursive space where Song literati could reflect on and navigate, through the life of objects, their own positions in the network of power and relations.

By focusing on the material aspects of the anthropomorphic biography, this article proposes a new way of reading these narratives of strange characters and an explanation for their return to the Song literary scene. Specifically, it does so by teasing out the intricate connection between the biography and the *pulu* manuals. Despite marked differences in style and structure, the two kinds of writings shared an overlapping set of objects. These include traditional literati apparatuses such as inkstones, brushes, ink sticks, and paper, as well as everyday objects such as food and drink, plants and insects, as well as various domestic paraphernalia. Beyond the shared subject matter, there are also traceable mutual influences between the two genres. In the anthropomorphic biography one sometimes finds language describing the human character's temperament that was taken verbatim from the *pulu* of the corresponding object, while the conception of objects as personified characters, sometimes even accompanied by visual representations, was common in *pulu* texts that investigate tea and studio apparatuses.

87. Zhang Zhenguo periodized the development of the genre into six stages: it originated in the Tang, developed during the Song and Yuan, flourished in the Ming, was restored in the Qing, was revived during the Republic, and finally declined after the May Fourth movement. Several theses have been written on the anthropomorphic biography genre, each focusing on texts produced during a specific dynastic period. See Huang Xiaojie 黃小菊, "Tang Song jiazhuan yanjiu" 唐宋假傳研究 (M.A. thesis, Huadong shifan daxue, 2015); Lin Fang, "Mingqian jiazhuan yanjiu"; Qu Jing 瞿靜, "Mingdai jiazhuan ti zuopin yanjiu" 明代假傳體作品研究 (M.A. thesis, Sichuan shifan daxue, 2014); Tao Wenjie 陶文傑, "Ming Qing jiazhuan yanjiu" 明清假傳研究 (M.A. thesis, Zhejiang shifan daxue, 2015). Yu Zhonghua 俞樟華 and Lou Xinxing 婁欣星 adopt the same approach in *Gudai jiazhuan he leizhuan yanjiu* 古代假傳和類傳研究 (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2015). The fact that these frameworks of periodization often simply reiterate dynastic transitions suggests that they are more of an unexamined assumption than an explanatory framework.

The anthropomorphic biography is a double text. On the surface, it is a biography of an individual; but underneath the human story, there is a material layer of meaning, a treatise of an object. Take for example Su Shi's "Biography of the Scallop." Like other anthropomorphic biographies, on the surface, the text is a biographic account of the life and deeds of a local literatus named Jiang Yaozhu (see Appendix A for a full translation). But if one returns this figurative language to its material base, one would discover a hidden text, a treatise describing the scallop's material properties, its natural habitats, harvesting and processing methods, as well as textual references from history and literature (for a translation based on this alternative reading strategy, see Appendix B). The anthropomorphic biography is, in fact, a hidden *pulu* treatise. Although there is no extant *pulu* on the scallop, the structure and the kinds of materials that Su incorporated in the biography are consistent with the *pulu* writer's ways of seeing and describing things.

While contextualizing the Song anthropomorphic biography within the contemporaneous genre of *pulu* writing, this article is not claiming that each anthropomorphic biography text produced during the Song was based on a corresponding *pulu*. In fact, several objects featured in anthropomorphic biographies, especially domestic everyday objects, were not, to the author's knowledge, treated in the extant corpus of *pulu*. This article suggests that the eleventh-century anthropomorphic biography was conditioned by the birth of a new kind of material knowledge in politically-motivated and empirically-oriented *pulu*, which embodied the relationship between the empire and localities, and between the empire's institutions and the individuals who staffed them. The implication is that, although it was predicated on the same body of material knowledge, the anthropomorphic biography presented a different, and rather unsettling, aspect of the sociopolitical relations amongst the literati, the local, and the empire. In these narratives, the values of objects and persons could be as easily nullified as they are aggrandized.

Simultaneous Narration in Anthropomorphic Biography

Innovative writers folded the material knowledge of the *pulu* into anthropomorphic biographies through the structure of simultaneous narration: the art of saying two things within one utterance. Unlike the disinterested tone and descriptive language of *pulu*, anthropomorphic biography engages the polysemy of language to produce double texts. Each anthropomorphic

biography is simultaneously two different narratives: a story of a person, and a biological biography of an object. The mechanism of simultaneous narration enables the plain language of the manuals and catalogues to be understood as metaphors, evocative of its figurative meaning; in the meantime, the figurative language of the biographical account can also be returned to its literal meaning, gesturing towards physical, material experiences.

The language that authors of anthropomorphic biographies employed to portray human traits often comes from the vocabulary that *pulu* authors used to describe the material properties of objects. The temperaments and careers of the human characters are created by thinking metaphorically through the material properties of the things to which they correspond. To construct a fictional human character, words describing the material properties of the object are employed figuratively in portraying the personality and temperament of the corresponding character. In the "Biography of Jiang Yaozhu" (the scallop-literatus), the image of the scallop "holding precious gems" 懷寶 between its shells is taken figuratively as the young literatus "having talents," while "lacking fragrance" 無馨德 and "giving off a foul smell" 發聞惟腥 are taken as the literatus "lacking virtues."⁸⁸

Elsewhere, in the biography of the inkstone, the author portrayed Luo Wen, whose material identity is a She inkstone, as being "of a gentle disposition" 資質溫潤, and a "cautious and likable" 縝密可喜 person.⁸⁹ These phrases are evocative of the language of eleventh-century inkstone connoisseurship—they are almost taken verbatim from contemporary *pulu* on She inkstones. The anonymous *Treatise on She Inkstones* (*She yan shuo* 歛硯說) describes the "Dragon Tail stones" 龍尾石, the raw material for *Luowen* inkstones: "Dragon Tail stones are mostly produced in the water; for this reason, they are extraordinarily moist and smooth. The stone's texture is firm and dense. When knocking it, the stone sounds clear and melodious, almost like the sound of jade, very different from other stones." 龍尾石, 多產於水中, 故極溫潤; 性本堅密, 扣之其聲清越, 宛若玉振, 與他石不同.⁹⁰ The stone's "moist and smooth" texture is mapped onto the character's "gentle disposition"; the same phrase is used to equate the material property with the emotional disposition. Likewise, the stone's "firm and dense" texture is analogous to the character's "cautious" nature.

88. See Appendices A and B.

89. Su Shi, "Wanshi jun Luo Wen zhuan" 萬石君羅文傳, in *Su Shi wenji*, 2:13, 424–26.

90. *She yan shuo*, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Wenfang sipu wai shiqi zhong*, 193.

The naming of the biographic protagonists often puns on the nomenclature of the object. In Su Shi's "Biography of Luo Wen, Lord Wanshi" ("Wanshi jun Luo Wen zhuan" 萬石君羅文傳), the subject of which is an inkstone, the character's name of Luo Wen 羅文 is a homophone of Mount Luowen 羅紋山 in She county 歙縣 (modern-day Anhui), a site that repeatedly appeared in Song *pulu* manuals for the connoisseurship of rockery and inkstones. As discussed in the previous section, naming objects after their geographical origins is a common *pulu* practice. The *Catalogue of She Inkstones* begins with an introduction of this particular mountain and its stone-production: "Mount Luowen is also known as Furong Creek. There, more than ten stone pits spread out over more than a hundred *li*; the stones grow from the water margins around the mountain, but there are no stones in the creek" 羅紋山, 亦曰芙蓉溪. 硯坑十餘處, 蔓延百餘里, 皆山前後沿溪所生, 溪水中殊無石.⁹¹

Naming often has larger implications, beyond simply identifying the character with a certain object and its *terroir*: it signifies values. Lord Wanshi's name, "Luowen," is the nomenclature for a particular type of inkstone, whose ripple pattern (*luowen*) determines its value as a commodity and as a collectible. These inkstones were extremely popular amongst literati, and there are several extant Northern Song *pulu* that detail practices of connoisseurship on She inkstones. In his *Inkstone Chronicle* (*Yan shi* 硯史), the painter and calligrapher Mi Fu 米芾 (1051–1107) meticulously describes the She inkstones he has personally seen, categorizing them by their patterns, including thin-lined ripples with no stars 細螺紋無星, dark ripples with a purple coin-sized star in the shape of goose eye 青羅紋一星紫金如鵝眼錢, golden thread ripples 金絲羅紋, thick-lined ripples 粗羅文, and brush-hair fine-lined ripples 刷絲羅紋, among others. Based on the quality of these exquisite patterns, Mi describes the market prices of different *luowen* inkstones as ranging from "dozens of copper coins" 數十金 to as much as "five to seven thousand copper coins" 五七千以上無估.⁹² Just as the shape, color and composition

91. Tang Ji 唐積, *Shezhou yanpu* 歙州硯譜, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Wenfang sipu wai shiqi zhong*, 175.

92. See Mi Fu's discussion on "inkstones from She County, stones produced in Wuyuan" ("She yan Wuyuan shi") 歙硯婺源石 in *Yan shi* 硯史, in *Song Yuan pulu congbian Wenfang sipu wai shiqi zhong*, 184. Note that with ten thousand copper coins, in the late eleventh century, one could have had a pavilion built in the middle of Luoyang. See Cheng Minsheng, *Songdai wujia yanjiu*, 602.

of the *luowen* define the inkstone's material identity and its value, the name Luo Wen signifies the character's value—his usefulness as a servant for the empire—and foregrounds his subsequent rise in prestige.

Besides the issue of naming, the biography's basic narrative plot frequently mimics the *pulu* tropes of discovery and recognition, of rescuing the precious object from its original obscurity. In *pulu* manuals, the author assumes the role of an observer venturing into a locality to discover the values of objects scattered across the local terrain; in anthropomorphic biographies, this figure is transformed into the ultimate authority who recognizes talented men: the emperor. In Luo Wen's biography, the *pulu* connoisseur's act of "knocking" on the stone in order to discern its quality is turned into the classic scene of recognition, in which Luo Wen has his first audience with the emperor:

(Luo Wen) was summoned to the Pavilion of Literary Virtue. The Emperor saw him and found him extraordinary. He teased Luo Wen: "You have long dwelled in uncultivated land. But you are graced by the water from the Leaking Spring; you have soaked in it for so long that you do not dry up." The emperor then tested him with questions, and Luo Wen answered with the clear voice of resounding metal. The emperor was delighted: "The ancients talked about 'the quality of jade and the sound of metal'—you are truly it!" He then promoted (Luo Wen) to Secretariat Drafter in Attendance.⁹³

蒙召見文德殿，上望見，異焉。因玩弄之曰：“卿久居荒土，得被漏泉之澤，涵濡浸漬久矣，不自枯槁也。”上復叩擊之，其音鏗鏗可聽。上喜曰：“古所謂玉質而金聲者，子真是也。”使待詔中書。

The emperor is the connoisseur of human character and talent: at first sight, he is able to recognize that Luo Wen is "extraordinary" (*yi* 異). "Water from the Leaking Spring" 漏泉之澤 is a metaphor for the abundance of the emperor's benevolence: even a tiny drop of it is enough to nurture life. This four-character phrase is commonly, and almost exclusively, used in imperial edicts bestowing imperial recognition on a person. Here, the emperor's diction befits the lofty rhetoric of the imperial edict. On the level of the inkstone, the metaphor of the spring returns to this artifact's material quality: the rock from which the inkstone is made comes from the river, and this material condition gives the inkstone its moist and smooth texture. Likewise, the description of Luo Wen's voice as *kengkeng* 鏗鏗—the onomatopoeia of the clear sound

93. Su Shi, "Wanshi jun Luo Wen zhuan," 425.

of resounding metal, and the emperor's comment on Luo Wen's having the "quality of jade and the sound of metal" 玉質金聲, also find their material base in the original *pulu* description of the *luowen* rock as having the sound of jade and metal.

Through extensive use of simultaneous narration, writers braided the human story and the object's materiality together to mirror one another. More than creating simple parallels, the materiality of things illuminates the vulnerability of the human body and the capriciousness of human fate. The material processes in the biography of the scallop elucidate the violence a person must put himself through in order to secure himself a place in the larger sociopolitical order. The act of "carving" (*juanzhuo* 鑄琢) is figuratively deployed in the human story as the necessary process of "polishing" and "improving," making a person into a useful subject of the empire. On the material level, the verb describes the action of cutting, mutilating, and shaping raw material in order to produce an aesthetically pleasing object. This material process lays bare the materiality of the relationship between the empire and the men who served it as officials. The court sees worth in men with respect to their usefulness, their "value" for the emperor. But unfortunately, like all material things, these individuals will "expire," ultimately becoming useless burdens.

Elsewhere, the "Biography of Ye Jia" ("Ye Jia zhuan" 葉嘉傳), which anthropomorphizes tea leaves, advances the unsettling proposition that the process of integrating an individual into the bureaucratic structure essentially entails the destruction of the self:

The Son of Heaven saw him and said: "I have long heard about your name, but never know your true quality. Let me test you!" The emperor then looked around and said to his servants: "Look at Jia—he has the appearance of iron, his substance bold and forceful. It should be difficult to use him as he is. He must first be put through a series of tests." He then attempted to threaten Jia with these remarks: "The hammering block in the front and the cauldron at the back are here to cook you. What do you think of that?"

天子見之，曰：“吾久飫卿名，但未知其實爾，我其試哉！”因顧謂侍臣曰：“視嘉容貌如鐵，資質剛勁，難以遽用，必槌提頓挫之乃可。”遂以言恐嘉曰：“砧斧在前，鼎鑊在後，將以烹子，子視之如何？”

Jia was enraged. He took a breath and declared: "Your humble subject is only a rustic scholar from the mountains and marshes. I am fortunate to have been selected and brought here to your majesty. If I could benefit others, even if I

were to have my body smashed into pieces and my bones ground to powder, I will not refuse." The emperor laughed and commanded that he be treated as an eminent ministry official; he then entrusted Ye Jia with crucial state affairs.⁹⁴

嘉勃然吐氣，曰：“臣山藪猥士，幸惟陛下采擇至此，可以利生，雖粉身碎骨，臣不辭也。”上笑，命以名曹處之，又加樞要之務焉。

Here the language evokes the material processes of tea production. The “appearance of iron” refers to the color of oxidized tea leaves. The “bold and forceful substance” refers to the texture of the tea leaf. To “put one through a series of tests” is the metaphor of tea production process: young leaves are picked from tea trees; the tea leaves are then dried on a heated surface, after which they are beaten with a mallet and ground into powder.

The physical violence involved in the process of turning leaves into tea powder serves as a reminder of the violence in making an individual a useful vessel for the empire; one must be willing to have one's body “smashed to pieces” and bones “ground to powder” in the process of public advancement. The language of official biography has become so formulaic and figurative that the material base of language is often forgotten. The writers of anthropomorphic biography, however, engage the double semantic domains—the material and the metaphorical—through the structure of simultaneous narration. In doing so, they return the figurative language to its material base. The materiality of the language amplifies the physical damage that inevitably occurred during the individual's assimilation into the sociopolitical structure of the empire. The perils of public life were to be felt in the most visceral manner.

Anthropomorphic Things: How (Not) to Belong?

The material narrative and the human narrative resonate in mutual analogy. At times, the two narratives seem like two separate worlds mirroring each other; but the fact that they are two alternative readings of the same text brings them into mutual illumination. The social life of the objects sheds light on the materiality of the human condition and the contingency of human fate, while the rise and fall of the human character demonstrates the fluidity of values. Ultimately, the meanings of things and persons rely on the signification of words.

94. Su Shi, “Ye Jia zhuan,” in *Su Shi wenji* 2:13,429–32.

There is no better case than the biographical afterlife of the scallop to illustrate how a text invests things with cultural and social value, which eventually materialize into the object's rise in prestige and increase in monetary value, so that it becomes *gui* 貴 (“expensive,” “prestigious”) in the full sense of the word. At the time when Su Shi's wrote the “Biography of Jiang Yaozhu,” the scallop, like its personified character, Jiang Yaozhu, was very much a local thing, known only to locals in Mingzhou and Hangzhou. Su Shi would not have known that the scallop would soon rise from local obscurity to become a famous product, being sold in markets during the Southern Song.⁹⁵ Items like “Scallop Sashimi” (*Jiangyao sheng* 江瑤生) and “Deep Fried Scallop with Pork Belly” (*Jiangyao zhadu* 江瑤炸肚) were featured on the most extensive extant menu of a twelfth-century imperial banquet.⁹⁶

But before that, the scallop first entered the tributary system in the late eleventh century. A mid-twelfth century brush-note collection, Wu Zeng's 吳曾 *Nenggaizhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄, recorded the moment:

In the third year of the Shaosheng reign era (1096), the first imperial edict for Futang and Mingzhou to present an annual tribute of fifty catties of scallop meat was issued. The scallop is commonly called the “red honey cube.” It is the Jiang Yaozhu for whom Su Dongpo wrote a biography.⁹⁷

紹聖三年，始詔福唐與明州歲貢車螯肉柱五十斤。俗謂之紅蜜丁。東坡所傳江瑤柱是也。

The fact that the anecdote refers to Su Shi's “Biography of Jiang Yaozhu” speaks of a readership that was more familiar with Su Shi's biography of the scallop than with the actual scallops. In fact, the explanatory tone suggests that Wu assumed that his readers might not even have seen one in the flesh. Since the court had by then been relocated to Hangzhou at the time Wu assembled

95. For a study of seafood consumption in the Northern Song capital of Bianjing, see Stephen H. West, “Cilia, Scale and Bristle: The Consumption of Fish and Shellfish in The Eastern Capital of the Northern Song,” *HJAS* 47.2 (Dec. 1987): 595–634.

96. In the early winter of 1151, Emperor Gaozong led his entourage to visit the house of Zhang Jun 張俊 (1086–1154), a powerful military official who entertained the emperor and his entourage with a grand banquet. The lavish menu is preserved in *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事, Zhou Mi's 周密 (1232–1298) memoir of Hangzhou. See “Gaozong xing Zhang fu jieci lue” 高宗幸張府節次略, in *Dongjing menghua lu wai sizhong*, 443–53.

97. “Fangwu: Che'ao” 方物·車螯, in Wu Zeng, *Nenggaizhai manlu*, *Quan Song biji* ed. (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), 5.4:15.161.

this anecdote collection, southern foods (especially seafood) were certainly more abundant and accessible than they had been in Kaifeng. The appetites of the imperial court adapted to the natural resources of its surrounding territory. Yet, for a local foodstuff to become enlisted as a tributary item no doubt increased its status within the hierarchy of luxury goods.

It is unlikely that Su Shi wrote the "Biography of Jiang Yaozhu" with the intention of making it prestigious, but the fact that the scallop eventually became a tributary good was very likely a consequence of Su Shi's biography. The cultural life of the scallop as a tributary item was, rather, the making of its biographic afterlife. The text creates a place for the scallop within the larger world outside of Mingzhou, and in the imperial palace kitchens in Bianjing and Lin'an. However, the same text also recounts a story about the failure to create a place for oneself in the world. Although Jiang Yaozhu tried, he did not manage to fit into the social circle in Hangzhou and was forced to return to his hometown.

Like Jiang Yaozhu, the lives of most characters in anthropomorphic biographies do not end well. When they are discovered from local peripheries and promoted to official positions, these individuals acquire value by becoming bureaucratic servitors. But most of these stories end with the abandonment and public humiliation of the protagonists, which leads to their disillusionment with the system, and many are forced to look elsewhere for meaning. The rise and fall of the human characters in their sociopolitical career arcs are shown through the making and breaking of the objects. Luo Wen, the Secretariat Drafter in Attendance, was caught up in political struggles at court in his heyday, which very much recalled the fierce factionalism in the political atmosphere during Su Shi's lifetime.⁹⁸ In the end, the emperor cast aside this aging official; in desperation, he asked for retirement in front of the emperor, but was "pushed to the ground" 擠之殿下 by a military man and "fell over and died" 顛仆而卒.⁹⁹ The grimly comical ending of Luo Wen's life—and its double in the broken inkstone—represents the individuals who lost imperial favor just like objects deprived of agency, whose meanings are conferred only by their owner: the emperor.

98. For a study of factional conflicts in late Northern Song political culture and how it played out in the rhetoric and discourse of authority, see Ari Daniel Levine, *Divided by a Common Language: Factional Conflict in Late Northern Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

99. Su Shi, "Wanshi jun Luo Wen zhuan," 426.

In other cases, the imperial subject retains a certain degree of agency; but for the purpose of self-preservation, he often must forfeit the identity of an imperial subject and withdraw from public advancement. For example, in Su Shi's "Biography of the Lord of Wen and Tao" ("Wen Tao Jun zhuan" 溫陶君傳), Shi Zhongmei 石中美, the emperor's Chief Steward for Food, was enfeoffed as the Lord of Wen 溫 and Tao 陶 counties, for he happened to have prepared the right food that satisfied the emperor's appetite. However, once his remarks were a little too "hard to stomach" 剛鯁 (lit. "a fishbone stuck in the throat"), he lost his job. Shi Zhongmei commented with bitterness: "Before, I was accepted as his confidant, now suddenly I lost his trust—this is a sign that he does not intend to see me through. Even if he may think of me again when he needs me, he will eventually dislike me." 昔也得充心腹,而今也遽不信,是有不善我之心,雖使時或思我,彼將不盡矣。¹⁰⁰ For fear of falling out of imperial favor, Shi decided to resign "on the excuse of illness" 稱疾, and left the court. The ruler's favor was unpredictable, so much so that individuals chose to exit from the imperial system as a means of self-preservation.

These anthropomorphic biographies reflect on the dark side of official advancement. The careers of these object-human characters imply that the process of assimilation into the bureaucratic system may well result in personal exploitation, and, ultimately, the possible destruction of the self. Ultimately, the biographies raise questions about the legitimacy of the sociopolitical system as the arbiter of a person's value. However, these questions are folded into these polysemic narratives, and further hidden behind the comic pretense of "vulgar" puns and ridiculous characters.¹⁰¹ Perhaps the writers themselves were uncomfortable about the subversive implications that these stories potentially suggested, or uncertain about how far they wanted to go with these

100. Su Shi, "Wen Tao Jun zhuan," in *Su Shi wenji* 2:13.432–33.

101. Humor and witticism are crucial to writings that involve anthropomorphic tropes but to discuss how such playful witticism intervenes to tame, alter, or sharpen the critical edge of the biographies would merit a full paper. For a discussion on "making comedy from history" (*yishi weixi* 以史爲戲), see Liu Chengguo, "Yishi weixi: lun Zhongguo gudai jiazhuan" 以史爲戲: 論中國古代假傳, *Jianghai xuekan* 江海學刊 4 (2012): 191–97. For analyses of the comic and satirical effects of Han Yu's humorous literature, see James Hightower, "Han Yu as a Humorist," and Kawai, "Tawamure no bungaku Kan Yu no 'gi' o megutte." For an examination of the role of wit in constructing a private discursive space during the mid-Tang, see Stephen Owen, "Wit and the Private Life," in *The End of the Chinese "Middle Ages": Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 83–106.

metaphorical propositions. Although it may risk reducing the story's potential subversiveness, the comedy of the anthropomorphic biography protects a discursive space for dissent and frustration. The lives of things offer alternative interpretations of the lives of men and, in so doing, question existing power relations and convictions. The human failure in these stories echoes the political frustration that one so often encounters in reading biographies of Song literati, but here the pathos and cruelty were materialized in the images of the scallop left to rot away on the forgotten coast, and the once-treasured inkstone broken into pieces.

Conclusion

The Northern Song discourse on things emerged from the imperial unification of the tenth century and commercial expansion in the eleventh century, when the material world of things became integrated into the sociopolitical dimensions of literati life. The two kinds of object-centered writings, *pulu* and the anthropomorphic biography, expose two intertwined dimensions of the eleventh-century discourse on things: *pulu* enable the commoditization and political integration of localities, things, and individuals, whereas anthropomorphic biographies expose the inevitable disappointment and violence inherent in these processes.

The practice of writing *pulu*, manuals, and treatises on local specialties (tributary goods in particular), grew out of the Northern Song state's integration of the newly reclaimed southern regions into the empire's sociopolitical order. While the *pulu* practice would become more about private reflections on, and the practical construction of, the literati's domestic aesthetic space in the late Southern Song and afterwards, during the eleventh century it stemmed from practices in the sociopolitical domain, where scholar-officials in localities managed to insert themselves into the imperial gaze by writing about the empire's prized objects. The majority of *pulu* texts from the Northern Song and early Southern Song were composed by scholar-officials during their tenures in local government administration, with a readership and circulation that was based primarily upon the authors' own sociopolitical networks. These public concerns cultivated a new mode of producing and disseminating material knowledge in *pulu* writings, which gave authority to empirical knowledge gained through personal experience. This new mode attached unprecedented significance to local residents as an authoritative source of

knowledge, which was instrumental in the *pulu*'s political function of textually integrating localities into the empire. In *pulu* texts, therefore, localities and local objects gained meanings only when they became accepted, owned, and used at the court as tribute from peripheral regions of the empire.

While the *pulu* discourse confirmed confidence in the sociopolitical system, the biographies of anthropomorphic things exposed a distrust in the proposition that persons and objects could realize their values by becoming useful imperial subjects. Anthropomorphic biographies made use of the material knowledge disseminated through *pulu*; based on the material properties of these objects, writers invented fictional characters with human/object double identities, endowing them with human ambitions and social lives. The figure of the *pulu* writer as the discoverer and connoisseur of local objects and talents provided the basic narrative arc for these biographies: persons, like things, were nurtured in the unique material conditions of the locality, discovered and brought to the court and made useful to the emperor. However, anthropomorphic biographies exposed the dark side of this process. In order to become useful, the objects would have to go through processes of physical mutilation, and when they were broken or worn-out, their use value having been exhausted, they were eventually abandoned.

The discourse on things placed material objects within the political economy of the empire. Writers encountered objects in their local obscurity, rescued them by injecting these objects into empire-wide networks of commercialization and circulation through the act of writing. At the same time, they saw in the materiality of things—that the process of making plants, fishes and stones useful objects involves violence and damage—the vulnerability of their own individual fates.

*Appendix A: The Biography of Jiang Yaozhu*¹⁰²

The young man's surname is Jiang, his name is Yaozhu ["jade column"], his courtesy name is Zimei ["the beautiful one"], and his ancestor was a native of Nanhai county [Guangdong]. His fourteenth ancestor Meichuan ["the enchanting river"]¹⁰³ fled from the Hepu ["the merging river"] upheaval and migrated to the Min and Yue regions [Fujian and Zhejiang].¹⁰⁴ There were many literati in Min and Yue. Hearing of Meichuan's arrival, they were quite excited. Day and night, they discoursed [with him]. They pushed him [towards a public career].

[However,] Meichuan hid himself away. He once sighed and said to his grandson: "I know the transgression of a commoner who has talents. What

102. The original Chinese text of "Jiang Yaozhu zhuan" provided at the end of the two appendices is based primarily on the text in the *Su Shi wenji* edition, with modified punctuation; for interpretations of the text, I have also consulted the annotations in Zhang Zhilie 張志烈, Ma Defu 馬德富, and Zhou Yukai 周裕楷 ed., *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 蘇軾全集校註 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2010), 11:13.1392–98.

103. Historical events related to the scallop are employed freely in the anthropomorphic biography in the construction of the family history of the character Jiang Yaozhu. The name of the ancestor, "Meichuan" 媚川, corresponds with "Meichuan port" 媚川都 (a seaside port located in present-day Guangdong), the place where the last ruler of the Southern Han Dynasty (917–971), Liu Chang 劉鋹 (942–980), set up an administration here in charge of pearl-farming.

104. Hepu 合浦, a town on the border of modern-day Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, is also a historical site of pearl production. The term "Hepu Upheaval" 合浦之亂 in history could refer specifically to the local revolt that began in Hepu in the sixteenth year of the Jianwu 建武 (25–56) reign era of the Eastern Han, when a local woman named Trung Trác 征側 and her younger sister Trung Nhi 征貳 rebelled against the Han government in Jiaozhi Prefecture 交趾郡. The upheaval managed to make Trung Trác the queen of Jiaozhi, before the Eastern Han general Ma Yuan 馬援 quelled the revolt in 43 CE. This historical event is recorded in Vietnamese historiographies as well, where the sisters were presented as heroes who rose up against institutional suppression and committed suicide at their inevitable failure. See "Nan Man Xinan Yi liezhuan" 南蠻西南夷列傳, in Fan Ye 范曄, ed., *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 10:86.2836–37. See also Wu Shilian 吳士蓮 ed., *Da Yue Shiji quanshu* 大越史記全書, "Wai ji" 外紀, *juan* 3, "Zheng Nüwang ji" 徵女王紀 (rpt. Japan, 1884, Harvard-Yenching Library Special Collections). In the late eleventh-century context, the historical "Hepu Upheaval" has contemporary resonance and very likely was a deliberate reference to the war fought between the Lý dynasty of Đại Việt (modern Vietnam) and the Song dynasty between 1075 and 1077, in which the Northern Song suffered a large number of casualties. For an account of the war and events that led to the war, see James A. Anderson, "Traacherous Factions: Shifting Frontier Alliances in the Breakdown of Sino-Vietnamese Relations on the Eve of the 1075 Border War," in *Battlefronts Real and Imagined: War, Border, and Identity in the Chinese Middle Period*, ed. Don J. Wyatt (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 191–226.

kind of person is Shang Ziping!”¹⁰⁵ He then left his children and travelled footloose on the muddy paths. He covered up his luminous virtues, and people have no clue where he ended up. Meichuan has two sons, the elder is named Tianding [“to add a son”], and the younger Majia [“horse cheek”].¹⁰⁶ [Majia] first came to settle along the Yin River and is now a local of Fenghua in Siming County.

Yaozhu is Meichuan’s grandson. He has a gentle disposition, an unpretentious look and an honest heart. After he had grown up, when he took his clothes off and washed himself, [one could see that he is] tall in height, with a fair complexion, his build is round and upright like a column, with no body hair. His father’s friend Old Pao thought him extraordinary and said: “I have met many men.¹⁰⁷ In the past someone dreamt of a man whose beauty was likened to a jade river [Yuchuan]. This son of yours can be called Yaozhu [the jade column].” Therefore, he gave him this name.

This gentleman had few desires, but he was fond of those with whom he got along well. He did not pass judgment on others. People were also happy to be around him. He was particularly friendly to Master Che from Emeidong, Mr. Xiaqiu from Qingxi, and Mr. Zhang Ju from Wangchaomen.¹⁰⁸ They were from similar backgrounds and shared similar experiences. Wherever

105. Shang Ziping 尚子平, also known as Xiang Chang 向長 (courtesy name Ziping 子平), was famous for refusing to serve the polity and led a life of the recluse; after marrying off his children, he disappeared into the mountains. See “Yimin liezhuan: Xiang Chang” 逸民列傳·向長, in *Hou Han shu*, 83.2758.

106. “Tianding” 添丁 was the courtesy name of Tang poet Lu Tong’s 盧仝 (795–853) son, which means “to beget a son (a *ding* is a labor and taxation unit for the empire).” As an epithet for the scallop, “Majia” 馬頰 appears in Han Yu’s poem “Eating Southern Dishes for the First Time, For Yuan the Eighteenth” (“Chu nanshi yi Yuan Shiba xieliu” 初南食貽元十八協律): “Octopus and the scallop compete to present their strangeness” 章舉馬甲柱，鬪以怪自呈。See *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 10:341.3827.

107. Old Pao’s 庖公 surname “Pao” also designates the profession of the cook.

108. Lord Che (*Chegong* 車公) is a pun on crab (*che’ao* 車螯), Mr. Xiaqiu (*Xiaqiu zi* 遐丘子) is a pun on shrimp (*xia* 蝦), Zhang Ju 章舉 is the epithet of the octopus (*zhangyu* 章魚). The appellation of Master Che also alludes to the fourth century character Che Yin 車胤, a handsome prodigy who grew up to be a learned scholar, just like Su Shi’s protagonist Jiang Yaozhu here. The character of Jiang Yaozhu partially overlaps with that of Che Yin: anecdotal sources suggest that Che Yin was a popular socialite at parties, and his contemporaries commented that “there is no fun without Lord Che” 無車公不樂. This comment is repeated verbatim in the “Biography of Jiang Yaozhu.” Che Yin’s anecdote is mentioned in Liu Xiaobiao’s 劉孝標 commentary on the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語; see Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, *Shishuo xinyu*, ed. Liu Xiaobiao (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 101.

they went, everyone present would admire them greatly. However, even the three gentlemen considered themselves inferior to Yaozhu.

This gentleman cultivated himself and curated a good reputation. His name was known throughout the country, but most of all, his fellow countrymen loved and respected him. At all celebratory occasions such as seasonal festivals, capping ceremonies and weddings, as well as reunions with family and friends, he was always invited as the special guest. If he refused to go, people would complain regretfully: "There is no fun without Mr. Jiang!" The gentleman got so fed up with this that sometimes he would escape to the lonely shores. However, the busybodies would go to all troubles to look for him. Even when the high-ranking officials at court were to serve local offices in the Southeast, they would often pick Siming—this was largely because they set their mind on Mr. Jiang.

The Prefect of Fufeng alone did not receive him with much courtesy. The gentleman grew unhappy by the day and decided to move to Wulin [Hangzhou]. On his way he was caught up in the heat and got the "Dry Interior" (*zhonggan*) syndrome.¹⁰⁹ With strenuous effort, he managed to get up and entertain friends and relatives with a grand banquet. Among the guests there was a certain gentleman with the surname He, who was also a celebrated literatus in the Jianghuai region. [Mr. He] was seated on a more honorable position than Mr. Jiang.

Everyone marveled at Mr. He, and scorned Mr. Jiang: "We heard that your reputation was a mere relic of the past. The praises from the men of your village were not always trustworthy. What Master Han [Yu] described as a "repulsive look" and "tasteless speech"—doesn't that precisely [describe] you!¹¹⁰ Even

109. The "Dry Interior" syndrome (*zhonggan zheng* 中乾症) is a diagnostic term in Chinese medicine, with a few occurrences in Song texts. For instance, Lü Yihao 呂頤浩 (1071–1139), when petitioning the imperial court for a transfer away from Lin'an (Hangzhou) office, complained that Lin'an was a humid, disease-ridden lowland, and that after a year of service as the governor of Lin'an, he suffered the Dry Interior syndrome and diarrhea (*zhonggan xiali* 中乾下痢), see Lü Yihao, "Ci mian zhi Lin'an fu qi gongguan zha" 辭免知臨安府乞宮觀劄, QSW 141:3044.275.

110. This alludes to Han Yu's humorous prose piece "Farewell to Misfortune" ("Song Qiong wen" 送窮文), in which the Master of the House accuses the Demon of Misfortunes for "everything that makes my face despised and my speech unappreciated" 凡所以使吾面目可憎、語言無味者. See "Song Qiong wen," in *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 6:557.5640–1. James Hightower translated and discussed this piece; see his "Han Yu as Humorist," 20–3. The exact phrase was repeatedly used by Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) in his letters to friends; for instance, "If one does not nourish his mind with ancient and contemporary

if you go back home, people won't adore you, they'll leave you on the sea for those who have a thing for the foul smell. Why don't you just go home! For what do you have to compete with Mr. He?!"

Mr. Jiang was utterly unable to respond. Feeling extremely ashamed, he left [the banquet]. He told his friends: "I failed to heed my grandfather's warning and didn't withdraw to the rivers and lakes—instead I was wandering from banquets to banquets for a meager salary. What's worse, I lack the fragrance of virtue, what I have is only a foul smell; no wonder I was shut out by Mr. He and frowned upon by the Prefect. I should have followed my people and roamed under the water. If I don't get to attain my aspirations, even if my body would be ground to powder, what would there be to lament! Now I beg your pardon." Sure enough, he did so. Afterwards, his clan again flourished in Siming County, although his reputation is slightly compromised.

The Grand Historian comments: "As the common saying goes, 'A melon growing in the wrong place will not flourish; a dragon dwelling in the wrong pool will lose its miraculous power.' This is certainly true for various creatures, but for people, too. Alas! Yaozhu is indeed a fine gentleman. When he was highly respected by people, just like the delicacy on the banquet table, its marvelous taste would surpass the exotic tastes of even the dragon's liver and the phoenix's marrow. But once it was served in an untimely fashion, it would lose its true substance and people walking by would cover their noses; even the official-scholars and learned people would judge it as inferior. When it comes to taking or leaving office, one must be very cautious [of such pitfalls]. How lamentable!"

(histories), then vulgar dust would pile up there; when looking at the mirror, he would despise his own face; when speaking to people, his speech would also become uninteresting." 人胸中久不用古今澆灌之,則俗塵生其間,照鏡則覺面目可憎,對人亦語言無味也。See Huang Tingjian, "Yu Song Zimao" 與宋子茂, QSW 104:2283, 348. Su Shi cited Huang's remark in a note; see "Ji Huang Luzhi yu" 記黃魯直語, QSW 91:1983, 230.

*Appendix B: The Biography of the Scallop
(An Alternative Translation)*

The river scallop is called “Jiang Yaozhu” [the jade column from the river]. It tastes delicious. They were products of the southern coastal region [Guangdong], where it was also known as the pearl scallop. “Meichuan” [the enchanting river] and “Hepu” [the river-merging port] were two important places of pearl-farming. They were also produced in the Min and Yue regions [Fujian and Zhejiang]. Min and Yue abound in seafoods; the scallop is a popular foodstuff there. The pearl scallop is grown in the riverbeds, carrying the pearl between the two shells. Buried in the mud, the luster of the pearl is concealed and thereby does not shine forth; therefore, the scallop’s pearl was not particularly valued. The scallop is also called “Tianding” [“adding a son”] and “Majia” [“horse cheek”]. They were also the local produce of Yin River in Fenghua of Mingzhou County. “Yaozhu” belongs in this scallop family.

The scallop is mild in nature. It has hard shells and soft tissues. As the scallop grows, the spots on the shells would fade away. The scallop’s abductor muscle is long and fair, round and straight, resembling a column. It is the chef’s favorite ingredient. The scallop tastes rather bland, but its taste blends well with the flavors [of other ingredients]. It goes well with all sorts of things, while adding a sweet flavor. It is often served together with dishes of crab, shrimp and octopus. They are all products of the rivers and seas. Whenever these things are presented on the dinner table, they would outdo all other dishes, winning the hearts of all guests.

Among all seafoods, however, the scallop is the most beloved. The local villagers [of Mingzhou] love it. Whatever the occasions are, be it a banquet for the capping ceremony or wedding, feasting relatives or entertaining friends, people would always offer scallop dishes. Once the scallop is not on the banquet table, the guests would all be dissatisfied. The natives living on the coast would go through all kinds of trouble to pick scallops from the sea. Moreover, court officials who were traveling to provincial posts would often choose to go to Siming. This is all because of the scallop.

Some are not big aficionados of the scallop. People would preserve scallops by drying them in the hot air, to make them available in places like Hangzhou. In Hangzhou, however, the clam is a more popular foodstuff. When the dried scallop and the clam are both offered on dinner tables, the guests would prefer clams, and dislike dried scallops. This is because dried scallop

gives off a pungent smell. Over time, the fame of the scallop waned slightly, but it is still abundant and popular.

The Recorder said: “As the common saying goes, ‘A melon growing in the wrong place will not flourish; a dragon dwelling in the wrong pool will lose its miraculous power.’ This is certainly true for various creatures—and for the scallop, too. Alas, the scallop is indeed delicious! When it is presented as a delicacy on the banquet table, its marvelous taste would eclipse the exotic tastes of even the dragon’s liver and the phoenix’s marrow; but once it is served in an untimely fashion, it would lose its true flavor. People walking by would cover their noses; the knowledgeable scholars would judge it as inferior. When it comes to the timing for coming out and retreating, one must be very cautious. Alas, how lamentable!”

江瑤柱傳

生姓江，名瑤柱，字子美，其先南海人。十四代祖媚川，避合浦之亂，徙家閩越。閩越素多士人，聞媚川之來，甚喜，朝夕相與探討，又從而鑄琢之。媚川深自晦匿，嘗喟然謂其孫子曰：“匹夫懷寶，吾知其罪矣。尚子平何人哉！”遂棄其孥，浪跡泥塗中，潛德不耀，人莫知其所終。媚川生二子，長曰添丁，次曰馬頰，始來鄞江，今爲明州奉化人。瑤柱世孫也。

性溫平，外慤而內淳。稍長，去襁褓，頎長而白皙，圓直如柱，無絲髮附麗態。父友庖公異之，且曰：“吾閱人多矣。昔人夢資質之美有如玉川者。是兒亦可謂瑤柱矣。”因以名之。生寡欲，然極好滋味合口，不論人是非。人亦甘心焉。獨與峨嵋洞車公、清溪遐丘子、望湖門章舉先生善。出處大略相似。所至一坐盡傾然。然三人者，亦自下之，以謂不可及也。

生亦自養，名聲動天下，鄉閭尤愛重之。凡歲時節序，冠婚慶賀，合親戚，燕朋友，必延爲上客。一不至，則慊然皆云無江生不樂。生頗厭苦之，閒或逃避於寂寞之濱。好事者，雖解衣求之不憚也。至於中朝達官名人游宦東南者，往往指四明爲善地，亦屢屬意於江生。

惟扶風馬太守，不甚禮之。生浸不悅，跳身武林。¹¹¹道感溫風，得中乾疾。爲親友強起，置酒高會。座中有合氏子，亦江淮

111. The *Su Shi wenji* edition's punctuation of this line is 跳身武林道，感溫風 (“moved to Wulin Circuit, struck by the hot wind”). Since Wulin was the epithet of the city of Hangzhou and was not a circuit, it is more appropriate to punctuate the line as 跳身武林，道感溫風 (“moved

間名士也，輒坐生上。衆口歎美之曰：“聞客名舊矣。蓋鄉曲之譽不可盡信。韓子所謂面目可憎語言無味者，非客耶？客第歸，人且不愛客而棄之海上，遇逐臭之夫，則客歸矣，尙何與合氏子爭乎！”生不能對，大慚而歸。語其友人曰：“吾棄先祖之戒，不能深藏海上，而薄游樽俎間；又無馨德，發聞惟腥，宜見擯於合氏子，而府公貶我。固當從吾子游於水下。苟不得志，雖粉身亦何憾。吾去子矣。”已而果然。其後族人復盛於四明，然聲譽稍減云。

太史公曰：“里諺有云：‘果蓏失地則不榮，魚龍失水則不神。’物固宜然，人亦有之。嗟乎瑤柱！誠美士乎。方其爲席上之珍，風味藹然，雖龍肝鳳髓，有不及者。一旦出非其時而喪其眞，衆人且掩鼻而過之，士大夫有識者，亦爲品藻而置之下。士之出處不可不慎也。悲夫！”

to Wulin [Hangzhou city], and on his way he was caught up in the hot wind”). The Zhang Zhilie et al. critical edition adopts the latter punctuation.