

The Technology of Enchantment: Agentive Texts and Religious Theatre at Huizong's Court

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ABSTRACT: This article posits the idea of the *agentive text* to grapple with the role of literature in post-Tang courts, when the court lost its position as the key endorser and shaper of literary taste. By examining the literary texts entangled in two major events associated with the creation and promotion of the new Divine Empyrean Daoism in the Northern Song court during the first quarter of the twelfth century, namely, the staging of a divine revelation and the construction of *Genyue* imperial park, I delineate the ways in which texts participated in the orchestration of religious spectacles, the re-ordering of spatial order, and the re-arrangement of social networks at court. Such texts, I argue, constitute a “technology of enchantment” that aided the production and perpetuation of a landscape of gods that embraced the emperor himself.

Keywords: agentive text, Divine Empyrean Daoism, *Genyue*, technology of enchantment

While early medieval Chinese courts have been justly celebrated as vibrant sites of literary production, innovation, and consumption, post-Tang courts seem lack luster by comparison. The handful of attempts at studying the role of the court in literary history after the splendid era of court culture in the Six Dynasties and the Tang are often accompanied by gestures of regret for the court's declining importance in the literary production of its time, and apologies for the dreadfully formulaic works under review.

These gestures, I think, are symptoms of an underlying ideology of literary criticism that views the ‘text’ as an object produced by a historical ‘context’, and the further fetishization of the text as

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an object to be singled out for aesthetic appraisal. The objectification of the text was by and large appropriate in describing epochs of intensely self-conscious literary pursuits, in courts led by lords enamored with fine writings (as sponsors of literature and as writers themselves) and surrounded by a constellation of “literary courtiers” (*wenren* 文人) equipped with unrivaled skills in composing “belle letters” (*wenzhang* 文章).^① Examples of such milieu may be found in the early medieval courts of the latter Han and the subsequent Northern and Southern Dynasties.^② However, in cases where the court lost its role as the key driver of literary innovation and where the focus of the court was laid elsewhere than on the craft of fine literature—and this applies to the majority of post-early medieval courts—this approach will inevitably lead to frustrations. It is not that such courts stopped caring about writing; quite the contrary, court literary production after the Tang displays a heightened self-consciousness that takes the forms of curating literary corpuses of the monarchs,^③ sponsoring compilations of grand encyclopedias,^④ and not the least in the magnitude of textual output made possible by advancements in printing technology.

The problem, as I see it, is that the nature of the relations between literature and the court underwent changes, and such changes force us to adopt a different strategy of reading.

Even within early medieval court literature, recent contributions have shifted toward a more elastic framework of court literature that pushes the boundaries of both the concept of the “court” and what constitutes “literature.” The results are refreshing accounts of court literary practices that participate in the building of cultural identities and communities,^⑤ facilitate the self-fashioning of the sovereign,^⑥ and engage in state-building and inter-state politics.^⑦

① Instead of the more normative term “wenshi” 文士 commonly adopted in dynastic historiography, I opt for the term “wenren” (lit. “literary man”) that Cao Pi 曹丕 uses in his definitive essay, “Lunwen” 論文, for the emphasis of the latter on their identity as writers rather than their political affiliation or classical learning.

② “Yongming ti yu Qi Liang shitan” 永明體與齊梁詩壇, in *Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史, Vol. 2, ed. Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 and Luo Zongqiang 羅宗強 (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999, 2002 reprint) pp. 120–145. Xiaofei Tian, “From the Eastern Jin through the early Tang (317–649),” in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume 1: To 1375*, pp. 199–285.

③ Zhou Jia 周佳, “Shenzong yuji kao” 《神宗御集》考——兼論北宋君主御集的編纂與用途, in *Wenxian* 文獻, No. 1 (Jan 2015), pp. 167–178; Wang Xiaochen 汪瀟晨, “Nan Song junzhu wenji bianxiu de zhengzhi gongneng tantao” 南宋君主文集編修的政治功能探討——以紹興修《徽宗御集》與敷文閣為中心, in *Hebei daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 河北大學學報哲學社會科學版, Vol. 45, No. 3 (May 2020), pp. 12–21.

④ Johannes L. Kurz, “The Compilation and Publication of the *Taiping yulan* and the *Cefu yuangui*,” *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* (2007), pp. 39–76.

⑤ Xiaofei Tian, “Circling the Tree Thrice: Lord, Vassal Community,” in Tian, *The Halberd at Red Cliff: Jian’an and The Three Kingdoms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018) pp. 79–156.

⑥ Jack W. Chen, *The Poetics of Sovereignty: On Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

⑦ Lu Kou, *Courty Exchange and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy in Early Medieval China* (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2018).

The Agentive Text

With these contributions, we are getting closer to what I think is the idea of the *agentive* text, and by “agentive,” I have in mind the capacity that Bruno Latour ascribes to material “actors/actants.”^① Perhaps more emphatically than has been claimed in recent scholarship on early medieval court literature, to say that a text “acts” (as opposed to “represents”) in the Latourian sense is to look at how texts “authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid” the formation of certain social relations.^② The emphasis on how texts (un)do social ties allows us to shift the focus of our critique away from the literary merits or qualities of court writings and to look instead at how such writings participate in the creation of socio-political relations, monuments, and memories at court. Acknowledging the text’s capacity as an actant in the complex network of relations also urges us to enlarge our notion of what constitutes “literature” and to extend our attention beyond belletristic masterpieces to include other texts despite their (want of) literary refinement.

The implications of the agentive text extend beyond circumventing our modern habits of reading a literary text as an aesthetic object. More forcibly, they sharpen our focus on how court literature ‘acts’ and constitute an experiment at the boundary of historicized literary criticism that takes literature as a critique of, or a commentary on, the historical ‘context.’

The recognition of the agentive text calls into question the notion of “context” as a stable ground for the interpretation of the “text.” Drawing on insights from Latour, Rita Felski questions our standard ideas of context that are predicated on dichotomies of texts/words and contexts/world, that contrive to see text and context as separable entities, as if the text were an object insulated within the container of the context.^③ The problem with such dichotomies, Felski points out, is that the text has always been part of the context. In other words, the text plays generative roles in the very formation of what we understand as the context. What actor-network theory can offer to literary studies, as Felski suggests, is “another view of works of art and of the social constellations in which they are embedded,” a view that attends to the “ongoing connections, disconnections, and reconnections between multiple actors.”^④ Here I would like to take up Felski’s proposition for a “postcritical reading,” which, as I understand it,

① Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007).

② Latour makes a convincing case for expanding the notions of “agencies” beyond “intentional” human actors to include “material relations,” which makes a difference in forming social relations, see Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, p. 72.

③ Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 156.

④ Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique*, p. 158.

is a reading strategy that operates simultaneously within the text, between texts, and at the interfaces between the text and other forms of social forces: writers, audiences, conventions, and rituals.^①

The usefulness of the notion of the “agentive text” is that it re-inserts the text into social relations as they were being formed. Approaching the text as an actor participating in a constantly shifting network of social relations, instead of an object produced in a certain social context, also has the advantage of doing away with the problematic boundary between “functional” and “literary” texts. It is this notion of the agentive text that I will engage with in this article as I believe that it will prove productive in thinking about court literature after the High Tang, when the court began to lose its central role in arbitrating, innovating, and setting standards of literary practices.

In this article, I examine selected texts from two sets of writings that played pivotal roles in the decade-long political and religious reconfigurations at the court of Song Emperor Huizong 宋徽宗 (r. 1101–1126), towards the end of his reign. The first set includes an eyewitness account by Emperor Huizong describing an event of divine revelation in the winter of 1117, and a heptasyllabic quatrain with divine attribution from the same event. Both the account and the quatrain were carved into stone steles as monuments that assist and mark the establishment of the Divine Empyrean Dao (*Shenxiao Dao* 神霄道). For the next decade, this new religious sect held sway at court, and was particularly adept at supplying the emperor’s whims with religious justifications. At the pinnacle of their mutually beneficial relationship, a landscaping project was initiated on the pretense of bolstering the religious efficacy of the court. This produced the *Genyue* 艮嶽 imperial park, so named after the main feature of the park—an artificially constructed mountain range, or rather, an entire mountain ecosystem. On the eve of the project’s completion in 1122, Emperor Huizong commissioned a set of literary compositions: two rhapsodies, a poetry set of one hundred heptasyllabic quatrains (*baiyong* 百詠) each devoted to a specific site in the garden; the emperor personally composed a prose account. The comprehensive examination of this complete set will be the topic of a separate study. In this article, I will focus on reading Huizong’s account against relevant portions of the rhapsodies and selected poems from the hundred quatrains.

Attending to the agentive dimensions of these texts, I seek to shed light on how court literature as an ‘actant’ participated in, and shaped, a decade of intense political and religious reconfigurations. I show how the texts mobilize theatrical and architectural projects to rearrange the temporal and spatial orders, to construct a symbolic landscape that materializes a bold theocratic order of the empire, and to forge new dual identities of the sovereign as well as his enablers as simultaneous agents of the gods and saviors of man. I consider the enabling role literary texts play in the reshuffling of social relations by placing these texts within the ecologies of motifs, motives, performers, spectators, time, and places—

① Rita Felski, “Context Stinks!” in *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 117–150.

various 'actants' that constitute the intricate network of relations at Huizong's court. By "ecologies," I underscore the court and the place of *Genyue* as 'environments' that are constantly renewed and reshaped by human and non-human actants of motifs, motives, memories, and literary traditions.

Based on the agentive role of the text, I posit the term "technology of enchantment" as a shorthand for the idea of literary texts as a form of "technology", in the sense that it enables the creation and perpetuation of illusions. By "enchantment," I have in mind Wai-ye Li's discussions on the rhetorical tradition of *fu* 賦 rhapsodies, in which she emphasizes how "the dramatic sense of language as play and performance" in Han *fu* "turns reading into the experience of a sustained and carefully manipulated illusion."^① Whereas the dialectics of enchantment in Han *fu*, in their evocation of extravagant imperial parks, ultimately serve an agenda of disenchantment and the restoration of order, in Huizong's court, literary texts turn the trope of the *fu* rhapsody on its head, by working towards a re-enchantment of the disenchanted audience through their absorption into an efficacious space and through the activation of the hidden portals to immortality.

A Divine Revelation

On the evening of the sixteenth day of the twelfth month of 1117, brilliant rays of colorful light suddenly shot from the stars.^② Following a sudden clap of thunder, a flash of lightning illuminated the dark pillars of the Hall of Peaceful Tranquility, the private residence of Emperor Huizong, awakening the emperor. In dazzling brilliance, he saw a ceremonial procession with streamers and halberds emerging from the night clouds. The celestial god, accompanied by a pageantry of numberless feathered men bearing splendid carriages, descended on the hall. Amidst the clamors of hairpins and jade pendants, the emperor heard "wondrous music" 妙樂, the clear sound of which reminded him of the murmur of a cold spring.

After a while, the divine pageantry retired in a northwesterly direction, the "extraordinary fragrance" 異香 that oozed from the auspicious clouds lingered on. In the wake of the wonder, a twenty-eight-character poem appeared on the emperor's writing desk. When he rushed to scrutinize the awesome calligraphy, written in an enigmatic script that recalled the tortuous shape of a dragon and the elusive form of clouds, he noticed that the ink was still half wet, indicating that the poem had just been written down.

We will examine the poem presently, for now we will follow the contours of the event. The emperor

① Wai-ye Li, "Fu Rhetoric and the Fictional Imagination," in *Enchantment and Disenchantment: Love and Illusion in Chinese Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.14–17.

② This reconstruction of the divine encounter is based on Huizong's own account of the event, preserved as part of the inscription on the "Stele of Emperor Huizong's Colophon on Chu Hui's Poem in Dragon Script and Cloud Seal" 宋徽宗題楮慧龍章雲篆詩文碑. I am responsible for the translations in this article unless otherwise noted.

examined the text in detail and found at the end of the poem a signature of one “Chu Hui, the Senior Clerk of the Western Terrace” 西台長吏臣楮慧 who, the emperor was convinced, turned out to be the divine incarnation of Lin Lingsu 林靈素, the Daoist priest at his court.^① The emperor immediately asked to see Lin, only to be told that the priest was, at the moment, “in sweet slumber” 酣寢 at the Temple of Perfected Communion 通真宮, “faraway” 邈 from the site of the divine event. The next day, he questioned Lin about the event that occurred the night before, whose only response was an enigmatic smile. Profoundly touched by the divine revelation in which the “Great Dao manifests itself to man beyond sounds and sights” 大道示人甚於影響, the emperor composed a testimonial account detailing the event, and later had the piece (written out in his signature “slender gold” calligraphy), together with the poem signed by Chu Hui, carved in stone. A version of the stone stele has remained (Fig. 1).^②

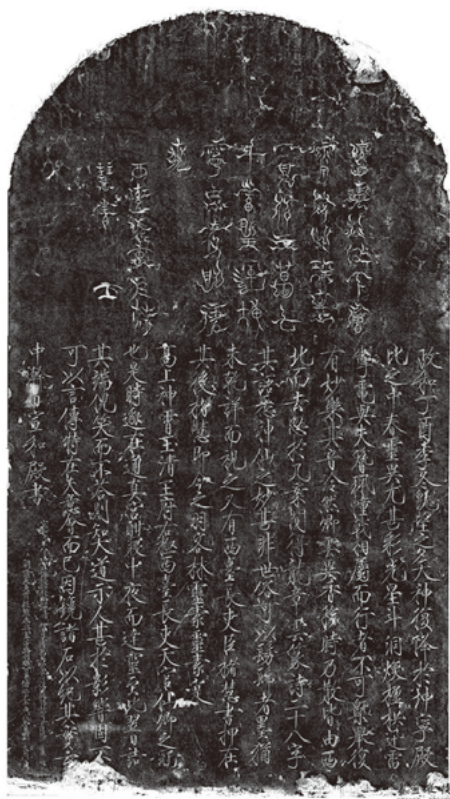


Figure 1. A rubbing of the inscription on the “Stele of Emperor Huizong’s Colophon to Chu Hui’s Poem in Dragon Script and Cloud Seal” (dated to 1119), found in in the Monastery of Tranquil Correspondence 靜應觀 in the Mountain of the Sovereign of Medicine 藥王山 (modern Shaanxi 陝西). The upper half of the stele is the seven-syllabic quatrain signed by Chu Hui; Huizong’s account, written in his “slender gold style” calligraphy, occupies the bottom half of the stele.

① Lin’s name appears elsewhere as Lin Ling’e 林靈噩. The earliest account of Lin’s life is the “Biography of Lin Lingsu” 林靈素傳 by his contemporary Geng Yanxi 耿延喜 (fl. 1127), which served as the basis for Lin’s biography in Zhao Yushi’s 趙與時 (1175 – 1271) *Bintui lu* 賓退錄 and Lin’s biography in *Song shi* 宋史. See Paul R. Katz, “Lin Lingsu,” *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, Fabrizio Pregadio ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2008) Vol. 1, 657–9.

② “Song Huizong ti Chu Hui longzhang yunzhuang shiwenbei” 宋徽宗題楮慧龍章雲篆詩文碑, in *Shaanxi Yaowangshan shike yishu zongji* 陝西藥王山石刻藝術總集 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 2013), vol. 6a 第六卷上冊. This extant stele, carved in 1119, may have been a copy of the 1118 original. Information concerning the material

Who was this deity? What was the purpose of the divine manifestation, and how does it relate to Emperor Huizong? What was the nature of the relations between the deity, the celestial clerk Chu Hui, the emperor, and Lin Lingsu?

The history extends back to the spring of 1116, when Lin Lingsu was introduced to Huizong's court and the Shenxiao order of Daoism emerged.^① Upon their first meeting, Lin was able to charm the emperor who, as historians reported, “regarded him as an old acquaintance” 視如舊識.^② Lin Lingsu was responsible for founding the new Daoist sect of the Divine Empyrean, with exclusive emphasis on the Divine Empyrean, one of the nine heavens in the Daoist cosmology.^③ He brought with him an ingenious design that assimilated the emperor deep within his mystic vision. He revealed to the emperor that, unlike all previous monarchs who were mortals chosen by Heaven's mandate as the ruler of man, His Majesty was a Daoist deity who had descended from Heaven for the salvation of man:

“Among the nine empyreans of heaven, the Divine Empyrean is the highest; its government seat is called the *fu* Precinct. The Prince of the Jade Clarity in the Divine Empyrean is the Divine Emperor's eldest son, who oversees the South and is designated the Lord Great Sovereign of Long Life—this is His Majesty yourself. After His Majesty descended into the mortal world, His Majesty's younger brother, the Lord Emperor Green Efflorescence who oversees the East, took over the duty of the South. I myself was the immortal official in your Precinct, my name was Chu Hui; and I have also descended into the jurisdiction of His Majesty the Lord Sovereign.”^④

天有九霄，而神霄最高，其治曰府。神霄玉清王者，上帝之長子，主南方，號長生大帝君，陛下是也。既下降於世，其弟號青華帝君者，主東方，攝領之。已乃府仙卿，曰褚慧，亦下降帝君之治。

provenance of the stone stele is included at the end of the inscription, located at the bottom left of the stele: On the seventh day of the eighth month in the first year of Xuanhe Reign (1119), Tutor of Education and Transmission, Director of Yaozhou Prefecture's Daoist Temple of the Divine Empyrean of Jade Clarity of Ten Thousand Years, Grand Master Daoqing, Daoist Priest of the Purple Rank, Yang Chongde supervises; Grand Master for Court Audiences, Former Judicial Commissioner of Yongxing Military Prefecture, with purple goldfish sachet, Liu Liangbi recruits the workmen. 宣和元年八月初七日，傳授科教師知耀州神霄玉清萬壽宮事道清大師賜紫道士臣楊崇德管勾，朝請大夫前提點永興軍等路刑獄公事偕紫金魚袋臣劉良弼募工。

① For the rise of the Shenxiao order at Huizong's court and Lin Lingsu's role, see Michel Strickmann, “The Longest Taoist Scripture,” *History of Religions*, 1978, Vol. 17, No. 3/4, pp. 336–38.

② “Zhenghe liunian” 政和六年, in Bi Yuan 畢沅, *Xu Zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑒, ed., Feng Jiwu 馮集梧, 220 *juan*. (1801) [hereafter, *Xu Zizhi tongjian*], v. 47, j. 92, p. 13a, available online https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=19113&by_title=%E7%BA%8C%E8%B3%87%E6%B2%BB%E9%80%9A%E9%91%91&page=72.

③ For a discussion of the Divine Empyrean movement during Huizong's reign, see Shin-yi Chao, “Huizong and the Divine Empyrean Palace Temple Network,” in Patricia Ebrey ed., *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: Politics of Culture and Culture of Politics* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 324–58.

④ “Zhenghe liunian” 政和六年, in *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, v. 47, j. 92, pp. 13a–13b.

Lin Lingsu designates a sacred identity to Emperor Huizong, fashioning the ruler of the empire as god's son and agent on earth. Huizong was entirely taken by the novel idea of becoming, literally, the "son of heaven." Soon he submitted a proposal to the imperial Academy of Daoist Register, suggesting that he be designated the Sovereign Founder and Lord of Dao 教主道君皇帝.^①

Though it may seem ludicrous to modern readers, Emperor Huizong embraced Lin's design with genuine enthusiasm. The proposal made good use of the royal family history and issues surrounding Emperor Huizong's succession to the throne. As the eleventh son of his father, Emperor Huizong had little claim to the throne; the fact that he succeeded his elder brother, Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (1077–1100; r.1085–1100) who died young, was to a large extent made possible by the latter's failure to bear heir.^② Lin's narrative legitimized the unexpectedness of Huizong's succession to the throne with a narrative that identified the emperor himself as "heaven," and not just as a representative of heaven's mandate. The arrangement of shared duties between Emperor Huizong's divine former self and his younger brother unmistakably mirrors, in reverse, the relation between Emperor Huizong and his deceased elder brother.

By the time of Lin Lingsu's introduction to court, Huizong's predilection for mysteries and marvels was already well known throughout the empire and claims of encounters with the divine (in dream or in reality) are abundantly documented in historiography.^③ If in his dreams and occasional encounters with religious mysteries Emperor Huizong was the spectator of marvelous performances, then Lin Lingsu went a step further by casting the emperor at the center of the stage. Moreover, beyond enshrining the emperor and himself in the Daoist pantheon, Lin Lingsu's design also assigns sacred positions for individuals surrounding the emperor, including powerful ministers, eunuchs and his favorite concubine.^④ In so doing, Lin turns the secular state into a sort of theocracy, in which the

① Emperor Huizong writes in the petition to the Daoist Academy: "I am the eldest son of the Supreme Sovereign, and I am made the Lord Sovereign of the Great Emphyrean. I witnessed the central kingdom falling victim to the doctrine of Jin Barbarians who burnt their fingers, severed their limbs, and sacrificed their bodies in pursuit of a correct awakening. I have much sympathy for them, so I petitioned the Supreme Sovereign to allow me to become the master of man, to lead all under heaven toward the correct path. The Sovereign gave me his permission and asked Lord Sovereign Green Efflorescence to oversee affairs in my Great Emphyrean. I constantly worry about the incompleteness of our teachings. You all can present a memorial to designate me as the Master of Teaching, Lord of Dao, the Emperor." 朕乃昊天上帝元子，為大霄帝君，睹中華被金狄之教，焚指煉臂，捨身以求正覺，朕甚閔焉。遂哀懇上帝，願為人主，令天下歸於正道。帝允所請，令弟青華帝君權朕大霄之府。朕夙昔驚懼，尚慮我教所訂未周，卿等可上表章，冊朕為教主道君皇帝。 See *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, v. 47, j. 92, pp. 19b–20a.

② Patricia Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 38–70.

③ *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, v. 45–49, j. 87–95. For a survey of Huizong's devotion to Daoism, see Ebrey, 2014, pp. 343–71.

④ Cai Jing as the Immortal Uncle of the Left Primordial, Wang Fu as the Clerk of Literary Efflorescence, Cai You as the Clerk of Treasure Efflorescence of the Garden; Zheng Juzhong, Liu Zhengfu, Sheng Zhang, Wang Ge, and other various powerful eunuchs all have their titles. Prized Consort Liu was the emperor's new favorite, and so she was

emperor, members of the royal family, court officials, and Daoist practitioners like Lin Lingsu himself become the human intermediaries through which the divine gods of the Daoist pantheon rule.

These were negotiations prior to the spectacle that Emperor Huizong beheld on the winter night of 1117. The event was, however, not Huizong's first sighting of this deity's descent. Earlier in the spring of the same year, Lord Sovereign of Green Efflorescence manifested in front of the emperor and a public audience of two thousand Daoist practitioners in the Daoist Temple of Precious Registry of the Upper Clarity 上清寶籙宮, located in the northeast of the imperial palace.^① In his account, the emperor makes the point of comparing the two events and marvels at how the second revelation was even more “exceedingly remarkable in its numinous extraordinariness” 靈異尤甚.

The change in place is important, as the choice of venues for the meeting reflects the nature of the relationship between the parties. This time, the Lord of the Green Efflorescence manifested not in the formal space of the temple in front of a public audience, but rather, in the emperor's private quarters. The change of location indicates the increased intimacy in the supposed familial bond between Huizong and the deity, his celestial brother. A sense of familiarity and shared memories is conveyed in the heptasyllabic quatrain signed by Chu Hui—that is, Lin Lingsu:

鸞輿彩仗下層霄，	The phoenix carriage accompanied by a colorful pageantry
	descends from the folds of the empyrean,
絳闕瑤台一見招。	from the crimson tower on the jade terrace, he waves at us upon
	first sight:
三萬七千當聖運，	After thirty-seven thousand years, right in this sagely reign,
坤寧忠孝助唐堯。	to the Hall of Peaceful Tranquility, the loyal and the filial (brother)
	come to assist the Emperor Tang Yao.

Lin Lingsu's biography in *Song shi* notes that he had “the rudimentary skills to compose poetry” 粗能作詩.^② This is confirmed by the crudeness of diction and unsophisticated syntax of the quatrain above. Its syntax is that of the everyday speech; the language is plain; the allusions and poetic imagery it employs are of the level of an elementary primer. It would be futile to look for those demonstrations of literary embellishments that one would expect from a court poem.

called the Lady An of the Jade Perfected of the Nine Efflorescence. 又目蔡京為左元仙伯，王黼為文華吏，蔡攸為園苑寶華吏，鄭居中、劉正夫、盛章、王革及諸巨闖，皆有名位。而貴妃劉氏方有寵，則曰九華玉真安妃也。 See *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, v. 47, j. 92, p. 13b.

① *Xu Zizhi tongjian*, v. 47, j. 92, p. 19a.

② “Lin Lingsu,” in Tuo Tuo 脱脱 (1313 – 1355) et al. ed., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), j. 462, pp. 13528–30.

The key to understanding the effectiveness of the agentive text lies elsewhere. This is a divine pronouncement in the poetic form of the heptasyllabic quatrain. Through its courtly form, theatrical presentation, and specialized knowledge of Daoist scripture, the text transforms the theatric spectacle into a religious experience and the spectator into a participant.

The poem opens with the pomp of the divine procession where the god greets the congregation led by Emperor Huizong and concludes by the god's pronouncement of loyalty and divine assistance. The theatric presentation of the poem wraps the spectator in wondrous sights and sounds. The manifestation of the poem between the tables follows the boisterous procession amidst "flashing thunders and lightning" and accompanied by "wondrous music."

But the poem turns a theatric spectacle—which could become rather alienating—into a religious experience by bonding with the imperial spectator, Emperor Huizong, and creating a sense of familiarity and intimacy.

The poem deliberately takes the form of the heptasyllabic quatrain, which Huizong is most familiar with: all of Huizong's extant palace poems (*gongci* 宮詞) are written in this form.^① Not only the poetic form takes the imperial spectator into a familiar context of court poetry, the poem also tactically fosters a sense of familial intimacy by emphasizing the emperor's association with the deity in revelation. The verse centers on the figure of Lord Sovereign Green Efflorescence, the celestial brother of Emperor Huizong, whose divine presence is marked by the symbolic phoenix carriage surrounded by a colorful pageantry that often accompanies the revelation of Daoist gods. The event is presented not as a god's grace upon a mortal king, but rather, a younger brother's visitation upon his elder brother, who had voluntarily given up his immortal privileges and reincarnated in the role of Song emperor to deliver the suffering men to blissful paradise. The filial bond between the emperor and the god is captured in the simple gesture of intimacy and recognition, in which the god "waves at us at once upon first sight" 一見招. The gesture is immediately followed by Lord Sovereign Green Efflorescence announcing his intent to assist the emperor in his mission of salvation, assuring the emperor that his reign is an auspicious one that Scripture pronounces to emerge once in thirty-seven thousand years, and that he would receive divine assistance and the service of loyal and filial ministers in support of his work as a sagely king (modeled on the mythical Emperor Yao).

① See Ronald Egan's detailed examination of Huizong's poems in his chapter, "Huizong's Palace Poems," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, eds., *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Asia Center, 2006), pp. 361–94. The form of a set of one hundred heptasyllabic quatrains comes with a strong association with the court, courtly celebrations and performances, the earliest example being the hundred-poem palace poems, all heptasyllabic quatrains, composed by Wang Jian 王建 (767–830), on various aspects of life in the palace. For the development and popularization of the hundred-poem form in the Song, see Benjamin Ridway, "The City in a Garden: The Emergence of the Geo-Poetic Collection in Dong Sigao's 'One Hundred Poems on West Lake,'" *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies*, 49 (2020), pp. 239 - 94.

Why thirty-seven thousand years? The number appears in multiple nearly identical paragraphs that account for the genesis of the *Book of Salvation* (*Duren jing* 度人經), a Song reinvention of the fourth-century Daoist liturgical text, which came into existence in the middle of Emperor Huizong's reign.^① One version of this account claims:

The preceding two stanzas are both the guarded voice of the divine sovereigns of the various empyreans and the True Lord of the Ultimate Numen. These are all the speeches of the Great Brahma and not ordinary words of the world. The speeches are not embellished with rhymes, and the songs have no ornate turns; therefore, they are profound and mysterious, and it is difficult to know all the details. These are what the supreme sovereign transmitted to the Sovereign of Jade Purity in the Divine Empyrean, who kept it hidden in his Palace of the Eastern Terrace, where it is guarded and stored by registries. In thirty-seven thousand years, following the movement of the cosmological cycle, they are to be transmitted. If there is a perfected being who offers gold and treasures to the liturgy, whose heart abides by the old tradition and pledges devotion to the Upper Clarity, then these scriptures can be transmitted to him.^②

此二章並是諸天上帝及至靈真王，隱祕之音，皆是大梵之言，非世上常辭，言無韻麗，曲無華宛，故謂玄奧，難可尋詳。上天所寶祕於高上神霄玉清玉府東臺，寶藏依科，三萬七千年隨運下傳，若有至人，齋金寶質，心依舊格，告盟玉清，然後而付焉。

The thirty-seven thousand years, in this Daoist scripture, are associated with the messianic apocalypse that occasions the transmission of the scripture^③. This is a formulaic account that reappears verbatim in a dozen of the chapters in the *Book of Salvation*. In fact, the general narrative conforms to the story of the scripture's origin told in the *Formulary for Transmission of Scriptures according to the Patriarchs of the Exalted Divine Empyrean* (*Gaoshang shenxiao zongshi shoujingshi* 高上神霄宗師受經式), where the revelation of the scripture of *Duren jing* is specified as after the *renchen* year of the Zhenghe Reign (1112).^④ The temporal specificity and openness seems to gesture towards the Daoist religious frenzy during the Zhenghe Reign, when multiple sighting of divine revelations similar to the one of 1117 are reported.^⑤ The “perfected being” to whom the scripture is scheduled to be transmitted

① Michel Strickmann, “The Longest Taoist Scripture,” pp. 331–54.

② “Qingwei jinke pin” 清微金科品, in *Lingbao wuliang shangpin duren miaojing* 靈寶無量度人上品妙, 61 *juan*, *Daozang* 1, j. 8, p. 159. Texts in the *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏 are marked with *Daozang* and numbered in accord with Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds, *The Taoist Canon: a Historical Companion to the Daozang*, 3 vols (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

③ The number is sometimes rounded up to forty thousand years 四萬 elsewhere in the scripture.

④ “*Gaoshang shenxiao zongshi shoujingshi*,” *Daozang* 1282. This text describes the *Duren jing* as a sixty-one-chapter scripture and lists all chapter titles, see Michel Strickmann, “The Longest Taoist Scripture,” pp. 334–5.

⑤ For discussions on the potential political motivation behind Huizong's Daoist pursuits, see Li Zhengyang 李政陽,

is none other than Emperor Huizong himself.

Emperor Huizong's account of the event deliberately echoes and confirms the story of divine revelation in the *Duren jing*. This is not surprising, as the emperor himself was well versed in the Daoist canon and personally took to the task of annotating the *Daode jing* 道德經, commissioning the compilation of *Dao shi* 道史 and other Daoist textual projects.^① Therefore, when he remarks on how the poem's "words are all about wonders of gods and immortals, not at all the likeness of words from the mortal world" 其語悉神仙之妙，甚非世俗可以仿髯者, he is likely deliberately echoing the language of the scriptural passage above: "these are all speeches of the Great Brahma and not ordinary words of the world" 皆是大梵之言，非世上常辭, gesturing at the sacred origin of the poem.

The poem, as the emperor underscores in his account, is written in the so-called "Dragon Script and Cloud Seal" 龍章雲篆 (Fig.2). Elsewhere referred to as "celestial script" 天書 (Fig. 3), whose



Fig. 2. A close-up image of the top of the stele (Fig. 1) that features Chu Hui's poem written in the "Dragon Script and Cloud Seal."

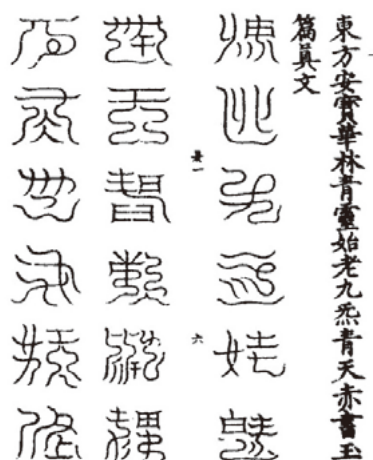


Fig. 3. An example of the "celestial script," from the *Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing* 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經, *Daozang* 22, juan 1, p. 7.

"Song Huizong chongdao chengyin xinkao: yi Songben Duren jing wei zhongxin" 宋徽宗崇道成因新考——以宋本《度人經》為中心, in *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, 2018 (05), pp. 106–15.

① The preface to *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing futu* 靈寶無量度人上品妙經符圖, a commentary on the *Duren jing*, is also attributed to Huizong, *Daozang* 147.

emergence in the sky is often taken as an auspicious sign. This appears to be a kind of seal script that expresses the “True Writs” 真文 in the Lingbao Daoist tradition. The “True Writs” are believed to have existed prior to the beginning of the cosmos and were the “grantors of the cosmic order.” They manifest in the form of “celestial script” inscribed on celestial palaces, and function to “register the names of the adepts on lists of immortality, warrant the correctness of the cosmic process, dominate the demons, and control the divinities of the water in order to prevent floods.”^①

The use of a script with supposed primordial divinity serves to bolster the sacred authority of the words spoken in the poem, but more importantly, the visual presentation of the elaborate script, coupled with the theatrical feat that accompanied the presentation, would have held any viewer (however momentarily) in a trance, let alone a devout Daoist mystic and lover of the visual arts.

The emperor's decision to have the poem carved on stone steles in its original form attests to its perceived, and embodied, religious efficacy. The fleeting event of the divine communion is now immortalized in the unchanging permanence of the stone. Joining on a single slab two distinct calligraphic forms—the celestial script and the slender gold style—representing correspondingly the divine and the secular emperor, the monument celebrates Huizong's double identity as a god and as a monarch. The texts that have enchanted the emperor, now chiseled in stone and erected in temples across the empire, continue to absorb their viewers into the emperor's dreamwork.

A Heaven Nearby

Two days after the auspicious revelation discussed above, Huizong decreed that the Mountain of Long Life 萬壽山 be constructed. This would become the main feature of *Genyue* 艮嶽 (lit. “Northeast Marchmount”).^② While this entirely man-made garden was acclaimed as a feat of garden design and premodern engineering technology, the celebration is always accompanied by an apology for its association with one of history's most absurd rulers and his ill-fated reign. In the winter of 1127, only four years after *Genyue*'s completion, Jurchen riders plundered the Northern Song capital Kaifeng, took the royal family hostage and looted the palace for valuables. Amidst the chaos, men and women stranded in the capital took refuge in the garden, where they chopped down trees and demolished buildings for fire logs; *Genyue* crumbled into ruins.^③

① Franciscus Verellen, p. 216.

② James M. Hargett, “Huizong's Magic Marchmount: The Genyue Pleasure Park of Kaifeng,” *Monumenta Serica*, 1988, 38:1, 1–48. Patricia Buckley Ebrey discusses Genyue as one of six “monumental projects,” through which Huizong's ambitions found tangible forms. See Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, pp. 273–8.

③ Emperor Qinzong decreed on the twentieth day of the twelfth month in the first year of Jingkang reign: “The storm

Our focus here, however, is not the often-retold drama of *Genyue*'s fate, nor its actual garden design, but its transformation from a man-made object of desire to an inhabited space of religious efficacy. Initiated in the winter of 1117, and completed in the summer of 1122, the *Genyue* project not only represented the culmination of the Divine Empyrean Daoist movement at Emperor Huizong's court, but also played an active role in materializing the imperial vision of Huizong's court as a universal caesaropapist empire in which the emperor is simultaneously the social and political authority and the ultimate representative of sacred order.

Technological maneuvers and material knowledge are mobilized to materialize the efficacious landscape of the Divine Empyrean, but the key to this transformation, as I seek to show in this article, lies in the agentive role court literature plays. Anticipating *Genyue*'s completion in the summer of 1122, Emperor Huizong personally composed a long prose account and decreed that two of his literary courtiers, Cao Zu 曹組 and Li Zhi 李質, each compose a separate rhapsody (*fu* 賦). In addition, Cao and Li collaborated to compose a set of one hundred poems (*baiyong* 百詠).

The individual pieces within this family of texts “speak” to one another. Read individually and in relation to one another, each presents a unique voice, which enriches the central narrative by elaborating from a different perspective. Taken as a whole, what we hear is a range of distinct voices conjoining to produce a chorus that gives a coherent character to the landscape. Huizong's account, as the grand designer and author of the project, sets the theme for the project in general and for the major features in particular. Li Zhi's poetic exposition, written in the tradition of the “grand rhapsody” (*dafu* 大賦, or *gufu* 古賦) presents, from the perspective of an awe-stricken observer, a ceremonial eulogy of *Genyue* that evokes the magnificence of Sima Xiangru's famous rhapsody on the Han imperial park. Complementing Li Zhi's rhymed rhapsody, Cao Zu's is written in the form of the “prose rhapsody” (*wenfu* 文賦), a fashionable form more in tune with the era's literary trends, in which the “host” answers a series of questions raised by the puzzled “guest,” and in so doing takes the opportunity to explain the intent of his construction. The hundred-poem sequence formally mimics the emperor-deity moving in the space of the garden, lingering at major scenic sites. While each poem presents one individual place, the whole sequence forms a tapestry of a luminous landscape.^① Notably, all poems in

and blizzard caused extreme coldness; people are in want of fire logs, many are frozen and starving, I am to blame for my lack of virtue that caused such sufferings. (The structures in) the Mountain of Ten Thousand Years may be chopped up by allow soldiers and commoners as they please.” 風雪大寒，小民闕乏柴薪，多致凍餒，皆朕不德所致。萬歲山許軍民任便斫伐。 See Emperor Qinzong, “Decree of Permission for the Military and Commoners to Cut Trees and Bamboo on the Mountain of Ten Thousand Years” 許軍民樵采萬歲山竹木詔, *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, vol. 191, juan 4223. The destruction of *Genyue* amidst the Jurchen invasion is recorded in Zhang Hao 張湜 (ca. 1180–1250), “Genyue ji” 艮岳記 [Account of *Genyue*]. Hargett translated in full Zhang Hao's account in the appendix of his 1988 article.

① This follows the sequential approach to landscape canonized in Wang Wei's 王維 (693?–701) Wangchuan collection, a set of twenty pairs of quatrains composed by Wang and his friend, each dedicated to one of the twenty

the set are, again, written in the emperor's familiar heptasyllabic quatrain.

While these compositions—especially the imperial account—have been cited as descriptive documents and used for a historical reconstruction of the garden, I prefer a different approach to court literary production and function that attends to the enabling role of literary texts within their social and political ecologies. Specifically, I am interested in how literary texts participated in the making of spatial order, power, and efficacy. Here, I am not talking about the “self-fashioning” of the sovereign's image through literature, nor am I referring to how literary texts produced outside of the court “imagine” the tenor of court life; I am, rather, particularly concerned about how court literature facilitates the creation of an efficacious landscape, and how the discursive construction defines the way in which the space can be experienced.

In the following sections of the article, I read portions of this set—specifically, the imperial account and relevant sections from the courtiers' rhapsodies and poems—to illustrate how this family of texts transforms the secular place into an enchanted landscape of religious efficacy. My analysis will center on the dynamics between the different pieces, looking at how the imperial account lays out the vision for the garden as a sacred space, and how the individual pieces composed by the courtiers set out to construct the building blocks of this vision. In my reading, the emphasis will be placed on tactics by which the texts erase any traces of *Genyue* as a site of dense and lengthy conscript labor and lavish expense, in order to consecrate the place.

In very much the same way as the divine poem discussed in the previous section, this group of testimonial poems, rhapsodies, and prose essays bear witness to the creation of *Genyue* as an efficacious space, as the dynamics between the literary texts and religious spectacles transformed the landscape into a theatre of power. These texts participate in the making of myth and memories, which then convert the imperial park into a potent religious space, where Huizong “remembers” his former celestial dwelling, where he goes to be a god.

A Genealogy of Sacred Places

The descriptions in Emperor Huizong's “Account of *Genyue*” are so detailed that it has been frequently mined to reconstruct the layout of the garden.^① It is worth noting, however, that the composition of the account predates the completion of *Genyue* by five months. It is, rather than a

scenic spots in his Wangchuan villa.

① James M. Hargett reconstructs the layout of *Genyue* in vivid details based on Zhang Hao's “*Genyue ji*” 艮岳記, which in turn cites the middle section of Huizong's account. See Hargett, “Huizong's Magic Marchmount: The *Genyue* Pleasure Park of Kaifeng,” *Monumenta Serica*, 1988, 38:1, 1-48. See also the modern reconstruction by Zhou Weiquan 周維權, in *Zhongguo gudai yuanlin shi* 中國古代園林史 (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2008), pp. 279–85.

description or a representation of the physical garden, more precisely a *prescription* of the garden as the emperor conceives of the project. It is the ideal vision of *Genyue*.

Huizong's account begins with a statement of the geographical location of the imperial capital, Kaifeng, that evokes the Han rhapsodies of the imperial metropolis. Sitting on the North China plain on the south bank of the Yellow River, Kaifeng was situated at the intersection of major canals, which made the city an urban and commercial hub in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; but it was militarily vulnerable due to the absence of mountains as fortifications, and ecologically fragile due to its position on the floodplains.^① That the rule of the Song has prospered for two hundred years despite such vulnerabilities, Huizong's account maintains, is because Song rule "relies on virtue, and not on strategic location" 所恃者德而非險也。^② Huizong's account is a preemptive defense of the *Genyue* project. But if not for military defense, what then could possibly justify the exorbitant cost of the *Genyue* project? Huizong's answer points toward a genealogy of sacred sites, where the efficacy of the place is taken as a manifestation of the efficacy of the ruler's virtue:

Nonetheless, King Wen's park was seventy square *li*, and when he had the Numinous Terrace built, the commoners came as if they were his children; when the Numinous Marsh was built, it was full of fishes leaping about. The Golden Gate of the Highest Sovereign stands erect on the Mountain of the Jade Metropolis, where the Great Sovereign of the Divine Empyrean would descend to spread his grace. Moreover, on the seas there are the three islands of Penglai. Therefore, where kings and sovereigns build their capitals, where gods and sages make their dwellings—it has to be a majestic landscape.^③

然文王之囿，方七十里，其作靈臺，則庶民子來，其作靈沼，則於仞魚躍。高上金闕，則玉京之山，神霄大帝，亦下游廣愛。而海上有蓬萊三島，則帝王所都，仙聖所宅，非形勝不居也。

Huizong's vision contains a taxonomy of powerful places, from King Wen's garden, to the

① For an environmental historical study on the entanglement of the Yellow River in Northern Song state policy-making, economy, and local society, see Zhang Ling, *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048–1128* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

② The emphasis on the efficacy of "de" recalls the notion of "governing by means of virtue" 為政以德 in the *Analecets* 2.1. The antithesis of "benevolence" and "strategic location" (*xian* 險) is not uncommon in political thought, and a similar comment appears in Tang Emperor Xuanzong's quatrain on the Tongguan pass between Chang'an and Luoyang, where he critiques the act of constructing Tongguan pass as leveraging "strategic location" for peace and security and not "counting on (the efficacy of) virtue" 所嗟非恃德，設險到天平。Emperor Xuanzong, "Tongguan kouhao" 潼關口號, in Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 et al eds, *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), juan 3, p.40.

③ All citations of texts from the *Genyue* set in this article are based on the *Genyue* texts as preserved in Wang Mingqing 王明清, *Huizhu houlu* 揮塵後錄, juan 2. *Yingyin wenyuange siku congshu* 影印文淵閣四庫全書 (hereafter, *SKQS*) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), 1038 ce, 420–36. For discussions on the provenance of the texts, see the concluding section of this article.

heavenly mountains in Daoist mysteries, and to the immortal islands of the seas. This corresponds to the division of space into the world of humans, that of celestial gods, and that of underworld immortals. It is an unusual taxonomy because it aligns Daoist religious efficacy alongside the Confucian notion of sovereign benevolence.

King Wen's garden is a favorite Confucian symbol of the unity of private pleasure and public good. The virtue of the ruler transforms the place into an inhabitable space for all creatures under his rule—not only did the commoners “came as if they were his children” 庶民子来, even the fishes were eager to swim in his pools. The celestial Mount Yujing 玉京 (lit. “Jade Capital”), on the other hand, is home to the Daoist scriptures and immortals. In the fourth-century *Lingbao Scripture on Pacing the Void at Mount Yujing* 洞玄靈寶玉京山步虛經, the Jade Capital is described in the following terms:^①

The Jade Capital Mountain of the Metropolis of Mysteries is on top of the Three Pure [Ones]; there is no color or dust. On top of the mountain is the Supreme Palace of Purple Sublimity on the Terrace of the Mysteries of the Seven Treasures, behind the golden gate of the Jade Capital. Inside the palace, there is the Divine Scripture of the Three Treasures. In the eight directions of the mountain there naturally grow the trees of seven treasures, one in each direction, together the eight trees fill the eight regions, covering the various heavens and encompassing the three realms.

玄都玉京山在三清之上，無色無塵。上有玉京金闕七寶玄臺紫微上官，中有三寶神經。山之八方自然生七寶之樹，一方各生一株，八株彌滿八方，覆蓋諸天，包羅三界。

Although Yujing had become a generic epithet for the imperial palace in medieval court panegyrics, for a pious Daoist like Emperor Huizong, who grew up with Daoist mysteries and was well versed in Daoist scriptures and rituals, the Jade Capital remains a very specific dimension of reality: it is his spiritual “home,” the dwelling of his divine former self.

Likewise, the ancient myth of the immortal mountain Penglai was another such enchanted space—with particular connection to the underworld—that gained specific reality in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, sometimes “found” on the eastern seas. Xu Jing 徐兢 (1091–1153), one of Huizong's diplomats during the early Xuanhe reign, noted when passing by an island named Penglai on his voyage to the Goryeo Kingdom in his report of 1124:

Gazing at Mount Penglai in the great distance, it has a higher front and lower back, delightful with jutting peaks. The island still belongs within the jurisdiction of Changguo County (modern Ningbo). Its surface is extremely broad and can be cultivated, there are inhabitants on the island. Among the three mountains of

① *Dongxuan lingbao yujing shan buxu jing* 洞玄靈寶玉京山步虛經, *Daozang* 1439.

immortals, there is a Penglai that can only be reached after crossing thirty thousand *li* of weak waters.^① Now one should not be able to see it in a mere moment. This [mountain] should be just one that people named after Penglai.^②

蓬萊山望之甚遠，前高後下，峭拔可愛，其島尚屬昌國封境。其上極廣，可以種蒔。島人居之。仙家三山中有蓬萊，越弱水三萬里乃得到。今不應指顧間見，當是今人指以為名耳。

Xu's report, presented to Huizong in the eighth month of 1124, caters to the predilections of his imperial audience. Although the account disputed the island's claim to be the immortal island of Penglai, it nonetheless betrays an attempt to locate the mythical land of the immortals on earth.

By aligning *Genyue* with the exemplars of efficacious places, the account situates it within a network of sacred landscapes. From King Wen's legendary park and the mythic landscapes of gods and immortals, Huizong moves comfortably between history and mysteries, with little regard for the boundaries separating the world of man from that of the gods. He lives in a world of Daoist mysteries and poems of visionary flights to heaven, where mortal men could journey to the heavens, and where feathered beings would occasionally grace the mortal land, their presence manifested in trails of magical mushrooms and wondrous spectacles. With the imperial prerogative and resources, Huizong was determined to bring to life the memories of a sacred landscape.

Divine Labor

The agenda of designating *Genyue* as a sacred Daoist site is made explicit in Cao Zu's rhapsody: "It is Mount Longevity of our state, Blissful Land for our descendants, thus named the Northeast Marchmount" 國家壽山，子孫福地，名曰艮岳。^③ Because a sacred place is meant to be and not forced; building it at the cost of suffering would not do. The emperor's account makes a point of distancing *Genyue* from any associations with conscripted labor or financial expenditure, concealing any references to the exorbitant cost, while claiming that the production process was as miraculous as the product: "no labor of baskets and spades was exhausted, no sound of axes and hoes was heard" 畚

① That is, water that cannot bear the weight of a boat. The measurement of the distance as "thirty-thousand *li*" originates in Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037–1101) line, "Penglai cannot be reached, beyond thirty-thousand *li* of weak waters" 蓬萊不可到，弱水三萬里. Su Shi, "Jinshan miaogao tao" 金山妙高臺, in Zhang Zhilie 張志烈 et al. eds., *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 蘇軾全集校注, vol. 5, juan 26, p. 2862–65.

② Xu Jing, *Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing* 宣和奉使高麗圖經, chapter 34, "Mount Penglai" 蓬萊山. Xu Jing's travelogue has been translated in full, see Sem Vermeersch trans., *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea: Xu Jing's illustrated account of the Xuanhe embassy to Koryŏ* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016).

③ Cao Zu, "Rhapsody of *Genyue*" 艮岳賦, in Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, juan 2.

插之役不勞，斧斤之聲不鳴。^① Erasing traces of labor eradicates the secular history of *Genyue* as a built environment. The peculiar absence of representation of labor literalizes the metaphor, “the axes of the ghost and the might of divinity” 鬼斧神工, turning the metaphor into a miracle. This becomes explicit toward the end of the account when Huizong marvels at *Genyue* as being “truly heaven’s creation and earth’s design, with god’s strategy and the Creator’s strength” 真天造地設，神謀化力，and that it is “not something man is capable of making” 非人所能爲者。^②

Li Zhi’s rhapsody follows the emperor’s rhetorical agenda by beginning with this notion of heavenly creation:

Magnificent! So capacious is this mountain, its foundation firmly rooted in the axle of the earth. Straddling the arch of the sky so high, looking down upon ten thousand things at the foot of the hill. The primordial Qi begins its breathing in and out, splitting *yin* and *yang* into darkness and light. It truly is heaven’s creation and earth’s design, following the desire of the sovereign mind. It enhances the benefits of the Northeast direction, to receive blessings for a billion years. Matching the decided mandate [of the sovereignty], in his doubly auspicious rule, surely the sovereign’s reign is without bound.^③

偉茲岳之宏厚兮，固磐基于坤軸。跨穹隆之高標兮，俯萬象于林麓。一氣肇其吐吞兮，割陰陽于晦昃。信天造而地設兮，行聖心之神欲。相美利于艮維兮，膺億載之假福。允定命以匹休兮，同潤、之乃藹。惟重熙兮累洽，固帝祚之無疆。

Li Zhi’s rhapsody elaborates on *Genyue*’s genesis as “heaven’s creation and earth’s design,” a thesis Emperor Huizong puts forth in his account. With its foundation firmly rooted on the axle of the earth and its body straddling the dome of heaven, *Genyue* is represented not as an artificial addition to the land but as a majestic mountain born from the primordial breath. Pushing the thesis further, Li Zhi’s rhapsody subjugates heaven’s intention to the “sovereign mind” of the emperor. The argument is that heaven and earth bring forth the majestic mountain at the northeast of the empire to “match” the splendor of Emperor Huizong’s reign, to strengthen his rule, and to propagate the blessings of the empire to eternity.

On the other hand, Cao Zu’s rhapsody develops this thesis from a different angle. Formulated in the question-and-answer format between the puzzled “guest” and the answering “host,” Cao Zu’s piece structurally evokes the rhapsodies on the great metropolis in *Wenxuan*, and thematically evokes the rhapsodic masterpieces of the past century—Ouyang Xiu’s “Rhapsody of Autumn Sounds” 秋聲賦

① Emperor Huizong, “Account of *Genyue*,” in Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, *juan 2*.

② Emperor Huizong, “Account of *Genyue*.”

③ Li Zhi, “Rhapsody of *Genyue*” 艮岳賦, in Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, *juan 2*.

and Su Shi's "Rhapsodies of the Red Cliff" 赤壁賦—which aim to elucidate the philosophy and intent of the "host." In Cao's piece, the "guest" enumerates the five mountains (one in each cardinal direction plus the one at the center), which are believed to correspond to the five stars in the sky. He then asks:

Then I saw this in the middle of the capital, why is it that I have not known of it before? Moreover, mountains are such grand creatures of heaven's creation and earth's design; formed in the beginning of the cosmos as the condensation of primordial Qi, how could a mountain be artificially built? Please let me hear the reasoning behind this.^①

復見茲於中都，何前此而未識？且山岳之大，天造地設，開闢之初，元氣凝結，是豈人爲？願聞其說。

In the words of the "host," the rhapsody attempts again at addressing the paradox:

The host responded: "After the separation of the clear and the muddled, who presides over the *yin* and *yang*, and directs the dissemination of the all-fashioning potter? Such things must depend on the Creator, who binds and connects all things. Now with one man's body I unify the empire. [With virtue] I take charge of ten thousand things, and put the populace to work; this brings wealth and prosperity to my myriad subjects, and benefits the world through the Dao. Only with an unperturbed mind like that of the Creator does this mountain rise in its proper place. Furthermore, those swimming in the water and running on the ground, through heaven's help and the gods' assistance all gather here; the ten thousand things are all offerings to the sovereign. Therefore, after six years, ten thousand ravines and thousands of cliffs, and fragrant flowers in vermilion and green adorn a painted screen.^②

主人曰：‘清濁既分，爰其陰陽，播之大鈞，孰爲主張？是必造物，區處維綱。今以一人之尊，大統華夏，宰制萬物，而役使群衆，阜成兆民，而道濟天下。夫惟不爲動心，侔于造化，則茲岳之興，固其所也。而況水浮陸走，天助神相，凡動之沓來，萬物之享上，故適再閏而歲六周星，萬壑千岩，芳菲丹青之寫圖障也。’

This is contradicted by the sources that reveal the violence of labor conscription and uses of expenditure that went into the making of *Genyue* as a physical place. The writer, through the voice of the "host", seems to be anticipating criticism and strenuously countering this reality. In fact, such critique was probably vehemently voiced during Huizong's reign and amplified in later historiographical accounts. Historians have largely considered *Genyue* a typical case of imperial corruption and the misallocation of resources, where enormous expenditure was lavished for the

① Cao Zu, "Rhapsody of *Genyue*" 艮岳賦, in Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, juan 2

② Cao Zu, "Rhapsody of *Genyue*".

emperor's private indulgences; its technical and aesthetic achievements index the gravity of the disease. For instance, in a Southern Song historian, Zhang Hao's 張淏 account of *Genyue*, the historian cannot resist evoking the comic distance between the emperor's rhetoric of an effortless miracle ("Divine Conveyance" 神運) and the reality of *Genyue* as a long and exhausting project:

They hacked mountains to pieces and carted away rocks; even the ones in the unfathomable gulfs in the lakes and rivers, to which [human] efforts could not reach, they devised every possible scheme to get them out and to their destination, so much so that this [system] was called the "Divine Conveyance." The boats continued, one after another, day and night, without a break. Four commands from Guangji were depleted in order to provide hauling officers. Still, they could not supply [enough].^①

斫山輦石，雖江湖不測之淵，力不可致者，百計以出之，至名曰神運，舟楫相繼，日夜不絕。廣濟四指揮盡以充輓士，猶不給。

Zhang Hao's account highlights the arduous processes involved in harvesting marvelous rocks, the enormous human costs, and the heavy financial expenditure, all of which still falls short of satiating the emperor's appetite. The emphasis on the heavy social, economic, and institutional toll that the *Genyue* project took on the empire exposes shades of irony in the emperor's rhetoric of divine intervention: the imperial prerogative encapsulated in the expression of "Divine Conveyance"—shall we recall the Zhuangzi's figure of the "almighty one" 有力者?—that moves mountains effortlessly is but a rhetorical trick.

Efficacious Objects

This is truly an exorbitant performance. Precious plants, minerals, and animals are mined from the far regions of the empire and brought to the capital through expansive networks of transportation. The enormous waste of human labor and the country's economic resources are retold in historical records and anecdotes. But what the group of texts advances is not at all anything like the lavish rhetoric of the Han rhapsody in describing splendid imperial parks. Quite the opposite, these texts collectively designate a landscape potent in its simplicity and closeness to nature. One needs not look far in the *Genyue* literature to notice the conspicuous absence of the attempt to flaunt wealth and possession that conventionally characterizes the literature of imperial parks. Instead, we have a carefully manicured rustic landscape. The curated rusticity conceals its enormous price tag. But the rhetoric of displacement

^① Zhang Hao, "Account of *Genyue*," *Quan Song wen*, vol. 307, *juan* 7035. The translation is a modification based on Hargett, 1988, p. 33.

inevitably calls attention to what it attempts to conceal.

The rhetorical masking of incongruous elements prepares *Genyue* for its consecration as a sacred space, a complex and dynamic process of creation that involves the arrangement of efficacious objects, the naming of elements and their ordering into a hierarchy, the performance of rituals, and the orchestration of religious theatre. In the beginning, Huizong's account makes it abundantly clear that the garden is built with ingredients that are themselves deeply imbued with marvelous powers. He enumerates the names of mountains and rivers where his workers labor to mine the building blocks of *Genyue*:

They visited the deep pools of Lake Dongting, Lake Hukou, Silk Creek, and Qiuchi pond, as well as several mountains in the names of Mount Sibin, Mount Linlü, Mount Lingbi, and Mount Furong, to fetch the gem-like rocks that are most marvelous and extraordinary.^①

涉洞庭、湖口、絲溪、仇池之深淵，與泗濱、林慮、靈壁、芙蓉之諸山，取壤奇特異瑤琨之石。

These are sacred places in Daoist literature. Qiuchi pool 仇池, for instance, leads to the first of the ten “Major Grotto-Heavens” (dadongtian 大洞天), the Grotto-Heaven of “Xiaoyou qingxu” 小有清虛 located in Mount Wangwu 王屋山, northwest of Kaifeng.^② The Grotto-Heavens, together with the Blissful Lands, are Daoist paradises believed to be hidden inside famous mountains. The Grotto-Heavens are often described as underworld utopias, caves and hollows filled with numinous medicinal herbs and immortals, where wars, floods, epidemics, old age, or death cannot reach.^③ Similarly, Mount Linlü is the legendary mountain where Daoist practitioners obtained immortality.^④

The rocks are shipped on the Grand Canal from various localities of the southeast regions to the

① Emperor Huizong, “Account of *Genyue*,” in Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, *juan 2*.

② *Tiandi gongfu tu* 天地宮府圖 [Chart of the Palaces and Bureaus of the Grotto-Heavens and the Blissful Lands], in *Yunji qijian* 雲笈七籤 27, cited in Fabrizio Pregadio ed., *Encyclopedia of Daoism*, vol. 1, 369. a different list of Daoist sacred sites is offered in Du Guangting's *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 [Records of Grotto-Heavens, Blissful Lands, Peaks, Rivers, and Famous Mountains]. The legendary emperor Huangdi was believed to have received on Mt. Wangwu the nine tripods 九鼎, the symbol of the imperial mandate, from the Queen Mother of the West 西王母, see Du Guangting 杜光庭, *Tiantan Wangwu shan shengji ji* 天壇王屋山聖迹記 [Records of Traces of the Saints on Mount Wangwu].

③ For a study on the place of Grotto-Heavens in Daoist cosmography, see Franciscus Verellen, “The Beyond Within: Grotto-Heavens (Dongtian 洞天) in Taoist Ritual and Cosmology,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 1995, vol. 8, Mémoires Anna Seidel: Religions traditionnelles d'Asie orientale (Tome I) (1995), pp. 265-286, 288-290. See also “Grotto-Heavens and Blissful Lands” 洞天福地, in Fabrizio Pregadio ed., *Encyclopedia of Daoism*, vol. 1, 368-73.

④ One such story from the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳, included in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, reports a certain Sun Bo 孫博 who is equipped with a number of supernatural skills eventually “entered Mount Linlü, swallowed immortal pellets and became a transcendent” 後入林慮山，服神丹仙去。 *Taiping guangji*, SKQS, 1043 ce, *juan 5*, p.28b-29a.

capital, where they are piled up to form foundations of the artificial mountains of *Genyue*, arranged to form rock formations, and placed around or inside the buildings as aesthetic objects. One of the most lavish applications of these marvelous rocks is sketched with the playfulness of a literati ink painting:

Here, in front of the tallest of all mountains, giant rocks line up altogether for about three *zhang* (equivalent of 9.5 meters). This is called the “Arrayed Officers.” Artful crags, fantastic cliffs, vines and lichen spread and sprawl like dragons and phoenixes that cannot be followed to the end.^①

最高諸山，前列巨石，凡三丈許，號排衙，巧怪嶄岩，藤蘿蔓衍，若龍若鳳，不可殫窮。

If the wondrous forms of the protean rocks in the imperial account only adumbrates their potency as a passageway to the ecclesiastical realm, they are by contrast explicitly highlighted in the two courtiers' compositions. Li Zhi's rhapsody accentuates the marvelous efficacy of the rock formation.^②

度金霞而矯首，	Wading the golden rays, its head held high,
介亭屹其上征。	the Lofty Pavilion stands towering, sailing upward (to heaven).
險羊腸于九折，	A perilous path of nine bends twists and turns,
升雲棧而心驚。	rising up to the passage amidst the clouds—the heart is startled.
有排衙之巨石，	There, arrayed rows of giant rocks
間珍木之敷榮。	are punctuated by blossoms of precious trees.
爲巖妙之絕巘，	They form marvelous precipices and sheer peaks
類簫台之玉京。	that resemble the Flute Terrace in the Jade Capital. ^③

The arrayed rocks in front of the Lofty Pavilion on the tallest mountain in *Genyue* recall the secret portal to heaven, the terrace from which Xiao Shi and Nong Yu leave their human incarnations and rise to heaven. On Lofty Pavilion, the highest point of *Genyue*, the possibility of ascension is always luring the dreamer, as in the poem on Lofty Pavilion (the second poem in the hundred-poem sequence):^④

雲棧橫空入翠烟， A passage of clouds straddling the void, enters the azure mist,

① Emperor Huizong, “Account of *Genyue*.” The translation is based on Hargett, 1988, p. 37.

② Li Zhi, “Rhapsody of *Genyue*.”

③ Xiao Shi, a Daoist immortal incarnated as a young flute player whose music can summon phoenixes, on which he rides away into heaven together with his wife. Liu Xiang 劉向, *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 [Biography of Arrayed Immortals].

④ Li Zhi and Cao Zu, “Lofty Pavilion” 介亭, in “A Hundred Poems on *Genyue*” 艮岳百詠, Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, juan 2. Lofty Pavilion is the highest point in *Genyue*, built on top of the Mountain of Ten Thousand Years 萬歲山 at the northeast corner of the garden, the main feature of the garden.

躋攀端可躡飛仙。 ascending it, you really can follow the tracks of the soaring immortals.
 介然獨出諸山上， Lofty and noble, it stands high above the mountains.
 磊磊排衙石滿前。 where rugged rocks are piled up in front like aligned officials.

Transcending one's earthly form and worries to join the rank of the free roaming is one kind of divine communion, but the consecrated space allows traffic in both directions. In Li Zhi's rhapsody, the sanctity of the place manifests in a different form of efficacy. There, the stones from gods' playgrounds set up a magical stage, where the theatre of spectacles can be performed on demand, and the gods are readily summoned into presence:^①

宜帝真之下墮， A place fit for the Supreme Emperor's descent,
 後電掣而雷鳴。 following flashes of lightning and claps of thunder.
 繼神光之燭壇， Continued with divine brilliance on the candle-lit altar,
 響環佩之琮睜。 and the cling-clang echoes of jade pendants.
 何天人之無間， Such intimacy between gods and man—
 本皇上之精誠。 originates from the emperor's sincere faith.

While Li Zhi describes the spectacle from the perspective of an observer, a more personal account from the first-person perspective of the “host” (or the “owner,” 主人, the emperor himself), who participates in the religious theatre, is described in inviting details to the “guest” 客:

To the north, above various mountains, beyond the tips of trees, you look down at the dense clouds over the valleys and gaze into the depths of the misty evening. You look toward the west at the Taihang mountain range under the bright sky, and gaze toward the east where rosy rays rise from the sea at clear dawn. The mountains are towering, the rocks are jagged. You bow to the long wind that circles the jade dome (of the heavens) and directs the brilliant moonlight that gushes from the icy disc. Purifying the mind, you can come close to Mt. Kongtong; praying with sincerity, your prayers always reach the Supreme God above. You see the soaring immortal carriages and follow the wafting fragrance of green efflorescence. You look at the plaque on which is written: Lofty Pavilion. There are arrayed rocks, lying in front of it in dark green. They follow the contours of the mountain, circling the pavilion as its veranda, like stars orbiting around the moon, like the shooting sunbeams on a fine morning.^②

其北也，諸山之上，衆木之杪，俯雲壑之沉沉，視烟霄之杳杳。西瞻太行于晴霽，東望海霞于清曉。

① Li Zhi, “Rhapsody of *Genyue*.”

② Cao Zu, “Rhapsody of *Genyue*.”

山寵從，石嶙峋。挹長風之回玉宇，導明月之涌冰輪。齋心嘗比於崆峒，精禱每延乎上真。見飄飄之仙馭，隨裊裊之青芬。視其榜曰介亭。有排衙，蒼碧之前陳者也。因山高下，周以回廊，如璧月之環坐，復晴曦之騰光。

If Li Zhi's grand rhapsody relates a marvelous spectacle to the reader, Cao Zu's invites his reader to participate in the making of a miracle. By listening to the host relating his own experience on the mountain, the reader is in fact following the directions given by the host and therefore participates in the divine communion vicariously.

With these mystic visions, the two courtiers are feeding the emperor's reveries, as Huizong himself dreams:

In the time snatched from my numerous tasks, I stroll here and immediately forget the glories of lofty rank and wealth; lifting over the mountain toward the valleys, exhausting the depths and exploring the perilous; amidst the green leaves and vermilion buds, ascending from the florescent pavilion, letting my heart play and pleasing its intent, reaching spiritual communion with the gods, I then forget the hustle and bustle of the dusty world, and loftily have the aspiration to ascend into the clouds. This is always enjoyable.^①

朕萬機之餘，徐步一到，不知崇高貴富之榮，而騰山赴壑，窮深探險，綠葉朱苞，華閣飛升，玩心愜志，與神合契，遂忘塵俗之續紛，而飄然有凌雲之志，終可樂也。

An Enchanted Landscape

The marvelous event of divine revelation registered in the rhapsodies is far from a lone occurrence. We have multiple sources of testimonial accounts from the Xuanhe reign that recount such occurrences of religious spectacles, chief among which is Sun Di's 孫覲 (1081–1169) "Memorial to Congratulate the Celestial God's Divine Revelation":

On the night of the fourteenth day in the eighth month, the Supreme God descended on the Lofty Pavilion on the Mountain of Ten Thousand Years. Marvelous fragrance sweet and dense, bells and chimes sounded nonstop, auspicious light and resounding thunders—these were witnessed by all. Again, in the ninth month, (his majesty) summons the six armies to feast in the Bright Hall, when there was the marvelous scene of divine brilliance accompanied by flying cranes.^②

① Emperor Huizong, "Account of Genyue."

② Sun Di, "He tianshen shixian biao" 賀天神示現表, *Quan Song wen*, vol. 159, *juan* 3426. Apart from Sun Di's memorial, Wang Zao 汪藻 (1079–1154) also presented "He Mingtang ji Wansuishan xiangguang biao" 賀明堂及萬歲山祥光表 [Memorial to Congratulate the Auspicious Light on the Bright Hall and the Mountain of Ten Thousand

八月十四夜，上真降於萬歲山之介亭。異香芬郁，鐘磬盡鳴，祥光震雷，衆所共睹。又九月張皇六師，大饗明堂，有神光飛鶴之異。

These theatrical spectacles, however magical, are short-lived. But *Genyue* has been transformed into a sacred landscape of the gods. Noting *Genyue*'s association with the Daoist religious movements at Huizong's court, Kubota Kazuo identifies *Genyue* as one of the three major construction projects in the capital that are associated with the rise of Divine Empyrean Daoism, suggesting quite rightly that *Genyue* was a "performance of imperial authority and sanctitude" 帝の權威や聖性を演出する。^① What I would like to underscore, however, is that these texts that were physically inscribed in the *Genyue* garden were part of the technologies that enabled and perpetuated such a performance.

Huizong's court seems to have taken the Lofty Pavilion as the stage for his religious theatre. The Lofty Pavilion occupies a central place as the religious altar in *Genyue*. This manifests in the organization of the hundred poems, which seems to reflect the hierarchy of sites within *Genyue*. In the hundred-poem set, the poem (discussed earlier) devoted to Lofty Pavilion is placed at the beginning, preceded only by the poem on the entire *Genyue*. Much more than an inert backdrop, the mountains with their rocky caverns, recalling the likeness of the Grotto-Heavens, are essential actors in the making of Huizong's theatrical spectacles.

In this theatre of the gods, literary texts act as a technology of seduction. Their unapologetic artificiality, their agentive power to call into presence a dreamscape, and the power to evoke vicarious experiences of the other world, resemble the physical technologies of illusions, which Song anecdotal sources so delight in exposing:

There were several dozens of large crevices in the Mountain of Ten Thousand Years, all of which were filled with arsenic and calamine. Arsenic was employed to prevent poisonous snakes, whereas calamine could form clouds and misty vapor when overcast, which would suffuse the air like the deep mountains and remote ravines. Later the clerks took them apart and sold them. When a Muslim learned about it, he requested that they sell them to him. He got several thousand *jin* of arsenic and several tens of a thousand *jin* of calamine in total.^②

Years], which mentions similar events. See *Quan Song wen*, vol. 157, *juan* 3377.

① Kubota Kazuo 久保田和男, "Hoku Sō Kisō jidai to shuto Kaifu" 北宋徽宗時代と首都開封. *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 63 (2005), 3: 615–49. *Genyue*'s association with Daoist religion is emphasized in Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, pp. 343–71.

② *Songbai leichao* 宋稗類鈔, *Siku quanshu* edition, *juan* 7, p. 15a. This is a Qing compilation in which the editor cobbled together anecdotes from Song sources and arranged them in thematic categories; various anecdotes concerning *Genyue* are arranged under "Extravagance" 奢汰. I have not been able to locate versions of these anecdotes in other extant Song sources, it remains uncertain whether, or how many of these anecdotes did originate in the Song. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that Song's innovations in materia medica and the discovery of material knowledge would have enabled certain technical innovations that generated the theatrical effects; and given Huizong's

萬歲山大洞數十，其洞中皆築以雄黃及盧甘石。雄黃則辟蛇虺，盧甘石則陰能致雲霧，滄郁如深山窮谷。後因經官拆賣，有回回者知之，因請賣之。凡得雄黃數千斤，盧甘石數萬斤。

Mists and clouds are essential elements in the manufacturing of the heavens. While, above, artificial clouds are generated from the clever deployment of a chemical substance, the same source includes a different method of harvesting clouds so that the emperor can enjoy them on demand:

When *Genyue* was first completed, the bureaus received an order to manufacture a great deal of silk bags processed in oil, and dampened with water. At dawn, they stretched the bags between perilous cliffs and steep peaks. After a while, when the clouds had all gathered in the bags, they would then draw the bags to keep them full. Wherever the imperial carriages arrived, they would open the bags to release the clouds. Within an instant, dense clouds would fill up the space—these were named “tributary clouds.”^①

艮岳初成，令有司多造油絹囊，加水濕之。曉張於危巒絕巘之間，既而雲盡入焉，遂括囊滿貯。每車駕所臨，輒開縱之。須臾滄然充塞，名曰貢雲。

True architects are more than builders of gardens—they are architects of illusions. The ways in which texts could orchestrate illusions are not unlike the processes described above. It is not really an art of deception, since the spectators themselves are in the know. The emperor and his courtiers are well aware of the artificiality of the garden and the divine encounters, but the sublimity of the spectacle itself is enough to suspend disbelief and to re-enchant the disenchanting.

A Conclusion: Approaching Court Literature as Agentive Text

The preceding pages are by no means a comprehensive analysis of the nature of court literature and its changing status in post-Tang courts. Here, as a way to conclude this experimental article, I circle back to my remark on an alternative approach to post-Tang court literature, and I would like to begin by commenting on the textual provenance of the *Genyue* set. The earliest extant, and the most complete, copy of this set of texts is included in the Southern Song scholar, Wang Mingqing's second brush-note collection (dated to 1193) in his *Huizhu lu* series.^② The texts were composed at court by the emperor himself and his courtiers. Although there is no direct record pertaining to the scope of circulation of these texts, they are likely distributed among his choice officials, as is often the case with

predilection for visual spectacles, the new technologies would likely have been employed at his court.

① *Songbai leichao*, *juan* 7, p. 16a.

② Wang Mingqing, *Huizhu houlu*, 1038 *ce*, 420–36.

poetry compositions at Huizong's court. To the extent of my knowledge, there is little explicit evidence of these texts being circulated widely outside of the court.

How might Wang Mingqing, writing half a decade later, have gained access to this set of texts? Here I offer my hypothesis. As one of the major imperial works, the set of texts would have been included in Emperor's Huizong's literary collection and deposited in the imperial archive dedicated for the preservation of Emperor Huizong's works, the Pavilion of Extending Literature.^① We know that in 1156, Wang married one of the daughters of Fang Zi 方滋 (fl. 12th century, courtesy name Wude 務德) and lived with the Fang family in Jiahe 嘉禾. Fang Zi was the Academician of the Pavilion of Extending Literature, a position that would have granted Fang access to the archives from Huizong's court, and it is possible that Wang Mingqing was able to view and copy the documents thanks to his father-in-law.^②

Though it is tempting to see the limited distribution of the *Genyue* set as evidence for the diminished role of literature at Huizong's court and the waning relevancy of the court among contemporary literati, I would like to suggest an alternative view. This lack of traffic between the literary communities at court and those outside of the court, especially in the 1120s, speaks more to the political conditioning of literature in the increasingly centralized era than the status of literature at court. By "political conditioning," I mean the division of literati based on their political associations. In the aftermath of decades of bitter factional disputes between the reformists and anti-reformists, Huizong's court was staffed by literati associated with the dominant councilor of the state, Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126), among whom the better known included Zhou Bangyan 周邦彦 (1056–1121) and Wang Anzhong 王安中 (1075–1134).^③ On the other hand, writers associated with the anti-reformist

① This is a tradition established in the Northern Song court, when a new emperor took the throne, he would commission a special committee to collect and edit the preceding emperor's works; a building would be constructed within the palace complex to enshrine all documents and works authored by the emperor; officials would be appointed as the Academician who oversees the archives. In this case, Emperor Huizong's literary works in diverse genres (poetry, lyrics, rhapsodies, prefaces, accounts, inscriptions) and official documents (edicts, letters) were housed in the Pavilion of Extending Literature 敷文閣, first built in 1140. For discussions on the Southern Song court's commission of a compilation of works written by the sovereign, see Wang Xiaochen, "Nan Song junzhu wenji bianxiu de zhengzhi gongneng tantao," in *Hebei daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (May 2020), pp. 12–21.

② Han Yuanji 韓元吉, "Fang gong muzhi ming" 方公墓志銘, 南澗甲乙稿, 卷二十一. Fang Zi's mother was the daughter of Wang Anli 王安禮 (1034–1095), Wang Anshi's 王安石 (1021–1086) younger brother. Wang Mingqing was also well informed of news and stories of the court through his own family. His father, Wang Zhi 王錚, once served as the editor in the imperial court's Bureau of Military Affairs. His grandfather, Zeng Yu 曾紆 (1073–1135), served in 1133 as the Academician of the Pavilion of Precious Literature 寶文閣, the imperial archive of Emperor Renzong's works.

③ Ari Daniel Lavine, "The Reigns of Hui-tsung (1100–1126) and Ch'in-tsung (1126–1127) and the Fall of the Northern Sung," in Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith eds., *Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 556–643.

faction and Cai's political dissenters, representatively local poets retrospectively grouped under the "Jiangxi school" 江西詩派, had little presence in the capital, let alone at court.^① Moreover, by the first decade of the twelfth century all major Northern Song writers and intellectual luminaries had died, and there was no longer a national center for literati and literary activities. The court poets of Huizong's reign and the local poets were largely insulated in their own social, cultural, and political spheres. In other words, the court was its own center, and literati communities outside of the court had no direct bearing on matters of literature. This larger ecology to which Huizong's court belonged had, to a large extent, determined that the place of literature within the court circle was no longer measured by its scope of distribution outside the court. In fact, literary compositions, poetry in particular, continued to occupy a significant place in court life. Huizong sponsored numerous court occasions where he made poetry composition an integral component of the event; he composed many works of poetry and prose himself, and promoted officials based on their perceived poetic skills.^② What ought to be challenged, as I proposed in the beginning of this article, is our strategy of reading.

To examine all pieces within the *Genyue* set and Huizong's court to fully assess such an approach would be an ambition fit for a much larger research project, but this article constitutes a crucial first step toward an alternative strategy of reading court literature, one that attends to the notion of the agentive text. As I seek to demonstrate, this notion of the agentive text liberates court literature from belletristic concerns which often tend to confine the text within narratives of formal and artistic developments. Attending to the agentive role of texts in the formation and reconfiguration of dynamics and relations at court, as this article shows, is a productive approach to post-Tang court literature where the court ceases to be a center of literary innovation and where literary innovation no longer occupies priority at the court. But it would also be a productive lens to re-examine the texts produced in early medieval courts, because by looking at how literary compositions interact with other actants in a particular sociopolitical network, this approach to court literature accounts for the enabling role that writing plays in the life of the court. Moreover, attending to the agentive role of court texts allows us to reconsider the nature of court as an ecological system, much more than a mere setting for competing literary talents. On the basic level, the court is a "place," fixed within the bounds of the palatial complex where different functions of the institution are laid out; court literature in this sense includes literary texts, the production and consumption of which occur within the place of the court. But the court is also an inhabited "space", or as I prefer to call it, "ecology", whose dynamism and conditions are shaped by the activities of human and non-human actants. Court literature then ought to be evaluated as a body of

① For "Jiangxi school of poetry" as a political demarcation, see Shen Songqin 沈松勤, "Liang Song dangzheng yu Jiangxi shipai" 兩宋黨政與江西詩派, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢, 2009 (1), pp.187-213.

② For an overview of poetry activities in Huizong's court, see Patricia Ebrey, "Poetry in the Culture of Huizong's Court," in Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, pp. 285-301.

texts that participate in the making of not only the spatial order, but also the nature of the environment within the space of the court.

入魅的技術：徽宗朝的行動文本與宗教演出

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摘要：有宋一代，宮廷已不再是引領詩文創新、傳播與批評的中心；雖然宮廷持續生產與消費大量詩文，但是這些文本普遍被視為頌聖的平庸之作。本文提出以“行動文本”(agentive text)的方法研究宮廷文學的社會屬性。不同於以往論者視文本(text)為社會歷史語境(context)的產物或鏡像，抑或視文本為自足的審美對象(aesthetic object)，本文認為宮廷文學的特殊性在於它從產生伊始即已嵌入宮廷社會生態之中；換言之，本文把宮廷文學文本視為充滿活力和動能的行動者，藉此研究它如何參與宮廷權力關係的構建、形塑和轉移。細讀北宋末年徽宗朝兩大事件——神霄道的創立與艮嶽的興造——所涉及的文學文本，本文分析了文本與宗教、利益團體、書寫傳統等的相互作用，揭示這些文本如何以“入魅的技術”(technology of enchantment)與其他“行動者”共同形塑了艮嶽的神聖空間。本文認為以“行動文本”作為方法，不僅可以研究宮廷文學（尤其是初唐以降的宮廷文學），還可以重審文學史，並還原文學與社會、歷史的一種更具活力的動態圖景。

關鍵詞：行動文本 神霄道 艮嶽詩文 入魅技術