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ABSTRACT

As the capital city of the last three imperial dynasties—Yuan (1271–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1644–1912)—and of contemporary China from 1949 onward, Beijing has long featured in literature; however, it was not until the last decade of the Ming that writers began to establish a systematic account of the city's history and its cultural reputation. This dissertation explores the changing relationship among literary practice, urban experience, and historical writing in a critical moment prior to the dynastic collapse. Focusing on the literary environments of Beijing, this project proceeds from a neglected, yet widely influential urban miscellany published in 1635, *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* (Dijing jingwulüe, 帝京景物略). It argues that the textual worldview of the urban miscellany played a central role in the discursive invention of the imperial capital, transforming what had been a frontier city into a cultural nucleus of the Ming state. Blending a new sentimental style found in personal expression with a documentary mode for public purposes, *A Sketch* encapsulates the early modern intellectual reflections on the relation of historiography and literature. My study of the text demonstrates how they were engaged in commemorative writing while facing drastic social changes caused by domestic crisis and foreign threats. This dissertation presents three case studies to elaborate how the late-Ming scholars inhabited Beijing in the literary sphere: an account of violence and death, the depiction of the northern landscape, and research on ancient stone inscriptions. Working across a variety of textual materials, including strange tales, travelogues, gazetteers, and treatises on epigraphical studies, this project examines the intertextual relation of *A Sketch* and its contemporary world of knowledge and learning. It also introduces the circulation and reception of *A Sketch* in subsequent periods. Integrating the study

of literary networks, architectural history, and geospatial analysis, my research demonstrates how Chinese classical prose, as a distinctive mode of seeing and thinking, was reshaped by social transformation and political turmoil.

CHAPTER ONE

A SKETCH OF THE NORTHERN CAPITAL

Premodern urban miscellanies (*chengshi biji*, 城市筆記) form a subgenre of Chinese prose literature whose works record distinctive sights and events of a city. As an assortment of different types of texts, they cover an extremely wide range of topics on the urban experience. Residing at the intersection of history and literature, urban miscellanies resist clear disciplinary categorization; although historians have often consulted them for historical information, literary scholars have treated them as fictions or anecdotal accounts. In the bibliographical system of late imperial China, they were generally categorized under the geographical subsection of history.[1] This dissertation examines a unique urban miscellany on Beijing from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) that showcases the convergence of literary practice and historical writing in a critical moment prior to the dynastic collapse. I ask how scholars constructed a historical discourse of the capital through miscellaneous writing that aimed to generate a powerful image of the city in the contemporary cultural landscape while serving to implicitly express their authors' reflections on historical events and critiques of current affairs.

The dissertation proceeds from an important yet understudied urban miscellany on Beijing—the northern capital of the Ming—titled *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* (*Dijing jingwulüe* 帝京景物略, hereafter referred to as *A Sketch*), written primarily by

[1] Urban miscellany is a general name to describe a group of miscellaneous books that were composed to record the history and culture of a city. In the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 system, these works were placed in the historical section 史部. They are not only documents for historical research, but also literary sources for the study of fiction (*xiaoshuo*, 小說) and prose (*sanwen*, 散文). For an introduction to the premodern urban miscellany, see Liu Haixia 劉海霞, "Zhongguo gudai chengshi biji yanjiu" (中國古代城市筆記研究) (PhD diss., Shanghai Normal University, 2014).

Liu Tong 劉侗 (1593–1636) and coauthored by Yu Yizheng 于奕正 (1597–1636). Published in 1635,[2] nearly one decade before the end of the Ming dynasty, it is the earliest, longest, and most systematic account of the city's history and culture of the period, laying the foundation of textual materials for subsequent literature on Beijing in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and the Republican period (1912–1949).[3] It is also a prominent collection of refined prose essays. Written in an idiosyncratic literary style, the book has long been venerated as one of the best works of "casual essays" (*xiaopin*, 小品), a representative work produced during the *xingling* (naturalistic expression, or personal sensibility, 性靈) literary movement from late imperial China.[4]

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[2] In all datable editions of *A Sketch* from the Ming and in all modern reprints from Beijing Guji and Shanghai Guji presses, the date of Liu Tong's preface is the winter of 1635. As far as I know, the only exception is a microfilm of an incomplete edition of *Dijing jingwulüe* collected in the University of Chicago Library. The date of the same preface is the winter of 1634, but the exact date of this version cannot be identified. Based on the study of Liu Tong's biography (to be discussed later in this chapter), modern scholars have demonstrated that *A Sketch* was published in 1635.

[3] From the late seventeenth century on, more books were compiled to systematically record the history and culture of Beijing. The Qing court conducted several imperial projects, and literati scholars contributed miscellaneous writings about Beijing. *A Sketch* was constantly reviewed and quoted in these later works. See Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, *Jiang Zhe fangshu ji* 江浙訪書記 (Beijing: Sanlian chubanshe, 1985), 311. For extant books on Beijing compiled during the Qing dynasty, see appendix 1.2. Also see Wang Canchi 王燦熾, *Yandu guji kao* 燕都古籍考 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe,1995).

[4] In the early 1930s, Zuo Zuoren 周作人 praised *A Sketch* as the representative work of "casual essays" from the late imperial period (this will be discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation). According to Charles Laughlin, *xiaopin* literature is a modern genre revived in the 1920s and 1930s; see Laughlin, *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008). However, the term *xiaopin* appeared as early as the Six Dynasties period and continued in use throughout the premodern period. During the late Ming, *xiaopin* already referred to a hybrid group of short texts, such as casual jottings, travelogues, and private letters (e.g., Zhu Guozhen 朱國幀, *Yongchuang xiaopin* 涌幢小品; and Chen Jiru 陳繼儒, *Wanxiangtang xiaopin* 晚香堂小品). For an introduction to premodern *xingling xiaopin*, see Tsao Shu-chuan 曹淑娟, *Wanming xingling xiaopin yanjiu* 晚明性靈小品研究 (Taipei: Wenjin, 1988).

This dissertation explores how the generic complexity and discursive versatility of the urban miscellany contributed to creating a historical discourse of the city. My research indicates that *A Sketch* played a vital role in the discursive invention of the imperial capital in the contemporary cultural landscape, transforming what had been a frontier city into a cultural nucleus of the Ming state. As the southern capital of Liao (Liao Nanjing, 遼南京), the grand capital of the Yuan (Yuan Dadu, 元大都), and the central capital of the Jin (Jin Zhongdu, 金中都), Beijing, the political and military center of state power, had been located in the marginal area where the Han Chinese frequently encountered the northern nomads.[5] In *A Sketch*, Beijing was for the first time comprehensively observed, reflected upon, and then represented by literati scholars, thereby initiating the systematic construction of the city's cultural identity as both the capital of late imperial China and a city rooted in a local society that produced its own customs and products.

Moreover, my reading of *A Sketch* elaborates how literati writers conveyed serious inquiries about society and the state. Centering on the intertextuality of the miscellany, this dissertation aims to unravel the late-Ming authors' writing process, in which adaptation and rewriting of the early referential materials created space to imply their own reflections and critiques. To be specific, my analysis demonstrates how Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng ingeniously employed the flexibility of the miscellaneous form to accommodate both commemoration of the glorious past and critique of the frustrating present. In the third decade of the seventeenth century, scholars residing in the capital clearly witnessed the retreat of state power at a time when the need for the state to respond to both domestic and diplomatic emergencies was

[5] Hou Renzhi 侯仁之 ed., *Beijing lishi dili* 北京歷史地理 (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe, 2000), 78–104.

increasingly urgent. Decay of the social order of the capital was reflected in the deteriorating situations at specific sites. By juxtaposing in the essays the carefully selected, sorted, and re-presented accounts of historical figures and events with contemporary descriptions of the sites of the city, the authors not only related what had happened in the past, but also implied their observation of current affairs—especially those related to the political legitimacy of the Ming state.

As the introduction to the dissertation, this chapter first presents an overview of the edition of *A Sketch* published in 1635, which is the core material for the chapters that follow. This section introduces the biographical information of the authors, including their literary careers and the expansion of their social networks. It also introduces the bibliographical information of the first edition, including the process of compilation and publication, and overviews the book's textual character, which is encyclopedic in content and miscellaneous in form. The chapter continues with a discussion of methodology, which centers on the intertextuality of the miscellaneous text, and explicates the case study approach that is to be conducted in this project. At the conclusion of this chapter, I present an overview of the structure of this dissertation and briefly introduce the content of the following chapters.

1.1 The Book

A Sketch was the collaborative project of three scholars. Liu Tong, from Macheng County, Hubei province, was the primary author, contributing the 127 essays that form the book's core component. Yu Yizheng, a native of Wanping County of Beijing, collaborated with Liu Tong during field research and undertook the editorial work of the book manuscript. Zhou Sun 周損 (dates unknown), from Liu Tong's hometown, selected 1,347 poems on the scenic sites

and appended them to the corresponding essays. After five years work on the project, *A Sketch* was published in Nanjing.[6]

Without any governmental sponsorship, the compilation and publication were made possible by the three literati's collaboration across Beijing, Hubei, and Nanjing. As a young scholar in his early twenties, Liu Tong had established a considerable reputation in Hubei; however, his political career did not advance as successfully as did his literary fame. Indeed, his literary talent even caused some trouble for his political advancement. In 1618, at the age of twenty-five, Liu Tong was admonished by the Ministry of Rites for writing requested treatises in a weird new style (*wenqi*, 文奇). Though we have no additional documentation to investigate specifically what the label means, we do know that Liu Tong excelled at writing in an unusual literary style, somewhat out of place in his time, that it caused political controversy, and that as a consequence, he was downgraded in rank to the status of Confucian student.[7] Although both Liu Tong and Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586–1637), another scholar who encountered similar censorship in 1618 and who was later an active member of the Restoration society (*Fushe* 復社), received negative assessments in the bureaucratic sphere, they continued their eccentric ways of writing.[8] In the following decade, their works achieved great popularity among scholars and

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[6] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe* (Beijing: Beijing guji, 1980), 4. For an introduction to the authorship of the book, see Wang Canchi 王燦熾, "*Dijing jingwulüe* jiqi zuozhe kao" 《帝京景物略》及其作者考, *Beijing shehui kexue* 北京社會科學 (April 2006): 54–60.

[7] *Guangxu Macheng xianzhi* 光緒麻城县志 (1877), *juan* 22, "Biographies, literati scholars (renwuzhi wenyuan 人物誌文苑)," 5b–6a.

[8] Scholars have supposed that this demotion of the Confucian students—Liu Tong, Tan Yuanchun, and He Hongzhong—was a result of factional controversy. Tan Yuanchun was later a member of the Restoration society (Fushe 復社). Although there is no record clearly showing Liu Tong's participation in political movements, his writing shows that he aligned himself politically with the Fushe members. Wu Guopin 鄔國平, *Jingling pai yu mingdai wenxue piping* 竟陵派與明代文學批評 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), 15–25. Zhang Yonggang

dominated the literary fashion in the last years of the Ming. In the history of Chinese literature, Liu and Tan, together with poet Zhong Xing 鐘惺 (1581–1624), were often grouped as the literati of the Jingling school (*Jingling pai*, 竟陵派).[9]

Frustrated with local academia, Liu Tong decided to leave Hubei and travel to the capital to seek opportunities for promotion. Upon his arrival in Beijing in 1629, he was introduced by Tan Yuanchun to Yu Yizheng. Born into a wealthy family in the capital, Yu Yizheng behaved like a typical eccentric scholar of the day; disdaining orthodox learnings, he was more obsessed with art collection, drinking, and gaming than working for civil examinations. Sharing a similar passion for landscape and travel, Liu and Yu became close friends, and over the next five years, they lived and traveled together, spending most of their leisure time on the writing of *A Sketch*. Their working partnership would last the rest of their lives.[10]

In the edition of *A Sketch* published in 1635 (hereafter referred to as "the 1635 edition"), the two prefaces, one written by Fang Fengnian 方逢年 (1585–1646) and one by Liu Tong, and the editorial remarks composed by Yu Yizheng, explicated the authors' motivations, purposes, and methods used in conducting this book project. Literature contributes to elevating the cultural status of a city. As Fang Fengnian proposed in his preface, "Yan must have its own book, yet it is

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張永剛, *Donglin dangyi yu wanming wenxue huodong* 東林黨議與晚明文學活動 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009), 165–89.

[9] Originating from Hubei province, this group of writers shared a similar literary pursuit with the earlier Gongan school 公安派, represented by the prominent Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610). However, such clearly linear narrative is a retrospective construction made in the mid-seventeenth century. In chapter 3, I will elaborate on the sophisticated network of these literati writers. The most comprehensive study of the Jingling school is Chen Guanghong 陳廣宏, *Jingling pai yanjiu* 竟陵派研究 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2006).

[10] Wang Chongjian 王崇簡, "Dijing jingwulüe ba" 帝京景物略跋 in *Qingxiangtang wenji* 青箱堂文集, *Sikuquanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, *jibu* 集部, vol. 203 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1996), 524. Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, "Yu Sizhi 于司直," *Shuying* 書影 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 148–49.

difficult to write one book about Yan" (燕不可無書而難為書).[11] The challenge resulted from the special historical and geopolitical situation in Beijing during the late Ming.

Fang compares Beijing to other famous capitals in Chinese history, represented by Xianyang, Chang'an, and Luoyang, which had long been portrayed in various literary genres. He points out that famous scenic sites, especially grand architectural works with significant historical heritages, build the cultural reputation of a city. In contrast, Beijing, as a relatively young capital by the time of Ming, was characterized by its "frugality and simplicity" (*jiejian,* 節儉); writing systematically about this city would thus require extra effort, a challenge, Fang notes, that is directly demonstrated in contemporary works about Beijing.[12] In the editorial remarks, Yu Yizheng reviewed several books known in his time on the history and culture of Beijing, including *History of Yan* 燕史 (Qi Bojian 戚伯堅, dates unknown), *Miscellaneous Records of the Office in Wanping* 宛署雜記 (Shen Bang 沈榜, 1593), *Guest Talks on Chang'an* 長安客話 (Jiang Yikui 蔣一葵, ca. late sixteenth century), and *Records of Excursions in Chang'an* 長安可遊記 (Song Qiming 宋啟明, dates unknown). He identified several problems of these texts, pointing out that they were overtly miscellaneous (*za*, 雜), lacking proper structure (*shilun*, 失倫), unwarranted without textual evidence (*e*, 訛), incomplete (*lou*, 漏) or excessively general and simplistic (*man*, 漫), and vulgar in terms of the content and literary quality (*li*, 俚). Therefore, after a thorough examination of these materials, checking the validity of early records

[11] Fang Fengnian was Liu Tong's teacher and one of the patrons of the publication. Fang Fegnnian, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 1.

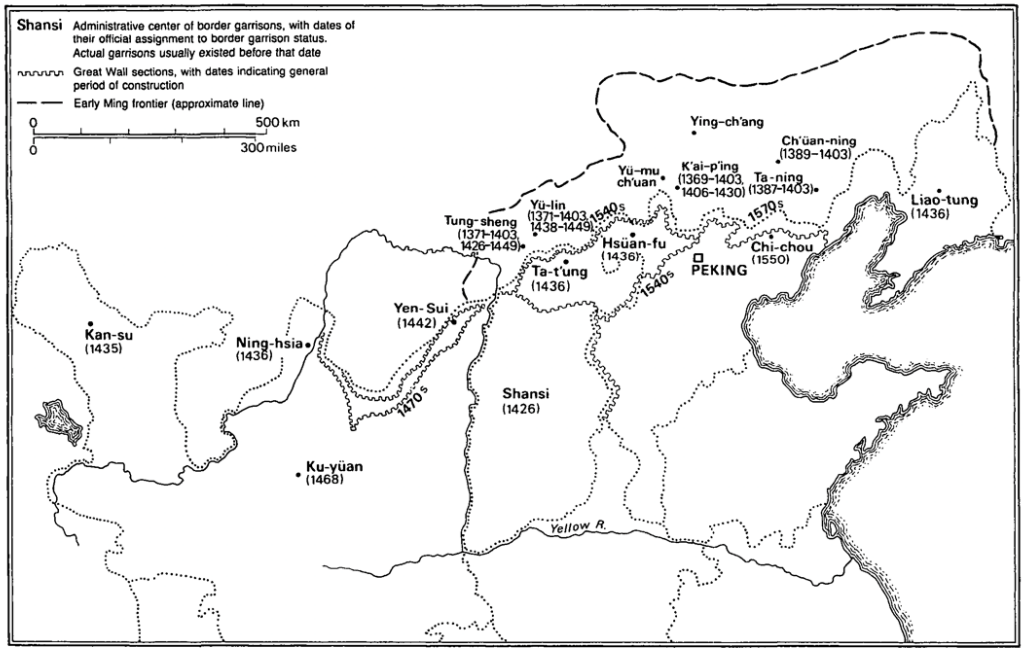
[12] Fang Fegnnian, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 1.

and selecting the "useful" elements, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng carefully composed *A Sketch* in a manner that would "update the old situation and create a new vision" (*yixin jiuguan* 一新舊觀).[13]

In his preface, Liu Tong further elaborates on the historical and geopolitical situation of Beijing. He first points out that as a political center on the frontier protecting the country from nomadic invasion, Beijing distinguishes itself from all other cities in history (Figure 1.1). He explains that the harsh natural environment nurtured strong personalities among local people and created a history of unusual splendor that was marked by the court's victory in numerous battles with the nomads rather than by the pursuit of material extravagance.[14] *A Sketch* was designed to establish a unique cultural image for this kind of capital.

[13] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks" [Lüeli], *Dijing jingwulüe*, 5. For a more complete chart on books on Beijing compiled before *A Sketch*, see appendix 1.1. Also see Wang Canchi 王燦熾, *Yandu guji kao* 燕都古籍考 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 1995).

[14] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3.



Map 19. Northern border garrisons and the Great Wall

Figure 1.1 Northern border garrisons of the Ming dynasty and the Great Wall. Illustration from Twitchett and Mote, eds., *Cambridge History of China: Ming, Part 1* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Map 19, 390.

Liu Tong summarizes three points on the critical position of Beijing in governing the whole country, which constituted the very reason why the discursive invention of the capital was necessary. Such candid discussion on the geopolitical status of Beijing was rarely found in urban miscellanies. First, located in the middle north of the central land, Beijing is on the crossroads where the military strength of the northwest (*xibei zhi jing*, 西北之勁) encounters the material opulence of the southeast (*dongnan zhirao*, 東南之饒), the ideal location for the emperor to be able to balance the two forces to bring prosperity to the country.[15]

[15] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3.

Second, through a comparative study of the military roles played by the Guanzhong area of the Qin, Luoyang of the Han and Tang, and Beijing of the Ming during the rise and fall of political powers, Liu Tong relates that the relative position of the capital to the military fortresses of the country is of great importance in sustaining security and peace. Beijing, with its dual identities as both an imperial capital and one of the largest garrison systems of the state, could most effectively protect "the realm under heaven" (*tianxia*, 天下).[16]

Third, Liu Tong comments on the legitimacy of Emperor Yongle's governance and of Beijing's imperial identity. Beijing was promoted to the capital when Yongle, the previous prince of Yan, succeeded in a campaign to purge the old court at Nanjing and ascended to the throne in 1403.[17] Using historical, geomantic, and philosophical evidence, Liu Tong openly expresses admiration for the early imperial decision to move the capital to the north.[18] The eagerness implies the imperative to defend the superior status of Beijing over Nanjing, at least rhetorically, in a period of chaos when the statesmen of Ming might have considered moving the capital back to the south.[19]

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[16] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3. For an introduction to Beijing's role in the military scheme of the Ming, see Peng Yong 彭勇, *Mingdai beibian fangyu tizhi yanjiu* 明代北邊防禦體制研究 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2009); and Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 91–107.

[17] Hou Renzhi, *Beijing chengshi lishi dili*, 107.

[18] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3.

[19] The debates on moving the capital back to Nanjing became a prominent issue in times when Ming governance was challenged. In the mid-fifteenth century, the invasion by Mongol troops caused debates in court; see Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*. In the early 1640s, such debate reoccurred; see Frederick Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 241–58. Although few records indicate the existence of such debates in the court of the early 1630s, Liu Tong's writing reveals a statesman's concern.

Against such a geopolitical context and the bibliographical history of Beijing, in what ways did Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng compose *A Sketch*? And how do we understand the composition of *A Sketch* in the textual tradition of urban miscellany? *A Sketch* presents many detailed records of local events and customs and organizes the account of the past around scenic or historical sites. Yu Yizheng identifies two works of urban reminiscences as the models of Liu Tong's writing: *Records of Buddhist Monasteries at Luoyang* (Luoyang qielanji 洛陽伽藍記, 547 CE) and *Old Stories from Wulin* (Wulin jiushi 武林舊事, ca. 1280).[20] Presenting the glorious past of the old capital after the permanent loss of the previous dynasty, these two miscellanies are literary representations of the city that reflected the individual sensibilities of the authors and the collective memories shared by the literati group. In *Records of Buddhist Monasteries at Luoyang*, facing a desolate Luoyang ruined by fire and war, Yang Xuanzhi 楊衒之 (d. 555) recalls the regime of the Northern Wei (386–534) by delineating hundreds of splendid temples that had been the landmarks of the city.[21] After the Mongol conquest of Hangzhou (the capital city of the Southern Song [1127–1279]), Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1298), the author of *Old Stories from Wulin*, bitterly enumerates the local festivals and urban scenery that he had once enjoyed.

The writers of these urban reminiscences strove to use all possible sources (textual, oral, and archaeological) to reconstruct the past and to implicitly affect the reader's comprehension of the lost city. Literary historians have proposed two features that underlined these memorial works. First, the "photo-realistic" depictions of the city are more than a transparent record of the

[20] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 8.

[21] For an introduction to and complete translation of the *Luoyang qielanji*, see William J. F. Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

past. Rather, the authors consciously presented an "alternative reality" of the fallen capital and often portrayed it as a place that is glorified, permanent, and secured.[22] Second, the tonality of the accounts is nostalgic and elegiac, lamenting the city's faded past, whereas the language is primarily documentary and descriptive,[23] with occasional expressions of the author's emotional reactions, which often occur in the preface rather than in the main text.[24]

Although *A Sketch* shares a formal similarity with these miscellanies, the fundamental difference lies in the late-Ming author's position within the dynastic time of the Ming, in contrast to the dislocation of time and space that characterized earlier urban reminiscences. Rather than dealing with a disjunct past, Liu Tong was living the day-to-day experience of urban decay; what he endeavored to preserve included the present condition, and his emotional reaction to his surroundings was not only instant and direct, but also a mixture of nostalgia, regret, anxiety, and critique. Consequently, the portrayal of scenic sites in *A Sketch* differs from the models on which it was based. Although Liu Tong intended to create a glorious image of Beijing, the content of his writing inevitably includes many details that alluded to the corrupt events that happened in the city. The language of the text synthesizes documentary and realist styles of writing. That is to say, Liu enumerates the details of urban life and scene by employing poetic language and a lyrical tone.

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[22] Ari Daniel Levine, "Walls and Gates, Windows and Mirrors: Urban Defenses, Cultural Memory, and Security Theatre in Song Kaifeng," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* no. 39 (2014): 97–100.

[23] McDowall, "History, Temporality, and the Interdynastic Experience: Yu Binshuo's Survey of Nanjing (ca. 1672)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 78 (December 2018): 318; Stephen West, "The Interpretation of a Dream: The Sources, Evaluation, and Influence of the 'Dongjing Meng Hua Lu'東京夢華錄," *T'oung Pao*, second series, vol. 71 (1985): 64–66.

[24] For instance, Yang Xuanzhi, *Luoyang qielanji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 2; and Meng Yuanlao 孟元老, *Dongjing menghualu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 4.

During the writing process, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng executed strict control over the textual quality of *A Sketch*. As Yu relates, every event included in the book had to be documented in other materials and then verified; no consideration would be given to unattributed sayings. If for some reason an event was unverifiable, the authors openly express their suspicion or doubt about its veracity.[25] In addition to the accuracy of content, verbal "expressiveness" (*da*, 達) is equally important.[26] Moreover, fieldwork was constantly arranged to supplement archival research and to verify the information. Yu Yizheng tells the reader that every place written about in the book had to be physically visited; if Yu and Liu were unable to go visit a site together, they were rigorous about reporting their individual observations to each other upon their return.[27]

The sightseeing, archival research, and fieldwork continued over the course of five years. In 1634, Liu Tong finally succeeded in the imperial examination and was soon appointed the magistrate of Wu County in Suzhou. In 1635, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng traveled south and visited Nanjing. In the winter, the manuscript of *A Sketch* was sent for printing. Impressed by the beautiful scenery of Jiangnan, Liu Tong planned to write a book about Nanjing as a sister project, tentatively titled *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Southern Capital* (*Nanjing jingwulüe*, 南京景物略).[28] It seems that in 1635 Liu Tong had written something for Nanjing, but the manuscript was lost. The two friends separated in the winter of 1635. Liu Tong traveled to Suzhou to claim his new governmental post, while Yu Yizheng continued traveling throughout

[25] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 5
[26] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.
[27] Liu Tong, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.
[28] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," 8. Also see Zhou Lianggong, *Shuying*, 148.

Jiangnan. Misfortune soon reached the two: in the autumn of 1636, Yu Yizheng died in a hotel in Nanjing, and less than a year later, Liu Tong died in Yangzhou.[29]

The 1635 edition of *A Sketch* is the last and one of the largest miscellanies on Beijing published in the Ming dynasty. It comprises eight chapters in total. Each chapter includes fifteen to twenty essays and a varying number of poems. Chapters are organized in geospatial units, beginning from "the north city" (*chengbei neiwai*, 城北內外) and moving clockwise to "the east city" (*chengdong neiwai*, 城東內外) and "the south city" (*chengnan neiwai*, 城南內外).[30] The mountainous part of west Beijing, the concluding section in the geospatial sequence of the book, is the longest of the book, comprising four chapters: "Inside the west city" (*xicheng nei,* 西城內), "Outside the west city" (*xicheng wai,* 西城外), "On the West Mountains" (*xishan shang*, 西山上), and "In the bottom of the West Mountains" (*xishan xia*, 西山下). The last chapter, "Famous sites in the surrounding districts" (*jifu mingji*, 畿輔名跡) introduces many sites in the counties and villages near Beijing.

A Sketch is an encyclopedic work covering an extremely wide range of topics on Beijing's history and culture. Before investigating the kaleidoscopic content of the book, let me first introduce what was deliberately excluded, which, I propose, reflects the authors' scholarly stance. *A Sketch* not only distinguishes itself from tourist manuals and other popular readings

[29] I could not identify the exact dates of the two authors' deaths. Gu Yuzhi 顧與治 (1599–1660) escorted Yu's coffin back to Beijing. Zhou Lianggong, Xing Fang 邢昉, and Shi Runzhang 施閏章 recorded the death of Yu in their works. See Zhou Lianggong, *Shuying*. Xing Fang, "Ai Yu Sizhi 哀于司直," *Shijiu ji* 石臼集, *qianji juan* 2 (Qing Kangxi edition), 52. Shi Runzhang, "Shu Yu Sizhi aici hou 書于司直哀辞后," *Xueyutang ji* 學余堂集, *juan* 26, *Jingyin wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 1313 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), 318.

[30] This structure of chapters first occurred *in Luoyang qielanji*.

that one could find in commercial printings, but also differs from official gazetteers, which concentrate on imperial undertakings in the capital. The design of the 1635 edition is simple and clean; one can find marks of punctuation only along the text, and there is no commentary to assist the reading (Figure 1.2).


帝京景物畧 卷之一

遂安方逢年一定

麻城劉侗

宛平于奕正一修

大學石鼓

都城東北艮隅，瞻其坊曰崇教，步其街曰成賢，國子監在焉。國初本北平府學，永樂二年，改國子監，左廟右學，規制大備，彝倫堂之松，元許衡手植也。廟門之石鼓，周宣王獵碣也，維我 太祖高皇

大學石鼓 一

卷一

Figure 1.2 Book page from *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital*. Ming Chongzhen edition, Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese rare book digitization project. Harvard University Library.

A Sketch does not include any visual illustrations of scenic sites, although the assorted scenic views of Beijing—such as "eight scenes at Yanjing" (Yanjing bajing 燕京八景)—had become a popular motif in art.

Moreover, as clearly stated in the editorial remarks, the authors aimed to separate their work from official records, which present the city from an imperial perspective with more attention paid to the imperial structures and the city's public infrastructures. Excluded from *A Sketch* are buildings not accessible to the public, such as the palaces secluded in the inner court; the ritual temples reserved solely for national ceremonies; and the imperial mausoleums that were out of reach for common people.[31] There is no description of city gates and the adjunct moats and walls, even though these architectural features were visually prominent. Only a few governmental institutions, such as the Imperial Academy, which were places familiar to Confucian scholars, are included in the book.

Meanwhile, although the authors had been fully aware of Beijing's proximity to the border, from this book as well as from other late Ming miscellanies of Beijing, a reader would be hard pressed to find textual traces of the single most prominent landmark of the frontier: the fortress architecture now known as the Great Wall. By the end of the seventeenth century, in response to the increasing threats from the Manchu state, the defense system had been densely constructed fifty kilometers from Beijing.[32] Fortress towers, guarding walls, military towns, although easily visible in nearby counties, are completely absent in the text. I propose that the deliberate omission of the engineering projects on the border reflects the authors' intent to disguise the perilous conditions and to preserve as much as possible a secure and prosperous image of the capital in the text. Admittedly, the concealment of military traces is not a complete success; in many passages, the authors display contradictors; when describing the current urban and natural landscapes, they could not fully control revealing the sense of urgency and anxiety.

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[31] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," 5.

[32] For an introduction to the history of the wall fortress in China, see Waldron, *The Great Wall of China.*

Returning to the content of the book, we find its richness and diversity demonstrate the authors' efforts in creating a systematic discourse of Beijing's history and culture. Sites (*jing*, 景) and objects (*wu*, 物) are major subjects. Thus, most essays in *A Sketch* are titled with either the name of a place, such as "Fayun Temple" (Fayunsi, 法雲寺) or "Qushui Garden" (Qushui yuan, 曲水園), or the name of a representative object that could be found in situ, such as "Old Wisteria from the Ministry of Personnel" (libu guteng, 吏部古藤). The essays often begin with an introduction to the history of the place and continue with accounts of historical events or biographies of important figures. Although *A Sketch* was titled with the character *lüe* 略, which means "abbreviation" and "outline," the book is by no means a modest review of Beijing. Rather, it is a "comprehensive" (*xiang,* 詳) project, as pointed out by Fang Fengnian in the preface, displaying an encyclopedic character.[33]

The essays, which are of varying lengths ranging from one hundred to two thousand words, touch upon four major topics: religious institutes, sites of monuments, natural scenery, and local customs and products. Among the eight chapters, there is no clear pattern in the distribution of length, and the topics presented in a single essay are combined in flexible ways. For instance, in the third chapter, one long essay relating a hagiography of the famous Taoist Qiu Chuji (1148–1227) is preceded by a very short essay introducing a terrace where hundreds of swallows gather during spring days.[34] In the second chapter, the long essay "Lantern Market" (Dengshi, 燈市), eloquently introducing the history of this market near Donghua Gate, follows a

[33] Fang Fegnnian, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 1–2.

[34] "The Swallow Terrace" (Juyan tai, 聚燕台) and "Shrine of White Cloud" (Baiyun guan, 白雲觀), in *Dijing jingwulüe*, 136; 137–38.

succinct account in which Liu Tong illustrates the picturesque scenery of a small garden owned by an imperial relative.[35]

Religious institutes constitute a prominent part of *A Sketch*. More than fifty essays use the name of temples as titles, although the contents do not often focus exclusively on monastic affairs. There are hundreds of temples in Beijing, including Buddhist and Taoist monasteries, shrines in honor of local deities, and the Catholic Church founded by Jesuit missionaries. The interest of the narrative lies more in secular and scholarly events than in religious experiences, with ancient trees, extraordinary flowers, pagodas, and exquisite sculptures as the main subjects.[36] The essay "Catholic Church" (Tianzhutang, 天主堂) even introduces European learning to the reader. It presents an overview of Western arts and Christian architecture, the biography of Christ, the organization of a Jesuit missionary, and the function of such European objects as the telescope, the hourglass, and the harp.[37] Noticeably, these religious institutes often generate anecdotes, as supernatural events constantly occurred in these places (the accounts of strange occurrences related to temples and shrines will be investigated in chapter 2).

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[35] "Yi Garden" (Yi yuan, 宜園) and "Lantern Market" in *Dijing jingwulüe*, 56–57; 57–59.

[36] The following essays take the vegetation and plants as their main content: "Baoguo Temple" (Baoguosi 報國寺) on pines (*Dijing jingwulüe*, ch.3, 107–08); "Weigong Temple" (Weigong si, 韋公寺) on fruit trees (ch.3, 125–26); and "Temple of Manifesting Numiosity" (Xianling gong 顯靈宮; ch.4, 176) and "Cedar from the Shrine of Yanxiang" (Yanxiangguan bai 延祥觀柏; ch.8, 376–77) on cedars. The following essays primarily focus on the architecture: "Temple of True Enlightenment" (Zhenjuesi 真覺寺) on the Five Pagoda (ch.5, 200–01); Statues of Thousand Buddha in "Temple of Thousand Buddhas" (Qianfo si 千佛寺; 40–41); the statue of Guanyi Bodhisattva in "The Statue of Dashi (Guanyin) in Jishan Guild" (Jishan huiguan Tang dashi xiang 稽山會館唐大士像; ch.4, 180–81); the miraculous image in "Temple of Vulture Peak" (Jiufeng si, 鷲峰寺; ch.4, 170–71); and exotic statues in "Temple of Double Tress in the Western Regions" (Xiyu shuanglin si, 西域雙林寺; ch.5, 205–06).

[37] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 152–53.

Moreover, *A Sketch* introduces many monuments constructed for famous figures, such as shrines established for Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236–1283), Yu Qian 于謙 (1398–1457), and Li Dongyang 李東陽 (1441–1516) and the tombs of Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇 (1552–1610) and Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602).[38] Through the accounts of their biographies, Liu Tong discusses remarkable events in the history of Beijing, such as the conquest of the Yuan in the late thirteenth century and the military conflicts between the Ming state and the Mongols in the mid-fifteenth century.

Another major topic in *A Sketch* is the natural scenery, with essays on gardens and natural landscapes found throughout. Eight essays are titled with the names of famous gardens in Beijing.[39] Unlike gardens in southeast China owned by literati and wealthy merchants, most garden estates in the capital were properties of aristocrats and top-ranking officials. Water was a precious resource in Beijing's semi-arid climate, and only the most prestigious residents of the city could afford to own small ponds in their private gardens.[40] To illustrate each garden, Liu Tong often focuses on one or two representative features—the stones and rocks in the Yi Garden,

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[38] See "Shrine in Honor of Wen Tianxiang" (Wen Zhenggong ci, 文正公祠; *Dijing jingwulüe*, ch.1, 14), "Shrine in Honor of Yu Qian" (Yu Shaobao ci, 于少保祠; ch.2, 49–51), "Shrine in Honor of Li Dongyang" (Li Wenzheng gong ci, 李文正公祠; ch.4, 155–56), "Tomb of Matteo Ricci" (Li Madou fen, 利瑪竇墳; ch.5, 207–08), and "Tomb of Li Zhi" (Li Zhuowu mu 李卓吾墓, ch.8, 366–67). There are other essays on the shrines or tombs of Di Renjie (Di Lianggong ci 狄梁公祠, ch.8, 331), Liu Fen (Liu Sihu ci 劉司戶祠, ch.8, 333), and Jia Dao (Jia Dao mu 賈島墓, ch.8, 355–56).

[39] "Garden of Duke Dingguo" (Dingguogong yuan, 定國公園; *Dijing jingwulüe*, ch.1, 29), "New Garden of Duke Yingguo" (Yingguogong Xinyuan, 英國公新園; ch.1, 31–32), "Garden of Duke Yingguo" (Yingguogong yuan, 英國公園; ch.1, 43), "Garden of Duke Chengguo" (Chengguogong yuan 成國公園; ch.2, 54–55), "Garden Yi" (Yi yuan, 宜園; ch.2, 56), "Qushui Garden" (Qushui yuan, 曲水園; ch.2, 63), "New Garden of Imperial Relative Li" (Li huangqin Xinyuan, 李皇親新園; ch.3, 104–05), "White Stone Villa" (Baishi Zhuang, 白石莊; ch.5, 197), "Garden of Count Huian" (Huianbo yuan,惠安伯園; ch.5, 199).

[40] According to *A Sketch*, many villas were constructed surrounding Shichahai Lake inside the city and in the area of Haidian in the northwest of the city. See essays "Shichahai Lake" (Shichahai, 什剎海; *Dijing jingwulüe*, ch.1, 39–40) and "Haidian" 海淀 (ch.5, 217–18)."

the willows in the White Stone Villa, or the delicate hydraulic design in the Li garden, for example—which he expounds upon with detailed descriptions. Lakes, channels, mountain springs, and branches of the Grand Canal, which were the most attractive water features in Beijing and were freely enjoyed by local residents, are also described by Liu, to whom these water scenes, decorated with lotus, bamboo, weeds, and water birds, looked deceptively "southern," like those beautiful spots at Jiangnan.[41] Simultaneously, Liu Tong also displays a starker image of the capital—the desert land covered by sand dunes and barren earth surround by muddy rivers that lay outside the city, and the temples and villages destroyed during the battles between the Ming and the Manchu deep in the mountains. Chapter 3 of the dissertation will further discuss the representation of landscape in *A Sketch*.

The last major topic relates to the authors' "ethnographic" interests in local customs. The essay "Spring Field" (Chunchang, 春場) describes in detail how Beijing residents prepared for and celebrated festival days in each month and introduces household taboos as well as practices for avoiding bad fortune. It not only relates well-known festivals such as Dragon Boat Day and Double Ninth Day, but also preserves information about local holidays, such as Daughter's Day in the early days of the fifth month, and it records special events that created unique spectacles, such as the imperial guardians bathing elephants in the city moat during the summer.[42] Later, in

[41] For the water scenery that reminds Liu Tong of the southern landscape, see the following essays: "Sansheng an 三圣庵" (*Dijing jingwulüe*, ch.1, 32), "Longhua si 龍華寺" (ch.1, 37–38), "Shuiguan 水關" (ch.1, 18–19), "Haidian," "Shuijintou 水盡頭" (ch.6, 264–65) "Xidi 西堤" (ch.7, 287–88), and "Gongdesi 功德寺" (ch.4, 291).

[42] *Dijing jingwulüe*, "Chunchang," 68–67.

the Qing dynasty, this essay was widely quoted by daily encyclopedias and "calendars books" (*yuelingshu*, 月令書).[43]

In the same essay, Liu Tong also transcribes many vernacular idioms, popular songs, and ditties, which provide important material to modern anthropologists for the study of folklore and vernacular culture.[44] Noticeably, Liu Tong pays particular attention to how local people speak about ceremonial procedures and how to address the names of food and toys. For instance, in introducing one festival in early spring, he writes, "The second day of the second month is called 'Dragon Raising Head.' People often fry the pancakes that were left from the New Year sacrifice and burn herbs to clean up the bed—this is called 'smoking insects.'"[45] Children play a game called "beating the *bobo*," which is a type of small spinning top made of wood. Liu Tong also adds a folk song: "When willows thrive, we whip the spinning top. When willows turn green, we throw the empty bell. When willows wither, we kick *jianzi* hackysack. When willows sprout, we beat the *bo'er*."[46]

A Sketch also introduces the city's markets, such as those selling lanterns and antiques, thus offering the reader valuable information about farm production and handicrafts of Beijing. Four of the essays, which concern the ranking of stationery, bonsai plants, ornamental fish, and crickets, read like mini registers or manuals of connoisseurship (*pu*, 譜). In the essay "Market of

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[43] *Dijing jingwulüe*, "Chunchang," 65–72. This essay appears in several "calendar books" (*yueling shu* 月令書) in the late Ming and Qing, which were a kind of popular reading genre in late imperial China. It was frequently quoted in, for instance, *Yueling cuibian* 月令粹编 (by Qin Jiamo 秦嘉謨, 1812) and *Qingjia lu* 清嘉录 (1830) by Gu Lu 顧祿.

[44] For instance, *A Sketch* was frequently referred to in Li Jiarui 李家瑞, *Beiping fengsu leizheng* 北平風俗類徵 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), which was the No.14 monographic study from Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica.

[45] *Dijing jingwulüe*, "Chunchang," 67. "二月二日曰'龍抬頭'，煎元旦祭餘餅，薰床炕，曰'薰蟲兒'。"

[46] *Dijing jingwulüe*, "Chunchang," 67.

the City God Temple" (Chenghuangmiao shi, 城隍廟市), Liu Tong introduces many objects that could be purchased in Beijing, including Xuande bronze incense burners, porcelain vessels from famous kilns in Jiangxi and Fujian, lacquer containers produced in Jiangnan and imported from Tokugawa Japan, and fine papers, ink cakes, and fans from Huizhou. He not only provides tips on how to evaluate the quality of these objects, but also instructs the reader on how to ferret fake products out and avoid being cheated.[47]

The essay "Grass Bridge" (Caoqiao, 草橋) records precious plants grown for the Beijing flower market: peony, rose, chrysanthemum, peach blossom, crepe myrtle flower, and so on.[48] In the essay "Golden Fish Pond" (Jiyuchi, 金魚池), Liu Tong lists the top categories of ornamental fish that were avidly welcomed in the market, and he studies the history of breeding ornamental fish, which he traces to the Northern Song.[49] In "The Hu Village" (Hujiacun, 胡家村), Liu Tong presents one of the most comprehensive accounts of cricket connoisseurship in late imperial China. Combining the natural-historical observation of insects with an evidential research of early texts, this essay systematically introduces how to capture, breed, and evaluate crickets while presenting an overview of the gaming culture in north China.

Poetry constitutes another important part of the 1635 edition of *A Sketch*. As Yu Yizheng relates in the editorial remarks, in the early stage of the book project, the authors collected five thousand poems whose subjects were the famous sites of Beijing. Zhou Sun, who was entrusted with the prodigious task of examining these materials, had only enough time to select the 1,347

[47] "Chenghuangmiao shi," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 161–66.
[48] "Caoqiao," 119–21.
[49] "Jinyu chi," 102; "Hujia cun," 122–24.

pieces that would ultimately be collated into *A Sketch*.[50] These poems came from multiple sources: individual anthologies, stone inscriptions, manuscripts, and private collections.[51] The distribution of poems among the chapters is uneven, with famous scenic sites having more works and less-known places having fewer or none. For instance, following the essay "Temple of Xiangshan" (Xiangshan si, 香山寺) in the sixth chapter, there are 115 poems dedicated to this most popular monastery in the West Mountains; but the fourth chapter, by contrast, only contains 99.[52]

In *A Sketch*, poetry provides referential materials that Liu Tong consulted while writing the essays.[53] By incorporating the poems into the essays—with each poem displaying a unique moment of a poet's experience in Beijing—a reader was able to observe a single site from several perspectives. Yet the use of poems served a second, perhaps more important, function: the strengthening of the scholarly community with which Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng identified. Over 90 percent of the poems were written during the Ming dynasty, while the rest were from earlier periods, mainly the Song and the Yuan. Among the Ming poems, the majority were written by scholars like Liu Tong, who sojourned in Beijing for governmental posts. According to Susan Naquin, *A Sketch* recognizes "the importance for literati of verse as markers of local sights" and is "a reflection of the prestigious influence of outsiders" on inventing the cultural image of the capital.[54] Here I would like to add one more observation. The selection of Ming

[50] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 8. The number of poems in every chapter are as follows: 154 (ch.1), 130 (ch.2), 163 (ch.3), 99 (ch.4), 130 (ch.5), 307 (ch.6), 191 (ch.7), and 173 (ch.8).

[51] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 8.

[52] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 230–45.

[53] The most significant use of poetry as referential materials is seen in the essay "Stone Drums in the Imperial Academy" (Taixue shigu 太學石鼓), which will be studied in chapter 4.

[54] Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 254.

poems relates specifically to the literary and social networks of the authors, since more than half of the Ming poets were connected to the southern provinces, particularly Hubei, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Jiangxi. In *A Sketch*, the reader could find works written by scholars who favored naturalistic expression and personal sensibilities, including Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610), Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道 (1570–1624), Tan Yuanchun, and Zhong Xing.

Although occupying a considerable textual space in the 1635 edition, the poems in *A Sketch* were insignificant in the later editions. From the mid-seventeenth century on, abridged editions of *A Sketch* began to circulate widely and gradually replaced the 1635 edition. Chapter 5 of this dissertation will elaborate on the bibliographical history of the book and readers' responses from late Ming to the Republican period; here, I briefly introduce how poetry lost its significance as the popularity of the abridged version grew.

In the early summer of 1643, less than twelve months before the fall of Beijing, two officials working in the Ministry of the War republished *A Sketch*. To manage block carving in a more economical way, only Liu Tong's essays were printed. This is the first abridged edition with all poems deleted. In 1766, Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805) published another abridged edition. He carefully edited the book and added subsidiary commentaries. From Ji Yun's perspective, poems, in their varied qualities, were too redundant to be included in a book that primarily focused on one city, and eliminating the verses in the original edition served not only to highlight Liu Tong's extraordinary skills in prose writing, but also to make the book more accessible for reading and appreciation. Ji Yun's edition became the most widely circulated version of *A Sketch* from the eighteenth century onward.[55]

[55] *Dijing jingwulüe*, edited by Ji Yun, woodblock print, the Jinling Chongde tang 金陵崇德堂 edition, in the collection of Oki bunko 大木文庫, Toyo hunka kenkyujo 東洋文化研究所,

In this dissertation, I consult poems only when the verses help sharpen our understanding of the authors; otherwise, most of the analyses are based on the essays. The primary goal here is to study the late-Ming authors' writing practice—how their living experience empowers the property of the text—and to examine how they accomplished their literary creation and historical writing within the genre of urban miscellany. Reading *A Sketch* critically is at stake. Having summarized the fundamental information about the 1635 edition—the authors, the process of compilation and publication, as well as the general content and format—we now turn to a discussion of their methodology.

1.2 The Methodology

As a book recording sites of the imperial capital in a broad thematic scope, *A Sketch* is often considered to be a guidebook designed for sightseeing. The late Ming period—roughly spanning the latter half of the sixteenth century—assuredly was the time when travel culture thrived with the development of urban economy and the extension of country-wide means of transportation.[56] Meanwhile, in the contemporary literary world, there emerged a surge of reading earlier and writing about places, including scenic sites, landscapes, and urban spectacles, as seen by the continuous rise in the number of published travelogues and geographically based writings.[57] Admittedly, *A Sketch*, in its very miscellaneous form, resembles most of

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the University of Tokyo. Ji Yun's edition was republished in a modern design in 1956 by Shanghai gudian wenxue chubanshe as one of the books in a series called "A Mini Collation of Reference Books for Chinese Literature" 中國文學參考資料小叢書.

[56] Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 173–90.

[57] James Hargett, *Jade Mountains and Cinnabar Pools: The History of Travel Literature in Imperial China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 141–75.

contemporary urban miscellanies in pointing the reader to the most appealing scenes in the city.[58] Its first publication in Nanjing suggests that to a certain extent, a circle of readers existed in the south who were interested in knowing more about the northern capital.

However, when evaluating historical documents on Beijing from the late imperial period, Naquin points out that *A Sketch*, as the most substantial and important of the "guides-cum-travel-accounts" that have survived from the early seventeenth century to today, indeed gives its readers almost "no practical guidance," because there are "no maps, no directions, and nothing about places to stay or dine." And "it merely identified, isolated, and described those sights deemed by the authors worthy of visiting" and offers "a relatively shallow sense of Beijing's history."[59] Certainly admittedly, the indexical relation between the text and historical facts about Beijing seems to be much weaker than the practical travel manuals. Thus, historians often have to use the book carefully, if not reluctantly, as a source when discussing what actually occurred in the city.[60]

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[58] Such as *Xihu youlanzhi* 西湖遊覽志. Si-yen Fei briefly introduced *A Sketch* when discussing urban surveys in the Ming. See Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space: Urbanization and Late Ming Nanjing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 190–91.

[59] Naquin, *Peking*, 255.

[60] The following English scholars have briefly addressed *A Sketch* in their discussions. Susan Naquin uses some essays to discuss local customs of Beijing; see Naquin, *Peking*, 268–73. Si-yen Fei categories *A Sketch* within the miscellany of literati's "urban surveys" and points out its difference from *duyibu* 都邑簿 (capital manuals). See Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space,* 190–91. Chinese scholarships on *A Sketch* largely focuses on its descriptions of the *minsu* 民俗 (local customs). See, for instance, Li Jianying 李建英, "*Dijingjingwulüe* zhong de Beijing misu jishu, yi yuanxiao jie wei li" 《帝京景物略》中的北京民俗記述——以元宵節為例, *Hanzi wenhua* 漢字文化 no. 5 (2017): 82–84. Zhang Bo 張勃, "*Dijingjingwulüe* zhong de suishi minsu jishu yanjiu" 《帝京景物略》中的歲時民俗記述研究, *Minsu yanjiu* 民俗研究 no. 4 (2010): 77–92. Liu Yongan 劉永安, "*Dijingjingwulüe* de yuanlin yanjiu" 《帝京景物略》的園林研究 (master thesis, Tianjin University, 2011). Qiu Zhonglin 邱仲麟, "Fanhua rumeng: Mingdai shiren jiyi Zhong de sandashi" 繁華如夢—明代士人記憶中的三大市 in *Beijing: dushi xiangxiang yu wenxue jiyi* 北京: 都市想象與文學記憶, edited by Chen Pingyuan and Wang Dewei (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005), 19–34.

Treating the book as a work of fine literature provides a different vision of *A Sketch*. Because *A Sketch* was the most important and the only representative work of Liu Tong's,[61] current scholarship has primarily engaged first with Liu Tong's and Yu Yizheng's biographies and social networking, and second with the bibliographical history of its publication and circulation.[62] Noticeably, scholars associate the book with the Jingling school and suggest that Liu Tong and his peers (Tan Yuanchu and Zhong Xing) inherited the literary legacy of the early Gongan school (Gongan pai, 公安派), which advocated "independently expressing one's personality, without being restrained by set forms."[63] The literary study of *A Sketch* often treats the book as a collection of casual essays and focuses on its stylistic features, specifically on how Liu Tong describes natural landscape in a poetic and lyrical way. But insufficient research has been done to fully investigate two key questions: how and why *A Sketch* was composed in such a style, and what other kinds of emotions and thoughts were accommodated in the text.[64]

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[61] Liu Tong did not have an individual anthology. Except for *A Sketch*, only a few works survive today. These works were preserved in *Meiyou ge wenyu erji* 媚幽閣文娛二集, a miscellaneous collection edited by Zheng Yuanxun in the 1630s (See chapter 5 for details).

[62] Wang Canchi, "*Dijing jingwulüe* jiqi zuozhe kao," 54–60. Also He Yanxian 賀亞先, "Liu Tong shengping chuangzuo kaobu" 劉侗生平創作考補, *Huanggang shizhuan xuebao* 黃岡師專學報 no. 2 (1998): 71–74. Zhu Liangwen 祝良文, "*Dijingjingwulüe* zuozhe bukao" 帝京景物略作者補考, *Wuling xuekan* 武陵學刊 no. 3 (2013): 104–7.

[63] The quotation "to independently express one's personality without being restrained by set forms" (獨抒性靈不拘格套), is from Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, "Xu Xiaoxiu shi 敘小修詩," in *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao* 袁宏道集箋校, ed. Qian Bocheng 錢伯城 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 187. Here I used the translation from Timothy Clifford, "In the Eyes of the Selectors: Ancient-Style Prose and Anthologies in Ming Dynasty China," (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2017), xxv. The relation between the Gongan and the Jingling schools will be discussed in chapter 3.

[64] Wu Chengxue 吳承學, *Wanming xiaopin yanjiu* 晚明小品研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2017); "*Dijingjingwulüe* yu jingling wenfeng 《帝京景物略》與竟陵文風", *Xueshu yanjiu* 學術研究 no. 1 (1996): 73–76. A recent master's thesis analyzes the literary value of the book from the perspective of the Jingling style; see Hu Yinghui 胡迎會, "*Dijing jingwulüe*

I propose that *A Sketch* is first and foremost *not* written as an urban guidebook. Nor is it simply a literature about leisure. The two approaches above take the book as a given object to discuss issues either on facts about the city or on the historical development of one literary genre. What they dismiss is the historical context, that is, the social environment within which the book came into being. What had the authors experienced in the city? How did they comprehend what they saw and found and then write down their observations? Current studies of *A Sketch* have largely ignored these questions, relegating the authors to the rather passive role of either mechanically recording the exterior surroundings or completely relying on an unexplainable "talent" to create the text.[65]

How can we use an urban miscellany in a more sophisticated way to explore the author's lived experience? Si-yen Fei's study of Nanjing in the Ming dynasty uses anecdotal narratives found in miscellaneous accounts to discuss literati's changing ideas of the city. Stressing the perspective of literati as the players and narrators of urban surveys, Fei proposes that through the production and consumption of anecdotes, the city becomes a discursive subject to accommodate people's cultural interpretations of their living experience.[66] Through the discourse of the city, the text speaks for the writer's thought. Fei's method uses the historical context in a nuanced manner to sharpen our reading of the text and to then promote the discovery of the author's ideas. My research carries on this reading on miscellany. Yet rather than focusing on literati

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xiaopin wen yanjiu" 《帝京景物略》小品文研究 (master's thesis, Shandong Normal University, 2016).

[65] The only article that briefly discusses how *A Sketch* reflected Liu Tong's anxiety over the future of the country is Huang Ming 黃鳴, "*Dijing jingwulüe* de shijie: Liu Tong de qinggan kongjian" 《帝京景物略》的世界：劉侗的情感空間, *Wuhan daxue Zhongguo chuantong wenhua yanjiu zhongxin huiyi lunwenji* 武漢大學中國傳統文化中心會議論文集 (November 2008): 114–24.

[66] The fourth chapter of Fei's book draws on street talk and gossip collected in two books about *ketan* (conversations with guests, 客談). Si-yen Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 188–238.

writers' configurations of the urban space, I am more interested in their reflections on the historical events that took place in the city.

A Sketch displays a high degree of textual complexity that challenges our reading, because there is a discrepancy between what is explicitly presented in the text and what the text itself deliberately obscures. Fang Fengnian, one of the earliest readers, reminds us in his preface that "the words [of the book] are refined while the purpose is concealed" (其言文, 其旨隱).[67] In the editorial remarks, Yu Yizheng further points out that the highly succinct discourse of *A Sketch* was a delicate work of design, the narrative of every essay has its own structure, and the information must be carefully incorporated so that the look of the book is in harmony.[68] The authors deliberately concealed their opinions by maintaining a restrained style of writing, but they simultaneously believed that those with keen eyes would recognize their praise, satire, and critique. Yu Yizheng relates:

> For mountains and rivers, we only record changes of height and depth; for temples, we only record prosperity and decline; for seasons and festivals, we only record playing and wandering; for gardens, we only record wood and stone. When composing the text to represent things, we provide neither praise nor satire. Readers who are used to [this strategy] do not need to know it. They will acquire [our meaning] beyond the words.
>
> 山川記止夷陵，刹宇記止衰盛，令節記止嬉游，園林記止木石。比事屬辭，不置一褒，不置一譏。習其讀者，不必其知之，言外得之。[69]

He informs the reader of the selective manner of writing by repeating the phrase "to record merely" (*jizhi*, 記止; literally translated as "the record won't go further than") four times. The

[67] Fang Fengnian, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 1.

[68] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 6. "In this book, every essay has its own length; within the length, it has [its own ways of] beginning and ending. Sometimes if the text cannot reach a harmonious entity, we would not hesitate to discard the valuable old sayings" (是編著作，在敘記間，篇有幅，幅有其首尾，或體致弗合，則亦捨棄舊聞).

[69] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 7.

careful manipulation of the release of specific details suggests a broader agenda behind the compilation.

If the authors had spent effort burying their ideas deep into the text, is it possible to reconstruct their praise and critique? My research indicates that in *A Sketch*, there are many unquoted citations of other texts, which the authors had used as references yet without acknowledging the sources. When describing one site, the transference and rewriting of earlier texts create a space into which the authors could add their own thoughts. The comparative analysis between *A Sketch* and its referential materials can help us specify what is included, what is not included, and how the original context is modified to fit into the new context of late-Ming Beijing. Therefore, to probing the intertextuality of the urban miscellany is the fundamental method by which we can tease out the authors' reflections.

"Intertextuality, as manifested in the transference, adaptation, or revision of signs within textual networks, contributed to the foundational order of reading and writing practices in premodern China."[70] As Wendy Swartz relates in her study of the intertextual modes of poetry writing, the relation between the "new," or manifest text, and the "old," or source text, constitutes "the space of meaning production."[71] In the case of *A Sketch*, such space generates the possibility of textual interpretation, and my research aims to construct an intertextual mode for the study of the urban miscellany. The chart below (Figure 1.3) illustrates how intertextuality works in the broader framework of this dissertation in linking literary creation and historical writing. Two timelines—on history and text—proceed in parallel throughout my research. The first critical edition of *A Sketch*, sharpened as the "manifest text," stands in the year—1635—that

[70] Wendy Swartz, *Reading Philosophy, Writing Poetry: Intertextual Modes of Making Meaning in Early Medieval China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 3.

[71] Wendy Swartz, *Reading Philosophie, Writing Poetry*, 2.

connects two lines. The timeline of history marks critical events that either happened in or were related to Beijing, and the timeline of text shows publishing events related to *A Sketch*. On this line, to the left of *A Sketch* are "source texts" that I found the authors used during compilation; to the right are different editions and literary collections that contain essays from the book, which demonstrate the transformation of the "manifest text" in the history of circulation and reception.

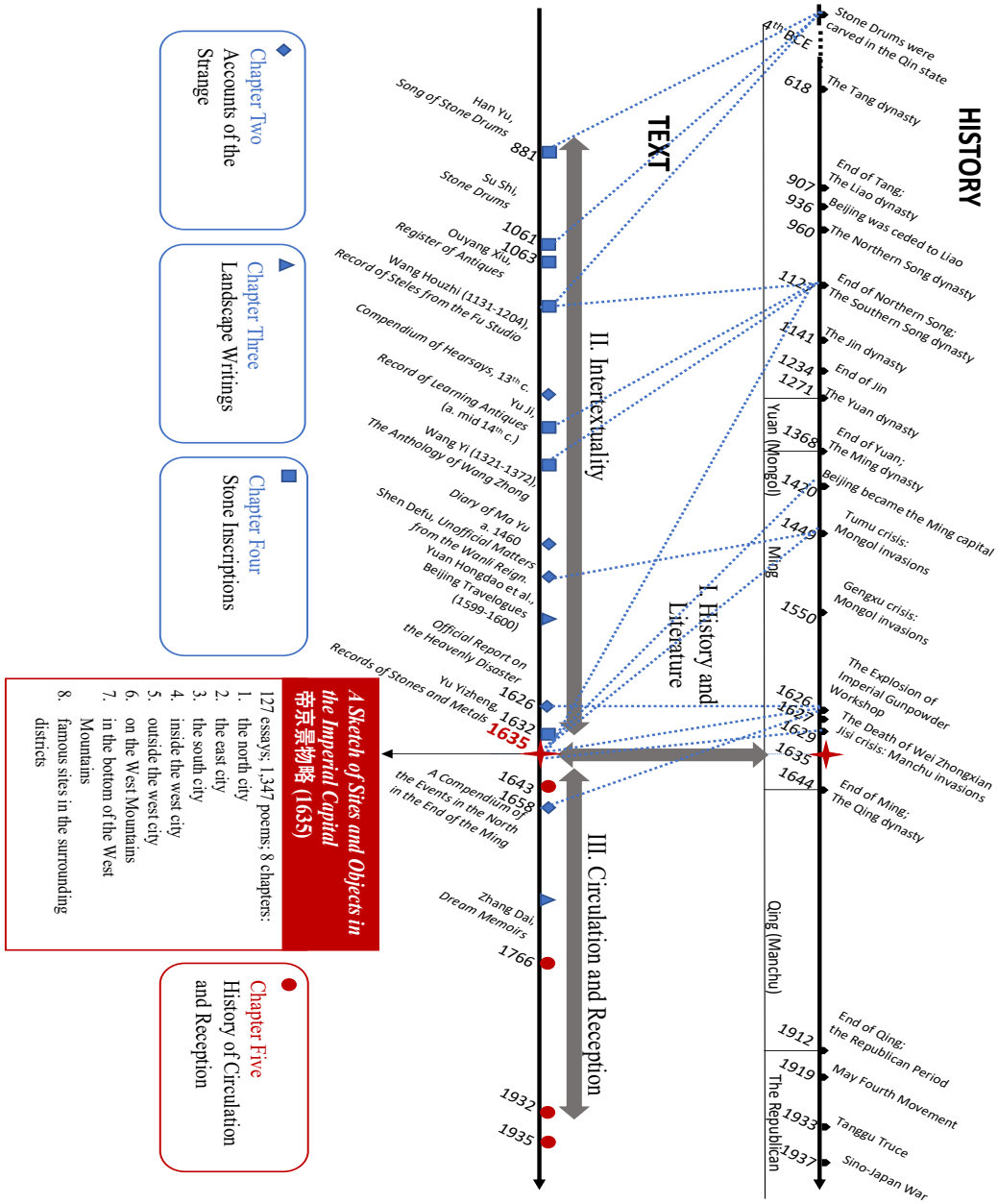

Figure 1.3 Illustration of the dissertation's structure and key methodology.

The literary heritage of scenic sites, namely literature relating to each place composed prior to *A Sketch*, plays a critical role in elaborating the process of making *A Sketch*. There are three main steps to my research. First, taking advantage of databases of Chinese premodern texts, I conducted a preliminary search to identify the early materials that the authors of *A Sketch* might have consulted. Second, I conducted historical research on the early materials, including their social and historical contexts of writing and the bibliographical history. Where possible, I examined which editions of these materials were available to the authors. Last, I compared *A Sketch* with these early materials. Their reflections on the past are presented in an implicit manner through layer(s) of representation: early materials recorded historical events that took place in or in relation to Beijing. When the authors wrote about scenic sites that had once been involved with these events, they consulted and transformed early materials; consequently, events presented in *A Sketch* acquire a new look, which contains the authors' perceptions.

Scholarship on Beijing's urban history has contributed to my knowledge of the historical timeline and prepared me to investigate how the late-Ming authors conducted their urban surveys in the city. Studies of the city plan and the transformation of urban space elaborate the fundamental spatial environment that accommodated the late-Ming authors' activities, not only framing their perspective of observation, but also structuring book chapters of *A Sketch*.[72] Although this dissertation is not a historical study of state policy during the Ming, the sociopolitical situations of Beijing—most notably, the military deployment around the metropolitan region, factional controversies in court among eunuchs and scholar parties, diplomatic emergencies entangled with Mongol and Manchu powers, and the peasant rebellions

[72] See Wu Hung, *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Zhu Jianfei, *Chinese Spatial Strategies: Imperial Beijing 1420–1911* (Philadelphia: Routledge, 2004).

that occurred relatively late, around 1630, in the neighboring provinces of Shanxi and Shandong—underlined the most important affairs that the authors of *A Sketch* strove to respond to.[73]

I chose a case study approach to further unravel the intertextuality of *A Sketch*, because a miscellaneous book is not only fragmented in form that apparently represses a consistent logic in the macro level of the narrative, but also so encyclopedic in content that it is hardly possible to discuss everything with equal thoroughness. This dissertation selects essays from *A Sketch* that share similar motifs and organizes them into three cases best exemplifying the unsettling situation of Beijing during the 1630s: an imperial capital located on the northern frontier of the country in the throes of unprecedented chaos as a result of both domestic and diplomatic problems. To write these essays, the authors had to deal with many historical details that at the time were surrounded in controversy; thus, they had to devise a coherent narrative through the delicate manipulation of the text.

The three case studies focus on the following subjects: strange accounts of disasters that were caused by political turmoil and occurred in recreational and religious institutes patronized by the imperial family; the natural scenery of the landscape in the mountainous areas between

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[73] James Geiss comprehensively studied the foundation and transformation of Beijing during the Ming dynasty; see Geiss, *Peking under the Ming (1368–1644)* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1979). David Robinson has several important works on the military culture, modes of rulership, and diplomatic practice of the Ming state, such as *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001) and *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). Lynn Struve's research on the Southern Ming elaborates political controversies between eunuch faction and scholars from the societies of Donglin ("Eastern Forest") and restoration in the last decades of the Ming, such as "Self-Struggles of a Martyr: Memories, Dreams, and Obsessions in the Extant Diary of Huang Chunyao," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol.69, no.2 (2009): 343–94. For an introduction to the factional controversies at court, see Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572-1644* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

the walled city and the northern steppe, with many ruinous sites showcasing the decline of social order; and the stone inscriptions from antiquity that were stored in the Imperial Academy, symbolizing the political legitimacy of the Ming regime while alluding to the long non-Chinese past of the local region.

In these cases, the authors attempt to present an ideal image of the city, yet the essays constantly betray their bewilderment about current social situations and sometimes their lack of confidence in the country's future. To compose these essays, they employed a large number of external materials originally generated in diverse venues to compose these essays. Belonging to different textual types and in distinct styles of writing, the referential materials range from governmental documents to folklore and from anecdotal accounts to academic treatises. To investigate the authors' reflections on the past and their observations of the present, I not only examine the selection of information, but also analyze the ways in which the information is conveyed.

To analyze the prose essays, I turned to a methodology that is atypical for scholarship in the field. In the field of Ming-Qing literature, the common analytical process is to examine the writer's biography, use individual experiences to annotate the text, and interpret the literary traits, which is exemplified in the study of Zhang Dai.[74] Another way is to borrow analytical concepts from literary criticism (especially those on poetry) and elaborate on the linguistic features of the prose.[75] The cases in this dissertation, however, aim to develop another method

[74] See Philip Kafalas, *In Limpid Dream: Nostalgia and Zhang Dai's Reminiscences of the Ming* (Norwalk, CT: Eastbridge books, 2006). Jonathan, D. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain: Memories of a Late Ming Man* (New York: Viking, 2007).

[75] For instance, Chi-ping Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 22–69. Chou uses the words "*qu*" (gusto, zest, or flair, 趣) "*yun*" (flavor, 韻) and "*dan*" (mild, 淡) to analyze Yuan's landscape essays.

through the investigation of the intertextuality of prose text. Through a comparative analysis of *A Sketch* and the early materials, we can determine how the authors manipulated the text and thus recreate the process of writing.

Although written in literary Chinese that is grammatically stable and continuous, the essays of *A Sketch* contain multiple linguistic registers; the literary style changes with the subject matter. Thus, when referential materials enter the text of *A Sketch*, they were "transcribed" accordingly to be incorporated into these registers. When relating extraordinary events, the narrative develops with twists and turns, and the reader always encounters some unexpected ending. When illustrating the natural scenery near the capital, the descriptive language becomes highly obscure and charges the prose text with poetic devices through the sophisticated use of sounds and imagery. When transmitting the ethnographical and historical knowledge about the city, the language becomes straightforward and seemingly neutral and objective, asserting authority in narrative as if every piece of information were unquestionably valid. Every individual essay is an admixture of these registers, and my classification is only a heuristic device for unpacking the textual complexity of the miscellany. In the following chapters, I will discuss in detail how the late-Ming authors played with the narrative techniques, poetic language, and collaging of the neutral accounts of knowledge.

Admittedly, the method of intertextuality and the case study approach have their limitations. Other than *A Sketch*, we do not have many other writings done by Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng; therefore, it is difficult to pin down the authors' direct interpretations of this book. In addition, very few commentaries were left on *A Sketch* during the authors' lifetime, and it is hardly possible to illustrate an immediate, contemporary understanding of the book content. Therefore, some of the interpretations in the following chapters may seem to be more speculation

than rigorous inference. But the comparative reading concretely displays one facet of premodern urban miscellany: it is "a storehouse of literary and cultural resource,"[76] a textual entity with porous boundaries that demonstrates and invites the exchange of information and idea.

1.3 The Structure

This dissertation comprises five chapters. In addition to this introduction, there are three chapters, each presenting one case from *A Sketch*, and a concluding chapter surveying the subsequent circulation and reception of *A Sketch* from the late Ming onward. Addressing different facets of the intertextuality of the miscellany, the case studies display three modes of literary creation and their respective roles in expressing the late-Ming authors' reflections of historical events. The last chapter shifts to the perspectives of later readers, most of whom were also editors of the later editions of *A Sketch*. It examines how these readers comprehended and reinterpreted the late-Ming author's dual practice of literary creation and historical writing, based on the changing concerns in their intellectual life.

Chapter 2 investigates how the late-Ming authors commemorate, criticize, and reflect on the dynastic history of the Ming through the accounts of violent death. It examines three strange stories about torture, war, and public disaster that took place in imperial-patronized sites: a Buddhist nunnery, the Southern Imperial Park, and the Fire God Temple. Reading *A Sketch* along with a hybrid body of miscellaneous materials, including personal diaries, official gazettes, government documents, and pseudo-historical records, I argue that the critiques of politics were disguised in the form of hearsay and the anxieties obscured among wordplay and the procession of narrative. Moreover, literary contemplations of ghostly scenes reveal a mixed mood of fear, nostalgia, shame, and sorrow. Liu Tong embellishes each story with a strong sense of lyricism,

[76] Swartz, *Reading Philosophy, Writing Poetry*, 2.

making the discourse of the dynastic past not only national and historiographical, but also individual and emotional.

Focusing on the writing of the northern landscape, chapter 3 investigates how the authors illustrate the desolate situation of Beijing in the years of military turmoil. It shifts from the empirical aspect of *A Sketch* to its internal textual properties and explores the maturation of Liu Tong's idiosyncratic style in the historical context of the decaying northern capital. This chapter elaborates the intertextual relations between *A Sketch* and the earlier travelogues about Beijing written around 1599 by the famous literati Yuan Hongdao and his brothers Zhongdao and Zongdao. I argue that *A Sketch* indicates a departure from the late-Ming landscape culture of pleasure seeking, and its profound and obscure language resonates with the ruinous and desolate scenery of the frontier.

Chapter 4 focuses on "Stone Drums in the Imperial Academy," the first and one of the longest essays in *A Sketch*, which transmits a strong political message in an unusually straightforward manner. This chapter discusses the construction of Beijing's political legitimacy and uncovers the adaptation of antiquarian treatises and ritual manuals in *A Sketch*. Through the examination of Liu Tong's laudatory account of the academy's decrees and his perplexing obsession with antiquity, I argue that the writing of ancient inscriptions and the prestigious site invests the capital with a discursive legitimacy, but such legitimacy is by no means a project with consolidated ideology. Social movements and political protests, as the authors witnessed in the late-Ming Confucian academies, by turn problematizes the attempt of legitimization and blatantly demonstrates the futility of such discursive construction in the ending years of the dynasty.

Chapter 5 presents three types of reading responses to *A Sketch* in its history of circulation and reception. They are the commemorative reading in the Ming-Qing transitional period, the literary reading in the eighteenth century under the political climate of literary inquisition, and the modern reading during the 1930s in the discovery of Chinese literary modernity from the traditional literature. These responses showcase the competition between historical value and the literary value and explicate how the book was finally transformed among its readers into a masterpiece of "casual essays" genre form.

To conclude this dissertation, I present, in the coda, a book project, titled *A Sketch of Cultural Relics in the Old Capital* (Jiudu wenwulüe, 舊都文物略), undertaken by Tang Yongbin 湯用彬 in 1935, which comprehensively records cultural relics and famous sites in Beijing prior to the Japanese occupation. Resembling its late-Ming predecessor in terms of its motivation, this modern project demonstrates a recurring practice in the writing of city: at the time of social crisis, to compile an encyclopedic book about the capital is to create the cultural memory of the state.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HAUNTED FRONTIER:

COMMEMORATING DEATH IN THE ACCOUNTS OF THE STRANGE

Anecdotal accounts of the strange are an indispensable motif in the urban miscellany.[1] *A Sketch* widely consulted early materials to retell the extraordinary events that happened in the capital. Many essays in *A Sketch* share a distinctive narrative structure: they begin with a formal and relatively objective account of the history of a particular site, as is often seen in gazetteers, and end in unexpected and disturbing circumstances that leave readers with ambiguous, ghostly, and unsettling conclusions. In the narratives, demons and ghosts frequently appear; prophecies of supernatural spirits often turn out to be fact. Tragedy persistently haunts the capital, as seen in many unexpected deaths caused by wars and public disasters. Focusing on the accounts of strange events, this chapter explores how Liu Tong wrote so unremittingly about death to commemorate the past and criticize the present.

This chapter focuses on a group of essays introducing politically prestigious sites: an imperial monastery, an imperial hunting park and an imperial temple honoring the Fire God. These sites are liminal spaces: between life and death, the supernatural and human worlds, the Ming state and the nomadic other. At the same time, the texts themselves occupy a liminal space, allowing Liu Tong's harsh critiques of politics to be disguised as hearsay, obscured among wordplay, and buried in the sequence of the narrative. Moreover, literary contemplations of ghostly scenes momentarily suspend the narrative, evoking a mixed mood of fear, nostalgia,

[1] *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (4th c. CE), *Youyang zaji* 酉陽雜記, and *Luoyang qielanji* 洛陽伽藍記 are early examples in the genre of urban miscellany, in which the reader finds a lot of anecdotes and the telling of strange and supernatural events.

shame and sorrow; and the author presents Beijing's urban sites with a sophisticated lyricism, making these essays not only national and historiographical, but also individual and emotional.

In the three essays from *A Sketch* examined here, "Nunnery in Honor of the Imperial Sister" (Huanggu si, 皇姑寺), "Southern Park" (Nan haizi, 南海子) and "Temple of the Fire God" (Huoshen miao, 火神庙), the narrative illustrates the image of various historical figures in a morally ambiguous manner by framing their stories in problematic spaces. As religious destinations receiving direct imperial patronage but also open to the public, the nunnery and the Fire God shrine were sites where gossip and rumor regarding the emperor and the inner court could easily ferment. Lacking effective management from the 1570s onward, the hunting park became semi-deserted and generated a considerable body of hearsay on the ruthlessness of court eunuchs. The three sites provide a literary stage for the display of what was usually mystified, protected, and excluded from outside observation. The emperor and his companions—here the Buddhist abbess and eunuchs—are reimagined. In the particular events of death recorded in these stories, the most powerful human figures turn out to be problematic victims.

These three stories—that of the death of a Buddhist nun in 1443, the death of a eunuch in the imperial park during the Jiajing reign (1522–1566), and the disastrous explosion of the Imperial Gunpowder Workshop in 1626 that caused numerous deaths in the city—had already circulated in different textual materials by the early 1630s. In the following sections, I read each story against a hybrid body of miscellaneous texts, including personal diaries, official gazettes, government documents, and pseudo-historical records, in order to explore the significance of writing about traumatic events in the capital during the waning years of the Ming dynasty.

2.1 The Nunnery in Honor of the Imperial Sister

Located in the Huang village of the West Mountain area outside the walled-city, Temple of Baoming 保明寺, also known as the "Nunnery in Honor of the Imperial Sister," was established in the mid-fifteenth century under the order of Emperor Yingzong 明英宗 (r.1436–1449, 1457–1464).[2] It was constructed to commemorate Yingzong's injustice to an old nun at a moment when the Ming army was preparing for an ambitious expedition into Mongol territory. As recounted in *A Sketch*, the story is a complex snapshot of an individual's death and a national trauma:

> The Nunnery for the Imperial Sister was founded by Emperor Yingzong when he reclaimed the crown (1457). In the eighth year of the Zhengtong era (1443), the Emperor led an expedition to the Zijing Pass to conquer Esen, the leader of the Northern Yuan.[3] A nun from Shaanxi with the surname Lü greeted the imperial carriage and admonished him, saying "An ominous decision!" The Emperor was infuriated and ordered his guards to beat the nun. She passed away seated in *Padmasana* (Lotus Position). Later on, while imprisoned in the enemy's barracks, the Emperor saw the nun's ghost many times. She spoke with him tirelessly, and often presented him with pancakes. When His Majesty returned [to Beijing], he lived in the southern palace. He saw the nun many times, and she spoke with him tirelessly. After the restoration of the monarchy, the Emperor issued an edict to grant the nun a noble title. The Nunnery was founded, and a tablet was commissioned which read 'The Monastery of Baoming in Shuntian' (順天保明). Someone said: "This is a riddle. If read in reverse, it says, 'The Ming protects Tianshun'" (明保天順). The whole-body relic of the nun is worshipped in the rear hall.[4] Seated in

[2] Since Yingzong (Zhu Qizhen) had two era names Zhengtong 正統 and Tianshun 天順, for the sake of convenience, here I use Yingzong to refer to Zhu Qizhen. In the following paragraphs, I will use the common way to address other emperors by using their era name, eg. Emperor Jiajing, Emperor Chongzhen.

[3] Chinese scholar Jing Ai studied the construction history of the temple through the rubbings of two imperial steles issued in 1499 and 1525. Jing criticizes the "inaccurate historical information" of the "Huanggusi" essay in *A Sketch*, pointing out that Liu Tong made a mistake in the date of Yingzong's expedition. The expedition against the Mongols took place in 1449 instead of 1443, and Yingzong did not camp in Zijing Pass. See Jing Ai 景愛, "Jingxi Huanggusi Mingdai shike congkao" 京西皇姑寺明代石刻叢考, *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 出土文獻研究 (2005): 381–91.

[4] The whole-body relic is a synonym for the Chinese word 肉身像 "flesh body", which means the undispersed mass of all the relics of a deceased eminent being. Skt. *śarīra-saṃghāta*. See the entry "全身舍利, whole-body relic," in A. Charles Muller ed. *Digital Dictionary of*

> *Padmasana* with a sad expression, she looks like an old woman. In the early years of the Wanli reign (1573–1620), the statue had not yet been lacquered with gold, and the top of its head was still warm. The embroidered hat on her head was sent from the inner palace. Three handwritten edicts by Tianshun hang in the main hall. On the wall of the corridor is painted the map of the North Expeditions of the *jisi* year (1449). Nowadays the nuns here all have long hair: they wrap their hair with cloth, wear black silk robes and greet people by bowing in the male manner.
>
> 皇姑寺，英宗睿皇帝復辟建也。正統八年駕出紫荊關，親征也先，陝西呂尼迎駕諫行，曰“不利”。上怒，叱武士交捶，尼趺坐以逝。及蒙塵虜營，數數見尼，娓娓有所說，時時授上餅餌。駕返，居南宮，數數見尼，娓娓有所說。復辟後，詔封皇姑，建寺，賜額曰“順天保明寺”。或曰：“隱也，如云‘明保天順’焉。” 後殿祀姑肉身，趺坐愁容，一媼也。萬曆初年，像未飾以金，頂猶熱爾。姑著繡帽，制自宮中。殿懸天順手敕三道，廊繪己巳北征之圖。今寺尼皆發，裹巾，緇方袍，男子揖。[5]

The story begins with Yingzong's expedition against the Mongols; when the nun remonstrates with him, she is ruthlessly beaten to death. Her suffering turns out to be a rehearsal for the emperor's dreadful experience in the following decade. Later on, in 1449, Yingzong was captured by Esen of the Northern Yuan after the Battle of Tumu Fortress. His principle eunuch Wang Zhen was murdered, and his younger brother Zhu Qiyu 朱祁鈺 (1428–1457), Prince of Cheng, with support of court officials and the empress dowager, was selected to ascend the throne as emperor and started a new reign period called Jingtai 景泰 (1449–1457). After almost one year of imprisonment, Esen released Yingzong probably because he realized that sending the dismissed emperor back to Beijing could trigger more problems in the Ming court. Upon Yingzong's return, his brother immediately put him under arrest in a palace south of the main

Buddhism, www.buddhism-dict.net (firstly established in 1995 and last modified October 4, 2019).

[5] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 215.

Forbidden City. Yingzong lived there for eight years, plotted a bloody coup, and finally managed to reclaim the crown in 1457.[6]

According to the steles discovered by archeologists in the temple, Liu Tong's account, however, has two significant mistakes. First, Baoming Temple was not constructed after the restoration of Yingzong's reign, but before his expedition and by Nun Lü herself. Second, Nun Lü passed away in 1498, which is thirty-three years later than the death of Yingzong; and she died because of old age rather than persecution.[7] Then where did Liu Tong acquire the information concerning the construction of Baoming Temple, and why did he frame the story of Nun Lü within the narrative of current political affairs? We first examine what the story is like in other late-Ming miscellanies.

The earliest dated account of this story is to be found in *A Compendium of Hearsay* (Ertan leizeng, 耳談類增) compiled by Wang Tonggui 王同軌 and first published in 1583.[8] The entry in this compendium contains many of the major plots relating Yingzong's interaction with Nun Lü as found in *A Sketch*: the nun remonstrates with the emperor and is sentenced to death; the emperor encounters the nun's ghost during his entrapment in the Mongol camp; when he restores his rule, the nunnery is founded. Yet the story is much shorter, without the interpretation of the tablet's hidden meaning, nor is there any description of the whole-body relic or the temple's architectural features.[9]

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[6] Meng Sen 孟森, *Ming Qing shi jiangyi* 明清史講義 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 126–62.

[7] The stele inscriptions are included in Jing Ai, "Jingxi Huanggusi Mingdai shike congkao," 381–91.

[8] Similar accounts can also be found in Jiang Yikui 蔣一葵, *Chang'an kehua* 長安客話 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1982), a collection of miscellanies on Beijing that is slightly later than Wang's work.

[9] Wang Tonggui, *Ertan leizeng* (Tangshi Shidetang edition, 1603), *juan* 16, 1.

In another essay, "Abolishing Huanggusi," from *Compendium of Hearsay in the Wanli Era* (Wanli yehuobian, 萬曆野穫編, 1603), Shen Defu 瀋德符 (1578–1642) presents an intense debate over the legitimacy of this nunnery in the late sixteenth century.[10] The decline he describes dates to the first decade of the Jiajing reign (1522–1566), when various political, cultural, and ideological concerns motivated the young emperor to suppress Buddhism in the capital cities of Beijing and Nanjing.[11] In 1528, the Senior Grand Secretary Yang Yiqing 楊一清 (1454–1530) proposed that the Nunnery for the Imperial Sister should not be an exception: it should be closed as soon as possible and all the nuns return to secular life.[12] Pointing out the futility of seeking out Buddhist favor in solving social problems, Emperor Jiajing approved Yang's proposal and straightforwardly showed his disgust for the anecdotes of Nun Lü's intersession by stressing that it was ridiculous to believe in the powers of a deceased nun, who could by no means truly protect and bless the country.[13]

However, two senior matriarchs interfered with this proposal. Lady Zhang, the empress of Jiajing's uncle Emperor Hongzhi (r.1488–1505) and the "Imperial Aunt" of Jiajing, insisted that the Nunnery must not be abolished because Hongzhi had patronized it for a long time and imperial support to this institution had already became a tradition for the family to carry on. Meanwhile, Lady Jiang, the Empress Dowager, who was Jiajing's natural mother, also opposed

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[10] For study on the historical event of "abolishing Huanggusi" see Chen Yunu 陳玉女, "Ming Jiajing chuqi yilipai zhengquan yu fojiao suqing: yi Huanggusi shijian wei kaocha zhongxin" 明嘉靖初期議禮派政權與佛教肅清: 以皇姑寺事件為考察中心, collected in Chen, *Mingdai de fojiao yu shehui* 明代的佛教與社會 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2001).

[11] He Xiaorong 何孝榮, "Lun Ming Xianzong chongfeng zangchuan fojiao 論明憲宗崇奉藏傳佛教", *Chengda lishi xuebao* 成大歷史學報, (June 2006): 139–77. Dewei Zhang, "The Collapse of Beijing as a Buddhist Center: Viewed from the Activities of Eminent Monks, 1522 to 1620," *Journal of Asian History*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2009): 137–63.

[12] Shen Defu, *Wanli yehuobian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 685–86.

[13] *Wanli yehuobian*, 685.

the purge of the nunnery. She asked her son to designate the nunnery as her property, allowing her to accumulate merit and demonstrate her superiority of status over Lady Zhang as the ultimate matriarch. Although these two empress dowagers represented two different political factions, their shared opposition to the emperor won over a large group of court officials dissatisfied with Jiajing's new policies. Henceforth, the conflicts inside the imperial family gradually fermented into a factional movement at court. In the years of the "Great Paternity Controversy," the Nunnery thus served as an arena where old and new political powers contended, and the attempt to dismantle it failed.[14]

As Shen Defu notes in his account of this episode, to abolish Buddhist institutions in the capital could not be easily solved because of their sophisticated relations with the inner court. Collecting money and goods and receiving protection from the palace, from the early sixteenth century on the Nunnery evolved into a place that nurtured both economic and moral corruption. Aristocratic and wealthy families held ceremonies there, and their daughters and concubines came to practice Buddhist meditation; as a result, the Nunnery served as a public space where men and women easily mingled, and silver and gifts were frequently exchanged.[15]

By the early seventeenth century, the Nunnery was openly operating as a high-ranking brothel. Upon an excursion to the West Mountains, Wang Siren 王思任 (1575–1646) wrote a cynical and satirical account of the scene.[16] He describes hundreds of nuns making a living as prostitutes in the Nunnery. These women have long black hair, wear black silk robes, and market

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[14] For an introduction to the "Great Paternity Controversy" 大禮儀 during the mid-sixteenth century, see Meng Sen, *Ming Qing shi jiangyi*, 185–241.

[15] *Wanli yehuo bian*, 865.

[16] Wang Siren, "A Trip to the Famous Sites at the West Mountains 游西山名胜诸记", from *Wenfan xiaopin* 文飯小品, *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1368, *juan* 3, 1a–12a,

their beauty. Appealing to "a taste for the unusual" (*yiwei*, 異味), they were regarded as rare goods in the prostitution market. Wang comments, "the price is extraordinarily high, several times that of famous courtesans. The old nuns are slier than bawds. Officials who hold imperial edicts guard their gate. And monks are not permitted to enter."[17] Celebrities from the capital are glad to have affairs with them for their strange appeal, in this unusual place. Wang further jokes, "when clients have conflicts, nuns solve their problem by forcing the clients to crawl between their legs."[18] Observing the behavior of this place's residents and patrons, Wang and his fellows come to the conclusion that the current abbess is a "sly old baldy" (*zeitu*, 賊禿), and those young nuns are no different from the "serving girls" in the pleasure quarters.[19]

However, unlike those scholars who wrote harshly in the above accounts, Liu Tong takes a more eclectic approach to the Nunnery than his predecessors. Deliberately downplaying the site's attendant moral controversies and social problems, the essay suggests a far more sophisticated sensibility. It is neither a neutral introduction to the history of the place, nor a bitter satire of its current customs. Compared to other essays on monasteries in *A Sketch*, the length of the essay is relatively short. However, within this limited space, Liu Tong delicately structures the story between Yingzong and Nun Lü.[20]

Unlike the brief account by Wang Tonggui, which simply records the series of events, Liu Tong tries to evoke the strangeness of these events. In his story, Emperor Yingzong is

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[17] *Wenfan xiaopin*, 6b.

[18] *Wenfan xiaopin*, 6a–6b.

[19] *Wenfan xiaopin*, 6b.

[20] For its subtle lyrical quality, this essay was later collected and re-published in a compendium of refined prose, *The Second Collection of Literary Entertainments from the Pavilion of Secluded Allure* 媚幽阁文娱二集, edited by Zheng Yuanxun 鄭元勳. Zheng Yuanxun, *Meiyouge wenyu erji*, *Siku jinhui shu congkan* 四庫禁燬書叢刊, *jibu* 集部 vol. 172, (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000).

depicted as a human figure, a victimizer turned victim, rather than the idealized, powerful "Son of Heaven." When Yingzong's ruthless punishment leads to Nun Lü's death, her posthumous lotus pose displays serenity in suffering. The emperor's injustice to the nun does not incite her revenge. Instead, her ghost returns to Yingzong again and again when he is in trouble. "[He] saw the nun many times, and she spoke with him tirelessly" (數數見尼，娓娓有所說).[21] In other versions of the story, for example, *Guest Talks on Chang'an*, the interaction between the nun and the emperor is depicted straightforwardly: "His Majesty saw the nun quite often. She secretly protected him and always chatted with him" (上常恍惚見尼陰相呵護，皆有詞說).[22] But in *A Sketch*, the two adverbs with duplicative characters, *shushu* 數數 and *weiwei* 娓娓 suggest a nuanced sense of feeling. Moreover, this sentence appears twice in the passage, such that the nun's speaking manifests as a kind, gentle, long-lasting murmur. As a result, the reading experience of this passage is more emotionally nuanced, as its diction generates an intimate, sorrowful, and melancholic atmosphere.

In contrast to Wang Siren's early account, Liu Tong does not directly mention the nun's licentious lifestyle, or their violation of religious regulations to serve as prostitutes. When Nun Lü is sacrificed for the misbehavior of the emperor, her descendants unconsciously take revenge on his noble posterity, wielding their sexual power, eroding social customs, and stigmatizing the reputation of imperial monasteries. Liu Tong's silence on this strange retribution could be interpreted from various perspectives. I argue it not only attempts to preserve dignity for this institute, but also constructs a subtle juxtaposition of individual suffering and national trauma,

[21] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 215.
[22] Jiang Yikui, *Chang'an kehua*, 60.

that on the one hand intensifies the tragic atmosphere of the story, and on the other hand expresses the author's strong feeling of disjunction when recounting the dynastic past.

Among all extant materials on the deceased nun, Liu Tong's essay is the only piece that mentions her whole-body relic (*roushen xiang*, 肉身像). From Liu Tong's perspective, this statue is a medium through which to connect to a particular moment in the past. In the Chinese Buddhist culture, regarded as a sacred statue preserving the true image of a holy figure the whole-body relic is a religious treasure for worshipping. Sculpted around a venerated corpse, a relic statue not only preserves the whole body of the deceased, but also records the very moment of death. The expressive face of this statue—a sad look (*chourong*, 愁容), distinct to the individual—brings the psychological condition and the internal feelings of the nun to the surface of the medium encasing her body. In his description of the relic statue, Liu Tong also states, "In the early years of the Wanli reign, the statue had not yet been lacquered with gold, and the top of its head was still warm" (萬曆初年，像未飾以金，頂猶熱爾).[23] The temperature bridges the gap between historical times. Bearing human warmth, the statue makes possible a direct connection between the 1440s and the early years of Jiajing reign. However, the character *you* 猶 ("still") implies that by the time *A Sketch* was written in the 1630s, the statue had lost its human temperature and was a mere inanimate object. Liu Tong came too late to catch the warmth of the nun's body as well as the events of the past. His moment is cut off from a continuous past.

Moreover, violence and powerlessness twist the depiction of Yingzong. The emperor's only moment of authority in this story comes in his punishment of a well-meaning nun, and he soon descends from the throne and becomes the prisoner of the Mongol ruler and then his own

[23] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 215.

brother. The anonymous commentator's interpretation of the riddle in the title "Baoming" also alludes to the emperor's guilty conscience. His arrogant decision to go to battle on the northern frontier causes his own suffering over the course of the following decade. At first glance, it is easy to interpret Yingzong's suffering as retribution for his mistreatment of the nun. However, the nun's sympathy for her victimizer destabilizes the logic of karmic retribution. The nun's ghost seems to be one of very few visitors Yingzong had, presenting food to him, chatting with him, and accompanying him throughout a time of difficulty.

Liu Tong's narrative deliberately presents a perplexing play between the two individuals' suffering and the larger trauma troubling the country. After recounting tragic experiences of the two figures, the essay shifts in a strange direction as it concludes. With the viewpoint moving from the rear building to the main hall, from the interior space to the outside corridors, the reader encounters Yingzong's edicts (probably those on honoring this nunnery) hung on high, and a special *tu* 圖—a map or image—with the motif of his failed northern expedition painted on the wall. Why were these materials—textual and visual testaments to Yingzong's political ineptitude as well as the Ming state's military weakness—displayed publicly at this location? The essay ends where the author again keeps silent in elaborating humiliating matters.

To sum up this section, the nuanced modifications in narrative, as found in the case of the Nunnery, betray the problems of commemoration faced by Liu Tong in writing *A Sketch*. In the discourse of this imperial patronized nunnery, distinct issues—women, emperor, domestic culture, and diplomatic affairs—become all associated. The commemorative account blending anecdotal, sentimental, and political elements challenges the monumental discourse of dynastic history. Moreover, sympathy and shame are linked, so that when personal sufferings are

presented in an affectively touching manner, the humiliation of the emperor who symbolizes the country is simultaneously stressed.

2.2 Ant Mounds, a Speaking Skull, and the Southern Imperial Park

This section examines stories about the Southern Imperial Park, a walled hunting ground under the direct charge of the court. In these stories the stage of strange events moves from a religious institution on the city's periphery to a location right beside the southern city wall.[24] Liu Tong's essay "Southern Park" is an exemplary case of its author's idiosyncratic narrative style, including a succinct pseudo-historical introduction to the site, an account of strange things that happened there, and an unexpectedly twist which leaves the reader with a sense of the uncanny. Derived from the well-established tradition of *zhiguai* literature ("accounts of the strange," 志怪), Liu Tong's narrative reveals the psychological worlds of his scholarly contemporaries, especially the reflections on war and peace, prosperity and collapse, and self and other.[25] Situating *A Sketch* in its historical and geopolitical contexts, Liu Tong incorporates popular urban legends of his time, maps these plots onto the site, and creates a unique type of "strangeness" rich with lyrical capacity.

Located ten kilometers south of the walled city, the Southern Imperial Park was a large damp area in today's Daxing and Fengtai Districts. Irrigated by the Sha River 沙河 and Hun River 渾河, this area used to be replete with swamps and lakes. In the Liao, Jin, and Yuan

[24] The southern part of Beijing experienced significant modification during the fifteenth century. With the increase of population outside the original south wall (from Chongwen Gate to Xuanwu Gate), a new city wall was constructed, a large area was enclosed, hence the walled city expands to the Yongding Gate.

[25] For an introduction to the classical strange tales and the *zhiguai* tradition, see Robert Campbell, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). Li Jianguo 李剑国, *Tang qian zhiguai xiaoshuo shi* 唐前志怪小说史 (Tianjin: Tianjin jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005).

dynasties, the rulers regularly conducted the annual *nabo* 捺钵 ceremony—nomadic hunting festivals—in this place.[26] As recorded in *A Sketch*, the Ming rulers carried on systematic construction there. The circumference of the park was expanded into one hundred and sixty *li* (eighty kilometers). Four gates were built into the four sides of the wall. The Imperial Household Department raised a variety of animals, including deer, roebuck, pheasant, and hare, to populate the park.[27]

Commoners were forbidden from approaching the property; only a special class of "lake residents" (*haihu*, 海戶), a special designated low status in the imperial household registration system, were permitted to live in the imperial park. Although the primary task of the Park was to undertake imperial hunting events, it also served the inner palace as a place of exile and imprisonment. [28] In the early years of the Ming, lake residents were mostly slaves and servants who had lost their rights as civilians and been sentenced to penal servitude. By the early fifteenth century, when eunuchs started acquiring increasingly significant political power at court, poor men increasingly subjected themselves to voluntary castration in hope of a political career. Self-castration was legally prohibited; however, the practice never ceased, especially in the region of the Northern Metropolitan (today's Hebei and Shandong provinces) next to Beijing. Those who were not officially admitted to the palace would find ways to live in the Southern Park, where they could earn a living performing heavy labor while waiting for an opportunity to be officially

[26] Zhao Yifeng 趙一澧, "Mingdai Beijing nanyuan kao 明代北京南苑考," *Hulun beier xueyuan xuebao* 呼倫貝爾學院學報 no. 3 (2005): 5–8.

[27] *Dijing jingwulüe,* 134.

[28] Huang Aming 黃阿明, "Teshu de jianmin—Mingdai haihu qiantan 特殊的贱民—明代海户浅探", *Lishi jiaoxue wenti* 历史教学问题 no. 2 (2006): 63–66. Huang Xuhong 黃續宏, "Mingqing haihu yanjiu 明清海户研究" (master's thesis, Anhui University, 2013).

enlisted.[29] Some eunuchs with official titles were appointed to oversee the park, and eunuchs who had been charged with crimes or been on the losing ends of factional battles might also serve out their sentences. Due to security concerns, lake residents were permitted to have weapons distributed by the court.[30] Miscellaneous accounts in the late Ming indicate that the excessive number of eunuchs residing in this place created an extra financial burden for the government, while their ambitions to contend in the political arena jeopardized the order of the court. Murder and violence frequently occurred in the park.[31]

Along with the large population of eunuchs, the Southern Park was the site of corrupt behavior in the form of "martial ritual." As Liu Tong points out, earlier emperors such as Yongle and Yingzong had conducted hunting parties at the Southern Park in an economically prudent manner.[32] However, excessive practice in martial arts wasted a great deal of money and material goods; in 1517, officials harshly attacked Zhengde hunting parties for their extravagance. The Southern Park began to appear more frequently in remonstrative documents submitted by officials and the miscellaneous notes of the literati.[33] In the following decades, the Emperor was

[29] In terms of the ban of self-castration, see "On the ban of self-castration" 禁自宮, *Wanli yehuobian*, 815. The entry on the first year of the Hongxi reign (1425), Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al. ed. *Mingshi* 明史 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980), 111; the entry on the eleventh year of the Chenghua reign (1475), *Mingshi*, 170. However, this restriction is gradually loosened and in 1516, the palace openly hired 3,400 self-castrated men to serve as "lake residents." See *Mingshi*, 208.

[30] "Crimes and punishment of the eunuchs" 内臣罪譴, *Wanli yehuobian*, 815.

[31] For instance, Li Dongyang, "To resign from the court" 求退錄, in *Huailutang ji* 怀麓堂集, *juan* 99 (Qing Wenyuange siku quanshu edition).

[32] *Dijing jingwulüe,* 134.

[33] See the entry "The Emperor's Hunting in the Twelfth Year of Zhengde Era"正德十二年, 上出獵 in Chen Jian 陳健, *Huang Ming tongji jiyao* 皇明通紀集要, *juan* 27, collected in *Siku jinhuishu congkan shibu* 四庫禁毀書叢刊史部, vol. 34.

forced to suspend his regular visits due to the poor maintenance of its infrastructure, a consequence of financial shortages. Liu Tong writes:

> In the third month, the second year of the Longqing reign (1568), the Emperor visited the Southern Park. Prior to this excursion, his companions spoke highly of this place. However, the Great Secretaries of the Grand Secretariat, represented by Xu Jie (1503–1583), admonished His Majesty [for pursuing excessive pleasure in hunting]. But the emperor did not follow their advice. Upon his arrival, all he saw was: the brush overgrown; the whole area boggy and marshy; the halls and tents nearly collapsed. The emperor was rather disappointed and soon gave the order to return to the palace.
>
> 隆慶二年三月，上幸南海子。先是，左右盛稱海子，大學士徐階等奏止，不聽。駕至，榛莽沮洳，宮幄不治，上悔之，遽命還蹕矣。[34]

In the 1620s, the Park fell into the whirlpool of outright political conspiracy. The notorious eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568–1627), who was the de-facto ruler of the court, fabricated criminal evidence against his political opponent Wang An 王安, another ambitious eunuch officer. After Wei succeeded in banishing Wang from the palace, he schemed to have Wang executed in the Park by being eaten alive by hounds. This horrifying event infuriated many officials who initiated the impeachment of Wei Zhongxian and stimulated the consolidation of the Donglin society in the early 1620s.[35] Around the same time, contemporary historical records indicate that the Southern Park was sacked by peasant rebels and became a base for bandits who were harassing the locals. Imperial memorials described this place as the "lair of the notorious bandit Gao Jingshi" (巨盜高景仕之窟穴).[36] It is still unclear how bandits managed to sneak into

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[34] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 134–35.

[35] The account of Wang An's death could be found in many historical memoirs during the Ming-Qing transitional period, such as Shen Guoyuan's 沈國元 *Liangchao congxin lu* 兩朝從信錄, Lü Bi's 吕毖 *Mingchao xiaoshi* 明朝小史.

[36] For instance, Dong Yingju's 董應舉 (*jinshi* 1598) imperial memorial submitted to the court in 1624, "Fuqing bingtun zhong mi dao shu" 覆請兵屯種弭盜疏, in *Chongxiangji* 崇相集, Chapter 2 卷二疏二 (1639 woodblock version, collected in Peking University Library). Dai Jiuxuan's 戴九玄 poem lamenting on the decaying scene is attached in *Dijing jingwulüe* (page 136), right after Liu Tong's essay. It reads:

these forbidden grounds, but it seems that the court could no longer enforce effective regulations in the Southern Park.

Liu Tong's narrative interests, however, do not simply linger on these political events. Instead, the essay shifts from its annalistic account of previous emperors to a series of strange, unusual, and even miraculous scenes, that take place in this park, which from his perspective perfectly illustrate the characteristics of the place. The essay proceeds with an account of a miraculous phenomenon: "Ant Mounds."

> In the northwestern area of the Park, at the time of the Qingming festival, millions of ants gather, piling and forming mounds. The mound in the center is one *zhang* in height. [As for] other three or four mounds nearby, their height is several *chi*.[37] At the end of the day, the ants disperse. These days locals go every Qingming festival to watch the scene, which they refer to as "the Ants' Tombs". It is said that when the Liao army declared war on the Jin, the whole army was finished off here. Their remains could not be returned home, and their ghosts have no one to tend to them. Therefore, they metamorphosed into "insect sand." In response to the annual occasion, this phenomenon occurs.
>
> 海子西北隅，歲清明日，蟻億萬集，疊而成丘，中一丘，高丈，旁三四丘，高各數尺，竟日而散去。今土人每清明節往群觀之，曰螞蟻墳。傳是遼將伐金，全軍沒此，骨不歸矣，魂無主者，故化為蟲沙，感於節序，其有焉。[38]

In the early seventeenth century, traces of ancient battlefields were easily found in the Beijing area. Some were the remnants of buildings destroyed in military conflicts, such as the General's

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Twenty kilometers, the circumference of the swamp in the south city. People hunted intensively at this place.

Trees were planted in lines and the area is secluded with walls. Everyday people capture pheasants and hares to present to the ultimate supreme.

Officers from the inner court guarded the place; however, walls on the four sides kept collapsing and animals and objects kept being stolen.

Trees were cut down; pheasants and hares were sold out. During daytime, bandits hide inside the park.

城南海子四十里，大狩禽物此中是。
樹木環植周以垣，日獲雉兔奉至尊。
內官監守但坐看，四垣崩圮禽物散。
樹木斫賣雉兔空，白日劫盜藏其中。

[37] In Ming and Qing periods, one *chi* is about 1/3 meter, and one *zhang* is ten *chi*.

[38] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 135.

Terrace (Jiangtai, 將臺) in Tongzhou, the Monastery for Skanda (Weigong si, 韋公寺) in the southern part of the city, the Monastery of Auspiciousness and Happiness (Jiaxi si, 嘉禧寺) at Mount Shijing; some were shrines or monasteries constructed to commemorate and pray for the deceased, such as the Monastery of Sorrow for the Loyal (Minzhong si, 憫忠寺). The ant mounds are a special case since they lack any permanent form, such as a collapsed wall or an eroded foundation. Because there was no material remnant of the battle between the Liao and the Jin, the site could only attest to the violence that had occurred there through an ephemeral spectacle that unfolded on the Qingming festival.

Liu Tong's use of the word *chongsha* ("insect sand," 蟲沙) merits further analysis. The Eastern Jin scholar Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) first proposed the analogy between sand (*sha*, 沙) and insignificant people in his discussion on the transformation of creatures and the transience of human life. In the Inner Chapter "Resolving Obstruction" (shizhi, 釋滯) from *The Master Who Embraces Simplicity* (Baopuzi, 抱樸子), it reads:

> Military troops could be completely transformed in a single morning. The noble become cranes; the lowly turn into sand.
>
> 三軍之眾，一朝盡化。君子為鶴，小人成沙。[39]

This trope is further developed in the Northern Song *leishu* encyclopedia, *The Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (Taiping yulan, 太平御覽), which reads "when King Mu of Zhou conquered the south, his army was completely transformed. The lowly became insect sand" (穆王南征，一

[39] Ge Hong 葛洪, *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 154.

軍盡化，小人為蠱沙).[40] Later on, *chongsha* was used to refer to soldiers who sacrificed their lives in war. In Liu Tong's account of the Southern Park, this *chongsha* is accumulated into ants' mounds. The collective tragedy of thousands of soldiers transforms them into countless lowly beings. They are insignificant, piteous, and cannot be individually commemorated. However, every year they gather together to create an incredible spectacle, which attracts visitors to bear witness. This scene, however, is not without irony. When the ant mounds appear, the excitement of viewing and the appeal of the exotic threaten to overwhelm the viewer and overshadow the potential for sorrow and compassion.

Immediately after describing the ant mounds, the essay continues with a tale about the uncanny death of a eunuch in the mid-sixteenth century. The first sentence reads like a typical introduction of local customs.

> In the fifth day of each month, the palace intendant, together with the imperial doctors, would come to the Park to catch toads.
>
> 歲五日，中侍例同太醫院官來捕蝦蟆。[41]

Liu Tong goes on to attach this story to a specific era:

> During the Jiajing reign, one eunuch named Lai Ding from the Imperial Household Department arrived. On the fifth day, right after catching toads, he went to a large willow tree to the south of the sheep pens. He sat on some willow roots to eat lunch. Looking around, he found a human skull next to him. Lai dipped a piece of meat in garlic sauce, put it in the skull's mouth, and jokingly asked, "Is it spicy?" The skull replied, "Spicy." Lai was startled. He removed the meat, but the sound— "spicy"—did not disappear. He quickly returned to the palace, but the sound "spicy, spicy" still haunted him. A few days later, Lai died.

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[40] Li Fang 李昉 ed. *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Sibu congkan sanbian jing Song edition, Database of Chinese Classic Ancient books 中國基本古籍庫, Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center, 2017), *juan* 74, 6a.

[41] In the Ming dynasty, the imperial doctors used to acquire toad venom (*chansu*, 蟾酥), an important medical ingredient, from the Southern Park. See *Chang'an kehua*, 31.

> 嘉靖中，御用監奉禦來定，五日方捕，至羊房南大柳下，坐柳根午食。顧旁一髑髏，來濡肉蒜盤，內髑髏口，戲問：“辣否？”髑髏曰：“辣。”來驚，去肉，辣音不已。驟馳而歸，辣辣音追之，數日來卒。[42]

Liu Tong borrowed this motif from a fatal conversation between a speaking skull and a traveler from two earlier texts. The first source is a collection of miscellaneous notes—*The Daily Jottings of Scholar Ma* (Mashi richao, 馬氏日抄)—written by Ma Yu 馬愈 (1435-?, *jinshi* 1464) in the mid-fifteenth century.[43] The second is more current to Liu Tong—Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 (1574–1646) collection of strange tales, titled *A Compendium of Talks from the Ancient to Today* (Gujin tangai, 古今譚概), and published in 1620.

Ma Yu's *Daily Jottings* records hearsay regarding supernatural occurrences that the author learned of during his official post in Beijing. Like Liu Tong's later version, Ma's story features the eunuch named Lai Ding from the Imperial Household Department; however, it lacks any mention of a time that could be attributed to a specific historical period. Ma's version reads:

> In the fifth month (of the lunar calendar), Lai Ding was assigned to attend to some imperial business in the Southern Park. Accompanied by five or six servants, he rode out of the city, carrying food and wine to eat along the way. At noon, he arrived at a large willow tree in the south of the sheep pens. He removed his robes and dismounted and sat on some tree roots. He used a coconut shell to drink wine and pounded some garlic into sauce to flavor the meat.
>
> 禦用監奉禦來定，五月間差往南海子公幹，從五六騎出城，舁肴酒為路食。日午至羊房南大柳樹下，脫衣卸鞍坐樹根上，以椰瓢盛酒，搗蒜汁濡肉自啖。[44]

The sequence of events is similar to Liu Tong's version. When Lai finds a human skull resting on the ground, he puts garlicky meat into its mouth. Right after he asks, "Is it spicy?" the skull

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[42] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 135.

[43] *Ma Shi richao* was selected in the late-Ming encyclopedia *Xuehai leibian* 学海類編, *juan* 108, edited by Cao Rong 曹溶. It was re-printed with other Ming diaries in the 1930s. See *Mashi richao jiqi sanzhong* 馬氏日抄及其三種 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936).

[44] *Ma shi richao*, 8.

begins speaking. Even removing the food cannot end its speaking. In great panic, Lai Ding hurries into the Park, finishes his business and immediately goes home, pursued all the way to the city gate by the sound of a voice saying "spicy." And as in Liu Tong's version, a few days later, Lai dies.[45]

Ma Yu attempts to rationalize the supernatural phenomenon by attributing a medical explanation to Lai's unexpected death. According to Ma, the eunuch lacked *yang*, so he could not resist the encroachment of excessive *yin*. Ma proposes:

> Lai was about to die because his *yang qi* was insufficient, thus the *yin qi* was able to exert an influence on him. As for those impure things related to the underground world, it is not proper to play with them. Once one plays around, one's heart cannot obtain its upright position. When one's heart is not upright, evil will take the advantage. Observing this, we should take [this story] as a warning.
>
> 蓋來之將亡，陽氣虧矣，故陰氣得以幹之。況冥穢之物，不宜相戲，戲則我心有不得其正矣。心不正，邪必乘之。觀此則可以為戒矣。[46]

Ma Yu's story is reframed in Feng Menglong's *Compendium*, but while Ma's rational explanation rooted in Chinese medical thought gives the story a logical ending, Feng Menglong ends the story with a simple sentence— "Lai died in sickness"—stressing the theatricality of the uncanny outcome. Feng also points out that an earlier miscellany of the Yuan dynasty titled *News and Hearsay in the World* (Jianghu jiwen, 江湖紀聞) includes a similar tale called "the skull complaining of salt plum in Xijia Lake" (hereafter referred to as "the Xijiahu tale").[47] The Xijiahu tale of the early thirteenth century is a possible archetype of the later skull stories that circulated in the Ming dynasty. The original Yuan edition of *News and Hearsay in the World* has been lost, but the Xijiahu tale is preserved in another late-Ming miscellaneous book, the

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[45] *Ma shi richao*, 8–9.

[46] *Ma shi richao,* 9.

[47] Feng Menglong, *Gujin tangai*, in *Feng Menglong quanji,* vol. 40, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), 1493.

Compendium of Strange Hearsay (Yiwen zonglu, 異聞總錄), which was edited and published by a book merchant from Kuaiji, Zhejiang province, named Shang Jun 商濬 as part of a large encyclopedic project on fiction and tales, *The Complete Collation of the Ocean of Trivial Talk* (Baihai quanshu 稗海全書).

The Xijiahu tale shares many narrative similarities with the Southern Park stories. On a night in the Bingzi year of the Zhizheng period (1276 or 1336), Luo 羅, a traveler from Luling 廬陵, is on the road. Upon arriving at Xijia Lake, Luo and his friends take a rest and start eating snacks. "Since he had just eaten a salted plum, Luo put the pit into the mouth of a skull on roadside" (因食鹽梅，以核寘道傍髑髏之口). Luo asks the skull, "Is it salty?" The skull does not reply immediately. However, when Luo continues his tour, "illuminated in the moonlight, he saw there was a black amorphous shape whirling up behind them" (月光燦然，見後有黑團旋轉隨逐而來). "It called out, 'Salty! Salty!'" (呼曰："鹹，鹹！") Panicked, Luo and his companions rushed forward. After they had run several miles to the river port of the neighboring village, the sound ceased.[48] Luo and his friends survived this incident.

The speaking skull has clear echoes of the philosopher Zhuangzi's famous conversation about death with a skull he encountered on his way to Chu. In that cynical yet humorous debate, the philosopher uses the skull's speech to entice us to think deeply on the transience of human civilization, the burden of ties that entangle the living, and eternal happiness after death.[49] Zhuangzi's idiosyncratic treatment of life and death is both comic and slightly horrifying.

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[48] Shang Jun, *Yiwen zonglu*, *juan* 1, 19a. Collected in *zhi* 帙 12, *ce* 8 of *Baihai quanshu* 稗海全書 (Collected in Toyo bunka kenkyujo 東洋文化研究所, University of Tokyo).

[49] Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 ed. *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 617–19. Burton Waston, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 107.

Encountering a piece of human bone is a threatening experience. As Stephen Owen points out in his analysis of the Zhuangzi story, this parched skull is "timeless, anonymous, and without skin," "something surviving from the past that both is and is not the former person. Bones without a commemorative marker represent a loss of identity, of one's place in time, and of the family whose purpose was to preserve the memory."[50] In the Xijiahu and the Southern Park stories, the anonymity of the skull emphasizes the narrative's spooky atmosphere a well as reflecting the unstable status of the human protagonist. It is not only the skull that lacks kinship and ties to others, but also the traveler, who is temporarily surrounded by a wilderness and lacking effective protection. Moreover, corporal desire is depicted in an intriguingly fatal way. Food consumption is the trigger that puts the traveler in danger, and the pungent flavors of salty plum and garlicky meat magically animate the skull. After eating, speaking, and haunting, the skull seems to be resurrected, whereas the human protagonist turns into a victim, to be chased, preyed upon, and killed.

The Southern Park story has two significant modifications from the Xijiahu tale. First, the semi-anonymous traveler Mr. Luo is replaced by an imperial eunuch with a specific name, Lai Ding. Like Nun Lü, who gets involved in imperial affairs and suffers a violent punishment, the eunuch is a victim who dies while serving the imperial palace. Second, in the Xijiahu story, the parallel between the skull and the human is only implied in a vague sense, for the traveler ultimately survives. However, the Southern Park stories consolidate the doubling of the two, with the inevitable death of the eunuch. As a native of Luzhou, Luo can finally return to his hometown after the incident; at the end of that story, the skull lets him go and Luo finally

[50] Stephen Owen, *Remembrance: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 34.

escapes from danger. Lai Ding, however, does not have such good fortune. As a eunuch, he is a man without a family, so has no secure home to which he might return. Although he returns to the palace, it seems even the palace cannot fend off an infiltrating evil. As a result, Lai died in great panic.

The doubling of the object of death and the human figure doomed to die fascinates Liu Tong. In order to further incorporate this story in *A Sketch*, Liu Tong attributes a specific task to Lai Ding as well as a date appropriate to that task. In *A Sketch*, the ambiguous day of the fifth month is fixed to "the Duanwu festival during the Jiajing period." The "imperial business" to which Lai Ding is assigned likewise becomes the specific task of acquiring a precious medicine—toad venom (chansu, 蟾酥)—for the Imperial Medical Office in the Southern Imperial Park. Several Ming miscellanies record the custom of collecting toad venom during the Duanwu festival. Liu Tong also mentions this practice in the essay "The Spring Field" (Chunchang, 春場).

> Officials from the Imperial Medical Service, with banners and an orchestra, head to the Southern Park to catch toads and extract their venom. The method is: pierce a jujube leaf with a needle, pricking the toad between its brows. Let the venom gush onto the leaf so that the person's eyes can be shielded, and no harm can be done.
>
> 太醫院官，旗物鼓吹，赴南海子，捉蝦蟆，取蟾酥也。其法：針棗葉，刺蟾之眉間，漿射葉上，以蔽人目，不令傷也。[51]

Indeed, to a late-Ming Beijing resident, this custom was closely related to the public display of the power and wealth of eunuchs. In the late-Ming miscellany *Guest Talks on Chang'an*, the annual toad capture provides an opportunity for high-ranking eunuchs to show off their prestige in the city. Local people chanted ditties to satirize these arrogant servants:

> Putting up energy, [they] marched outside the Phoenix City.
> A stifling din of drums embraces the banner of multicolored feathers.

[51] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 68.

> Venturing through the forest, armed with brushwood, [they are] like roaring tigers.
> —Catching the toad and carving out its eyes.
>
> 抖擻威风出凤城，
> 喧喧鼓吹拥霓旌；
> 穿林披莽如虓虎，
> 捉得虾蟆剜眼睛。[52]

Liu Tong exploited several textual sources and weaved them into one coherent narrative filled with pseudo-historical details. Through the fabrication of many details in Lai Ding's tragedy, Liu Tong presents the reader with a historically credible incident, as realistic as the annual accumulation of ants in the Qingming festival. Following Lai's death, however, the narrative suddenly shifts from pseudo-historical to something altogether different. It reads:

> Beside the west wall of the Park, there is a sand dune winding like a snake. It grows larger every year. At present its height is around three to four *zhang* (ten to twelve meters), and its length is more than ten *li* (five kilometers). From afar, its color is like silver; drawing near, it bears a pattern resembling waves. Local people call it "the sand dragon".
>
> 海子西牆，有沙崗委蛇，歲歲增長，今高三四丈，長十數裏矣。遠色如銀，近紋若波，土人曰沙龍。[53]

In a semi-arid region with strong winds, Beijing frequently suffers from sandstorms in the dry and cold seasons. Along the west wall of the Southern Park, sand accumulated and gradually formed a long line of dunes. Next to the imposing city walls and grand imperial architecture, the tall silver "sand dragon" looks solemn and stirring. This tranquil scenery ends the "Southern Park" essay in *A Sketch*.

For Liu Tong and his contemporaries, Beijing has a unique appearance, with a barren view of the desert encircling the domain of the Son of Heaven. The crudity of death frequently insinuates itself into this setting, ruthlessly tarnishing imperial glory, as those sand dragons

[52] Jiang Yikui, *Chang'an ekua*, 31.
[53] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 135.

slowly crawl towards the walled city.[54] In this essay of *A Sketch*, the final view of desert land overwhelms the reader. Metamorphosis—between the soldier ghosts and ants, the eunuch and human skull—entices the reader to recognize the imperial park through exotic phenomena. When one reaches the end after the successive scenes of death, the silent sand dunes erase the noise of the emperor's hunting parade, the sound of the accumulating ants, and the voice of the speaking skull.

Liu Tong plays with the narrative matrix to destabilize an idealized image of the imperial institution in the text. His implicit critique on the abuse of power—either military power demonstrated by war in the previous dynasty or political power enjoyed by eunuchs in the Ming—are balanced by the tranquil description of natural scenery. This perfectly demonstrates the literary strategy that distinguishes *A Sketch*—to embed criticism in an account of history, while simultaneously creating a thought-provoking, aesthetically sophisticated experience for readers.

2.3 A Mushroom Cloud, Fire God, and the Creation of Heavenly Punishment

Leaving the Southern Imperial Park and moving towards the north, the last case of this chapter took place in the inner city and had a complicated relation with multiple bureaucratic agencies. In the morning of May 30, 1626, a giant black mushroom cloud appeared in the sky of Beijing. With an astonishing sound, in one minute, hundreds of houses near the Xuanwu Gate were burned to ashes; thousands of people were killed or injured; the whole city fell into great panic. The explosion of the Imperial Gunpowder Workshop (Wanggongchang 王恭廠; hereafter referred to as "the Tianqi explosion") was the most horrifying public catastrophe to take place in

[54] See poem, "Sand Dragon of the Southern Imperial Park" 南海子沙龍 by Li Yuanhong 李元弘, collected in *Dijing jingwulüe*, 136.

Beijing in the final decades of the Ming dynasty.[55] This extraordinary event occurred in the very moment when the political struggle between the eunuch faction headed by Wei Zhongxian and the Donglin faction constituted of gentry scholars had grown unprecedentedly fierce. Bloody confrontations happened at the capital Beijing and the provincial regions of Jiangnan and reached a climax when many officials from the Donglin side were persecuted to death.[56] The explosion that coincidentally took place at this problematic moment of court governance attracted the attention of many contemporary scholars' and frequently appeared in miscellaneous writings of the seventeenth century during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition.

In the essay "Fire God Temple" in *A Sketch*, Liu Tong incorporates many of the exotic details on the explosion that had happened roughly ten years before, carefully locates the accident in the contemporary urban environment and creates a complicated narrative on death and the strange.[57] In *A Sketch*, it is the first time that the extraordinary disaster was written into a local history through an intricate account of supernatural occurrences and violent human activities, Liu Tong demonstrates his philosophy in making a historical discourse for the recent past.

Liu Tong acquired the information of the explosion from an issue of official gazette (*dibao*, 邸報), entitled "Official Report on the Accident of Heaven" (*Tianbian dichao* 天變邸抄, or "Official Report"). Primarily written for distributing important news to multiple bureaucratic

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[55] Geng Qingguo 耿慶國, Li Shaoyi 李少一 ed., *Wanggong chang dabaozha: Ming mo qizai yanjiu* 王恭廠大爆炸：明末京師奇災研究 (Beijing: Dizhen chubanshe, 1990).

[56] For a study on the factional controversies between the Donglin members and the eunuch faction, see Harry Miller, *State Versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572–1644*, 95–136. John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and Its Repression, 1620–1627* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Ono Kazuko, *Minki tōsha kō: Tōrintō to Fukusha* (Kyoto: Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1996); Xie Guozhen, *Ming Qing zhiji dangshe kao* 明清之際黨社考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982). Meng Sen, *Ming Qing shi jiangyi*, 293–316.

[57] "Huoshen miao"火神廟, in *Dijing jingwulüe*, 41–42.

agencies, this gazette was transcribed by scholars and preserved in several miscellanies.[58] This section examines the role *A Sketch* played in consolidating the political interpretation of the Tianqi explosion in the narrative of Beijing's local history. When Liu Tong transferred the early gazette into the urban miscellany, he developed a "spatial rhetoric" in narrative, to accommodate the critiques on eunuch who abused power and brought great turmoil to the court. Such rhetoric was further employed by the early-Qing scholars, to create legends of the Dongling scholars' deeds.

Primarily designed to deliver messages across multiple strata of the bureaucratic system, *dibao* was a type of practical text that aimed to familiarize officials with necessary information about particular events.[59] Nonetheless, in the late Ming, reading *dibao* was by no means limited to officials, and common people would also regularly check the gazette to keep up with current

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[58] The earliest of these is *Accounts in Praise of Heaven* (*Songtian lubi* 頌天臚筆), published in 1629 by Jin Risheng 金日昇. "The Official Report on the Accident of Heaven" is attached as an appendix to this book at the end of the last volume. Later on, the "Official Report" was published in Huang Yu's 黃煜 memoir, *The Register of Emerald Blood* (*Bixie lu*, 碧血錄), under the title "Miscellaneous Records on the Accident of Heaven" (*Tianbian zaji* 天變雜記) with slight modifications. It is unknown when the book was finally completed but based on the appellation of the Chongzhen emperor in the text, the main text should have been finished in the Ming dynasty. Huang Yu, *Bixie lu*, in *Biji xiaoshuo daguan* 筆記小說大觀 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guangling keyinshe, 1983), vol. 7, 171–99. In 1670, it occurs in *A Compendium of the Events in the North in Last Years of Ming* (*Mingji bei lüe* 明季北略) written by Ji Liuqi 計六奇 (1622–?). See Ji Liuqi, *Mingji beilüe* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 73–76.

[59] Scholars of Chinese history and literature have examined *dibao* gazettes in terms of their textual properties, social function, historical significance, usage, and channels of circulation. For discussion on *dibao*, see Yin Yungong 尹韻公, *Zhongguo Mingdai xinwen chuanboshi* 中國明代新聞傳播史 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1990). Wei Shang, "Jin Ping Mei and Late Ming Print Culture", in Judith Zeitlin and Lydia Liu, ed. *Writing and Materiality in China Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 187–238. Liu Yongqiang 劉勇強, "Ming Qing dibao yu wenxue zhi guanxi" 明清邸報與文學之關係, in *Xueren* 學人 vol. 3 (1992): 437–64. Timothy Brook, "Communications and Commerce," in *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 8, The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Frederick Mote (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 579–770.

events. The transmission of government information consequently incorporated another function of the gazette: to influence the public reception (or interpretation) of court affairs and to generate public opinion in a manner somewhat akin to today's news media.

Structured with a succinct summary followed by episodic portrayals of specific scenes, the "Official Report" aims to politicize the explosion in order to bring public pressure to the court. It first introduces the basic information of the explosion, including the time and location, then details the precise area that was destroyed during the disaster—from Fucheng Gate along the eastern city wall to the neighborhood of Ministry of Justice (Xingbu, 刑部)—and summarizes the horrible outcome: many thousands of people dead and many houses crushed.[60] Following this overview, the gazette narrative shifts to present multiple scenes from sites all over the city. These thirty-seven independent entries constitute the major text. They illustrate the experiences of the emperor, court officials, and local residents, as well as supernatural phenomena, including the manifestation of immortals and spirits. They also provide a literary tour across all of Beijing, from the palatial halls secluded inside the Forbidden City to the wild fields lacking regular maintenance, from the governmental bureaus to various religious institutes that charged with keeping order in the supernatural world.

One appealing feature of the "Official Report" is that deities became extremely active on the day of the explosion and frequently appeared in the text. The Fire God is a case in point. According to the "Official Report," every Fire God Temple in Beijing experienced something unusual. At one Fire God Temple near Bei'an Gate 北安門, eunuchs who served in the temple heard three bursts of unusual music played in the main hall. Feeling uneasy, they opened the door, and right at that moment, a large fireball rushed out and tumbled up to the sky. A few

[60] Jin Risheng, *Songtian lubi* (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1986), 3213–14.

seconds later, the gunpowder workshop exploded.[61] In another Fire God Temple near Chongwen gate 崇文門 in the southeast corner of the city, the priest working there found the Fire God "was emitting flames and intending to step out of the hall." Feeling startled, the priest quickly kneeled down, held the god in his arms and pleaded: "My Fire Lord! It is too dry outside. Please don't walk around!" As the priest was pushing the god back to his divine seat, the explosion broke out.[62] At a third temple in Zhangjiawan, Tongzhou County, in the east of the city, "the doors had been locked for many years. On that day, all the doorbars and locks ruptured" (積年扃鍵不開。此日鎖鑰俱斷).[63] The broken locks suggest the Fire God in residence had left his station. In entry eleven from the "Official Report," one Fire God travelled to the city, and was observed by an official in the Investigation Bureau of the north city (Beicheng chayuan, 北城察院):

> As [the Investigating Censor] rode his horse into the office courtyard that day, he saw an immortal with red hair wearing a red hat sitting on a *qilin* beast and holding a sword. The immortal was close, right above his head. [The Censor] was startled. Falling from his horse, he injured his forehead. In the midst of the hubbub, there was suddenly a tremor in the eastern city.
>
> 北城察院，此日進衙門，馬上仰面，見一神人赤冠赤髮，持劍坐一麒麟，近在頭上。大驚，墮馬傷額。方在喧嚷間東城忽震。[64]

The unexpected encounter with a Fire God caused an injury to the Investigating Censor; meanwhile, chaos became the motif of that day in that we see more people in the city were severely injured during the explosion. To a modern reader, the most striking things in the "Official Report" are the uncanny accounts of people's corporeal suffering. One noticeable feature of the victims described is that their bodies are transformed into seemingly inanimate

[61] *Songtian lubi*, 3215.
[62] *Songtian lubi*, 3215–16.
[63] *Songtian lubi*, 3216.
[64] *Songtian lubi*, 3220.

objects that are easily dissected by the strong explosive force. For instance, entry thirty-one relates:

> In the area near Chang'an Boulevard, human heads flew down from the sky. Eyebrows and noses, sometimes even a forehead, descended one after another. A giant piece of wood flew into the Street of the Stone Consort-Prince in Miyun County. And a large stone lion, weighing five thousand *jin* (2,500 kg), flew over Shuncheng Gate.
>
> 長安街一帶，時從空飛墮人頭，或眉毛和鼻，或連一額，紛紛而下。大木飛至密雲石駙馬街，有五千斤大石獅子飛出順城門外。[65]

Entry thirty-six relates:

> Outside Desheng Gate, even more human arms and legs dropped down.
>
> 德勝門外墮落人臂、人腿更多。[66]

In these two entries, the human body is accounted for in individual parts: head, eyebrows, nose, forehead, arm and leg. No victim's name appears in the text; instead we only receive a list of human parts falling down in pieces, stripped of their original bodily context. Like the giant piece of wood (probably a column from some palace hall), or a heavy stone lion that usually stood at the gates of imperial bureaus, these human parts fly through the sky, pass over a large area of the imperial city, cross the spatial boundaries constructed by layers of city walls, and arrive at some place in the distance.

Moreover, the "Official Report" also shows a particular interest in the depiction of naked women. For instance:

> The secretary of He Tingshu…stood on the rubble and shouted: "If there is anybody below, please answer!" A voice suddenly responded: "Help me!" People asked: "Who are you?" The voice replied: "I am Little Er-jie." The secretary knew she was the official's beloved concubine and hurried to pull her out. Not a single piece of cloth was on her body! Another secretary removed his coat to clothe her. Wearing neither skirts nor pants, she left riding on a donkey. No one knows where she went.

[65] *Songtian lubi,* 3226.
[66] *Songtian lubi,* 3228.

屯院書辦……立瓦礫上，呼曰：“底下有人可答應。”忽應聲：“救我！”諸人問曰：“你是誰？”曰：“我是小二姐。”書辦知是本官之愛妾，急救出。身無寸縷。一書辦脫大擺裹之。身無裙褲，騎驢而去，不知所之。[67]

In this case, the officer's whole family was buried in ruins and died except one concubine. Oddly, the poor woman's naked body becomes the focus of the narrative. When the secretary, a servant and assistant of this master, rescues her from the rubble, there is not a single piece of clothing on her body. In contrast to her ready responses in the previous dialogue, the woman seems to be completely silent and passive in the second half of the story. When a servant wraps her with a robe, she has no words. Lacking any reaction to the surrounding environment, especially without any spoken interactions with the men, this woman turns into an object of the male gaze.

Entry thirty-three records an incredible scene during the explosion:

> In Yuanhong Temple Street, a woman's sedan chair was passing by. The sound [of the explosion] blew the roof of the sedan into sky. The woman's clothes were stripped away. She was in the sedan chair, completely naked, but also unharmed!

圓宏寺街有女轎過，一響掀去轎頂，女人衣飾盡去，赤體在轎，竟亦無恙。[68]

And entry nineteen reads:

> One man, whose leg was crushed, lay on the ground. He saw women passing by completely naked: there was one who held a piece of tile to hide her vulva; one who clutched half a strip of foot-binding to cover up; one that was wrapped in half a mattress; one who was dragging a bed sheet. A moment later there were several tens of women. The man was both in pain and laughing.

有一人，因壓傷一腿，臥於地。見婦人赤體而過，有以瓦遮陰戶者，有以半條腳帶掩者，有披半邊褥子者，有牽一幅被單者，頃刻得數十人。是人又痛又笑。[69]

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[67] *Songtian lubi,* 3218.
[68] *Songtian lubi,* 3226.
[69] *Songtian lubi,* 3222.

Why did the explosion leave women naked even with their dresses, skirts, and blouses strangely stripped away?[70] Nudity is by no means a rare depiction in accounts of natural disasters in the late imperial period.[71] The depiction of these episodes suggests the extensive disruption the disaster brings to people's daily lives in the capital. When the gunpowder workshop explodes, the once-orderly street opens up, transforming into a fluid space where people can quickly mingle together and easily get separated. This chaotic disruption of daily life leads to deviant behavior. Freed from normal courtesy, men's gazes can penetrate what is usually secluded and savor what is usually forbidden. In the "Official Report," once the shockwave is over the woman is stripped of all textiles that shield her body—the curtain of the sedan chair, together with her blouse and skirt—and directly exposed to public view. In entry nineteen, through the eyes of a male victim, we see women in a series of embarrassing postures "displayed" on the street. The foot-binding strip, the mattress, and the bed sheet are all private objects belonging to the domestic sphere. In this particular moment, though, they are suddenly displayed in the street, grasped by women in a vain attempt to cover their naked bodies. Admittedly, this view does not come without a price: the man who lying on the ground has a badly injured leg. His laughing in pain reminds us of the range of effects that this disaster brought to the city: horror and unease, but also deviation and excitement.

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[70] Modern scholars have proposed several hypotheses based on geographical, nuclear, and bio-chemical studies. But none has been able to provide any scientific explanation for such a phenomenon. Geng Qingguo, Li Shaoyi ed., *Wanggong chang dabaozha: Ming mo qizai yanjiu*, 181–92.

[71] For example, Pu Songling depicts a chaotic street scene in the tale "Earthquake" (dizhen, 地震), but his treatment of nudity is relatively general, since he merely mentions that people forgot to dress during the emergency. Pu Songling 蒲松齡, edited by Zhang Youhe 張友鶴, *Liaozhai zhiyi huijiao huizhu huipingben* 聊斋誌異會校會注會評本 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 170.

As a text transmitting society's instant response to a public disaster, the "Official Report" carries many details about extraordinary spectacles occurring in the city. Contextualizing the account of strange in specific sites, the text can be read not only as a report about an actual event, but also as a piece of anecdotal literature guiding the reader to observe the exotic and uncanny, like the unexpected demonstration of immortals, the bloody dissections of victims' torsos, and voyeuristic glimpses of the naked female body. In the case of "Official Report," the narrative intensifies an atmosphere of misery and foreboding. To be specific, the account defamiliarizes the ordinary space to exaggerate the sense of horror, and highlights the intersecting space where humans witnessed the supernatural in order to strengthen a cosmological interpretation.

From 1624 to 1627, confrontations at court between the Donglin and various other factions reached their zenith.[72] At the time of the explosion on May 30, four high-ranking officials of the Donglin side, Zhou Shunchang 周順昌 (1584–1626), Zhou Zongjian 周宗建 (1582–1626), Miao Changqi 繆昌期 (1562–1626), and Li Yingsheng 李應昇 (1593–1626), were in prison. As historian Liu Zhigang points out, officials of the day immediately capitalized on the political potential of the catastrophic explosion to realize various plans, such as promoting the reform of current financial policies and forcing the emperor to lessen the persecution of the Donglin prisoners.[73] Composed in the midst of this political turmoil, the gazette attempts to subtly criticize the eunuch faction and generate public dissatisfaction with Wei Zhongxian.

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[72] Historians have proposed the fierce confrontation began from Yang Lian's (1572–1625) "Twenty-four Crimes" memorial impeaching Wei Zhongxian that was submitted to Tianqi in July 1624. Followed by the public arrest and secret murder of leading figures of the Donglin faction, including Yang Lian, this event initiated more protestations in the upcoming years. See Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 72–100; Miller, *State Versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China*, 121–23.

[73] Liu Zhigang 劉志剛, "Tianbian yu dangzheng: Tianqi liunian Wanggongchangzai xia de Ming mo zhengzhi" 天變與黨爭：天啟六年王恭廠災下的明末政治, *Shilin* 史林 no. 2 (2009): 121–22.

Among various literatures in the late Ming, *A Sketch* was the first scholarly attempt to systematically recount the explosion as an indispensable moment in Beijing's local history.[74] The essay "Fire God Temple" details the construction history and architectural layout of that building complex, where the story of the Tianqi explosion—particularly the unusual occurrences of Fire God—is carefully woven into the narration. Contextualizing two crucial places, the imperial gunpowder workshop and the temple, within a broader urban environment of Beijing, Liu Tong employs a spatial rhetoric to normalize the account of uncanny episodes and continues to intensify the political interpretation of the strange phenomenon.

Similar to the Imperial Sister Nunnery, the Fire God Temple was maintained under imperial patronage, and its construction and permutation was closely related to events inside the imperial palace. As introduced in *A Sketch*, located next to Shichahai Lake, this temple drew on the power of water to balance the power of the Fire God. It was originally established in the Zhenguan reign (627–649) of the early Tang and was reconstructed in 1346. In 1605, it was renovated with a significant expansion in scale. In the Wanli reign (1573–1620), the Forbidden City suffered several fire disasters, including conflagrations that destroyed the most prominent palaces in the Forbidden City. Therefore, in order to please the Fire God, the emperor ordered the construction of two main halls and appointed a Taoist priest to conduct a purifying ceremony every month.[75]

After this initial description of the building complex is the story of the Tianqi explosion. The narrative begins from the perspective of eunuchs who lived at the Bei'an Gate.

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[74] These books of the late Ming period mentioned the Tianqi explosion: Liu Ruoyu 劉若愚, *Zhuozhong zhi* 酌中志, *juan* 3 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1994). Zhu Changzuo 朱長祚, *Yujing xintan* 玉鏡新譚 (a.1627) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989).

[75] *Dijing jingwulüe,* 41–42.

> In the sixth year of the Tianqi era, on the sixth day of the fifth month, during the hours of *si* (10 a.m. to noon), eunuchs at the Gate of Northern Peace (Bei'an) were startled to hear three sudden bursts of music played by percussion and string instruments coming from the Temple. Opening the door of the Temple they examined the situation. Suddenly, a ball of fire tumbled up into the sky. People looked up from afar—a quaking sound broke out in the southwest.
>
> 天啟六年五月初六日巳刻，北安門內侍忽聞粗細樂，先後過者三，眾驚而跡其聲，自廟出。開殿審視，忽火如球，滾而上於空。眾方仰矚，西南震聲發矣。[76]

The essay goes on to describe the explosive scene and its horrifying aftermath, now shifting perspective to a bird's-eye view over the city:

> The scene [resembled] entangled silk threads, the crest of a tidal wave, iridescent hues, a black numinous mushroom, all rushing into the sky. This was the disaster that happened in the Imperial Gunpowder workshop.
>
> 望其光氣，亂絲者，海潮頭者，五色者，黑靈芝者，起沖天，王恭廠災也。[77]
>
> From Fucheng Gate in the east to the Street of the Ministry of Justice in the north, within an area of 13 square kilometers, houses collapsed and the ground caved in. Trees, stones, people, and birds poured down to earth from the sky like rainfall. Thousands of houses were razed; hundreds of people were killed. The smell of burning [was everywhere]; ashes blinded eyes; wailing could be heard around the city. The deceased were all naked. There were people who had lost hands, feet, heads, or eyes, and these parts were found outside the city. Objects were moved from their original locations and placed elsewhere.
>
> 東自阜成門，北至刑部街，瓦四裹，闊十三裹，宇坍地塌，木石人禽，自天雨而下。屋以千數，人以百數，燔臭灰眯，號聲彌滿。死者皆裸，有失手足頭目，于裹外得之者，物或移故處而他置之。[78]

The essay ends with an intriguing story regarding the Fire God at another temple near Chongwen Gate.

> At that time in the Temple of the Fire God near Chongwen Gate, the god was emitting flames, almost standing up, preparing to rush out of the temple hall. The priest knelt down, held the god in his arms, and said: "It is too dry outside! Please don't walk around!" The god raised his feet and moved back, and the quake occurred.

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[76] *Dijing jingwulüe,* 41–42.
[77] *Dijing jingwulüe,* 42.
[78] Ibid.

時崇文門火神廟，神亦焰焰欲起，勢若下殿出。祝跪而抱曰：外邊天旱，不可走動。神舉足還住而震發。[79]

In all these accounts, Liu Tong takes the crucial material from the "Official Report." But he consciously normalizes the previous discourses by deleting all details regarding the abnormal display or dismemberment of the human bodies. Death, in Liu Tong's writing, is presented as a non-sensual fact, with the minimum degree of exotic passion and voyeuristic interest. The macabre scenes of dissected organs, especially how they left their original bodies and flew over the city, are deliberately dismissed. Nor is the author interested in discussing the embarrassing spectacle of naked women. Victims are briefly described as "the deceased," without any specification of their gender or age. The voyeuristic depiction of the female victims completely disappears, to be replaced with a succinct and unemotional summary. The essay attempts to state a historical "fact" cleansed of titillating details.

The gazette's collage of juxtaposed perspectives is also absent from the "Fire God Temple" essay. Instead, the authors carefully selected particular scenes, organized them into a narrative flow, and focalized the account of the event from the viewpoint of eunuchs. Reading the text alongside the spatial organization of Beijing, we discover another layer of meaning beneath this terse account.[80] It was the eunuchs living in Bei'an Gate who first noticed something unusual. Located in the center of the north wall of the Imperial City, Bei'an Gate was the central tower gate on the north-south axis of the capital. The organizations located along this axis, starting from Zhengyang Gate in the south and ending at the Bell Tower, constituted the engine

[79] Ibid.

[80] Hou Renzhi 侯任之 ed. "Ming Beijing cheng quantu"明北京城全圖, *Beijing lishi ditu ji* 北京历史地图集 (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1988), 31–32.

of the country's bureaucratic system.[81] Right next to Bei'an Gate along the axis was a large area dedicated to the offices of the eunuchs: the Directorate of Palace Eunuchs (Neiguanjian, 內官監),[82] the Directorate of Imperial Regalia (Sishejian, 司設監),[83] the Directorate of Imperial Garments (Shangyijian, 尚衣監) and the Directorate of Ceremonial (Silijian, 司禮監).[84] The director of the eunuch agencies, whether the Seal-holding Eunuch (*zhangyin taijian*, 掌印太監) or the Pen-holding Eunuch (*bingbi taijian*, 秉筆太監), was always a leading figure at court—not only the de-facto chief of the imperial household staff, but also supervisor of the country's intelligence agency and in charge of the notorious secret police units, the Eastern and Western Depots (Dongchang, 東廠 and Xichang, 西廠).[85] During the Tianqi reign, Wei Zhongxian, who as the Pen-holding Eunuch led the Eastern Depot, informally controlled the Embroidered Uniform Guards (Jinyiwei, 錦衣衛)—the secret police with the authority to directly interrogate statesmen who played a vital role in persecuting Donglin members. Following the eunuchs' action of opening the door, a fireball flew towards the southwest of the city and soon prompted the startling sound of the explosion.

Why did the authors place the eunuchs at the center of the narrative and present them as the only active agents in the disaster? First, by fixing the narrative perspective around Bei'an

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[81] From south to north, these include the Five Ministries of the State (*libu* 禮部, *hubu* 戶部, *libu* 吏部, *bingbu* 兵部, *gongbu* 工部), the Central Military Commands (*jundudufu* 軍都督府), the Alter of Land and Grain (*Shejitan* 社稷壇) and the Imperial Family Temple (*Taimiao* 太廟), the Forbidden City (*Zijincheng* 紫禁城), the Imperial Park with the Mount Longevity 萬歲山.

[82] Charles O Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 348.

[83] Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China,* 455.

[84] Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China,* 451.

[85] Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China,* 451.

Gate, the exotic and uncanny scenes that occurred on other streets were naturally excluded, thereby "purifying" the text of gratuitous details. Moreover, as the only characters in the essay who take action, the eunuchs become a natural target of blame for the incident, for their opening of the door permits the eruption of a fireball that leads to the explosion in a phenomenological sense. The final episode of the essay suggests another link between the eunuchs' deeds and the unsettling reactions of the Fire God. The original gazette lists the unusual scenes from different Fire God temples to emphasize the strangeness of the explosion. In *A Sketch*, however, by assembling these plot points into a continuous, linear narrative, the authors remind the reader to consider the causes of the explosion. From the eunuchs' actions to the explosion and then to one Fire God's active response, human activities in the district of the eunuch agencies lead to an upheaval in the district that symbolizes state justice; finally, the chaos in the city commands the attention of protective deities.

Throughout *A Sketch*, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng address the problematic deeds of the eunuch faction by inscribing chaotic occurrences among famous sites. The dismantling and annihilation of buildings is frequently indicative of profound critique. For instance, in an essay on the Nunnery of Mahākāśyapa (Mohe an, 摩訶庵), the authors write of another forced demolition of a popular site where young scholars used to hold society meetings. This is the only time in *A Sketch* that Wei Zhongxian comes to the fore in the text. It reads: "there was a pavilion in the Monastery where [people] could appreciate the scenery of the West Mountains. During the Tianqi era, the eunuch Wei [Zhongxian] walked by. By chance he pointed out the building and said, 'Get rid of it!' It was demolished immediately. From this time on, people warned each other

not to pass by [that area]."[86] The word *ou* ("by chance," 偶) stresses Wei's unreasonable personality, and the populace's warning implies public dissatisfaction.

The spatial rhetoric employed in *A Sketch* was inherited by the early Qing intellectuals, and they used it to help further solidify the political interpretation of the disaster. The mutual resonance among fire disasters, Heaven, and Wei Zhongxian's crimes was intensified and complicated. The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed a heyday of writing "private histories" (*sishi*, 私史) in early modern China. A generation of scholars who experienced the traumatic period of dynastic transition devoted themselves to compiling historical books about what had recently happened.[87] Thus we see many historical accounts produced, such as *A Compendium of Events in the North in the Last Years of the Ming* (Mingji belüe, 明季北略; hereafter referred to as the *Compendium of the North*) by Ji Liuqi 計六奇 (1622–?).

In the *Compendium of the North,* compiled between 1666 and 1670, Ji Liuqi deploys the Tianqi explosion in a more sophisticated way.[88] Organized in an eclectic structure that combines annalistic and biographical styles in Chinese historiographical tradition, the *Compendium of the North* categorizes historical events in a chronological sequence with biographies of particular historical figures inserted among the description of events. In this book, Ji systematically relates military and political events that took place in the imperial court of Beijing and in frontier provinces such as Liaodong, Shanxi, Shandong, and Beizhili, from 1595 to 1644.

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[86] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 308.

[87] For an introduction to the compilation of "private history" during the Ming-Qing transition, see Han Hongliu 闞紅柳, *Qingchu sijia xiushi yanjiu: yi shijia qunti wei yanjiu duixiang* 清初私家修史研究—以史家群體為研究對象 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2008).

[88] For an introduction to these two compendiums, see Zhang Yin, "Ji Liuqi yu Mingji Nan Bei lüe," in *Mingji beilue*, 729–57. Qu Ning 屈寧, "Qingchu sijia xiushi chengjiu juyao: lun *Mingjin Nan Bei lüe* de shixue jiazhi (清初私家修史成就舉要：論《明季南北略》的史學價值)," *Xuehai* 學海 no. 4 (2010): 155–60.

In this book, Ji Liuqi employs the spatial rhetoric of the narrative to show how the explosion was actively involved in and interfered with contemporary political affairs. He incorporated the Tianqi explosion into the biographical writings of the Donglin members to glorify their conduct. Zhou Shunchang arrived at Beijing in late May and was placed in the "Decree Prison" located south of the Imperial City on 23 May 1626. Xu Xianchun (?–1629), the director of the Northern Prison Office of the Embroidered Uniform Guard and a trusted confidant of Wei Zhongxian, conducted the interrogations and torture. In the biography of Zhou Shunchang, Ji Liuqi depicts this dramatic scene, where the explosion becomes a vital factor affecting the jurisdictive process in the capital.

> Master Zhou spoke to his fellows: "Today if I go to the capital, I must die. Once I die, I will plead before our Grand Emperor (Ming Dynasty founder Zhu Yuanzhang) and ask him to punish those evil criminals." ... When he arrived at the capital he was immediately thrown into prison. He did not surrender to the court. [The judge] forcefully accused him of "accepting bribes of three thousand taels of silver," and decided to execute him. Heaven manifested its will and warned [people], then fire burned the Imperial Gunpowder Workshop. Following an edict from the emperor, the punishment was suspended. In the sixth month, the master was severely tortured every five days in the steaming summer heat. He chided Xu Xianchun. Xianchun hit the master's teeth with a bronze hammer. Even when all his teeth were chiseled out, he was still cursing, and his blood gushed out onto Xianchun's face. Master Zhou soon died.
>
> 公謂所知曰："今我赴都必死，死則訴高皇帝速殛元兇。"……公至都，下獄，對簿不屈，強坐贓三千，即欲殺公。天意示儆，火起王恭廠，奉旨停刑。六月酷暑，復五日一嚴比。公大罵許顯純。顯純將銅錘擊公齒，齒俱落，公猶極罵噴血於顯純面，遂死。[89]

The basic elements of this story—imprisonment, torture, and especially the details of gushing blood and teeth being knocked out—can be found in Zhou's biography from *Accounts in Praise of Heaven.*[90] Meanwhile, the commemorative writings dedicated by Zhou's colleagues and friends had already established a correlation between Zhou's physical suffering and the Tianqi

[89] *Mingji beilüe*, 58.
[90] *Songtian lubi*, 1004.

explosion.[91] For instance, in the posthumous biography of Zhou composed by Hu Jingchen, it reads:

> When the master was arrested, the earth admonished through a quake. When he was put into prison, the heavens admonished through fire and thunder at the Imperial Gunpowder Workshop. When he was repeatedly questioned and tortured, the heavens admonished again through rain and hail.
>
> 方先生初逮時，地以震變告。比於獄，天以王恭廠火雷之變告。屢訊搒略，天又以雨雹之變告。[92]

Ji Liuqi's plotting synthesizes various discourses found in earlier miscellanies. Inserting the explosion into the narrative flow creates a correlation between fire and the secret punishment, implying that the explosion in the southwest of the city had an effect on activity in another part of the city far way. On the one hand, Ji interprets the explosion as the manifestation of Heaven's will, one that brings about a temporary pause in Zhou Shunchang's torture. On the other hand, Ji's account entices the reader to imagine the miserable scene of torture within a specific context, to associate the scholar's bodily suffering with a series of symbolic images about "fire." In the suffocating summer heat, the scholar's skin and flesh bleed and become inflamed. The endless pounding and flogging, combined with his unexhausted chiding, echo the astonishing boom heard across the city. The fire not only represents the emotion of an abstract "Heaven," but also expresses the real and specific fury of Master Zhou, his biographers, and everyone who bravely protested against Wei Zhongxian in the mid 1620s.

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[91] For instance, Zhang Pu reviews the heroic behavior of the Donglin scholars in the tomb inscription he composed for Zhou Zongjian. See "Zeng taipusiqing Zhou gong Laiyu muzhiming" (贈太僕寺卿周公來玉墓志銘) in *Qiluzhai shiwen heji* 七錄齋詩文合集, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, vol. 1387 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2002), 355–58.

[92] Hu Jingchen 胡敬辰, "Zhou Liaozhou xiansheng zhuan (周蓼洲先生傳)," from Zheng Yuanxun ed., *Meiyouge wenyu erji*, *Siku jinhuishu congkan*, vol. 172, (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), 422.

Returning to the spatial layout of Beijing, let's further explore how the spatial context of the capital city also resonates through the text and deepens its meaning. After Emperor Yongle formally moved the capital to Beijing in 1420, throughout the rest of the Ming dynasty the district to the north of Xuanwu Gate where the Imperial Gunpowder Workshop was located symbolized the imperial order of law and justice. Within a few blocks could be found the Ministry of Justice, the only State Ministry outside of the Imperial City;[93] the Capital Investigation Bureau (Duchayuan, 都察院), the country's sole Censorate;[94] and the Court of Judicial Review (Dalisi, 大理寺), which was one of the Nine Courts (Jiusi, 九司) and one of the Three Judicial Offices (Sanfasi, 三法司).[95] This area not only housed institutions supervising juridical order in the human world, it also accommodated the Capital City God Temple, which was the supreme supernatural court supervising all local City God Temples within the country.

From Ji Liuqi's perspective, the physical turmoil in the juridical district of the capital represented the country's dark and chaotic reality. Wei Zhongxian, who should not have stood in a position superior to official scholars, abused his power and purged scholars who challenged him; the Tianqi Emperor, who should have fostered balanced relations among the different factions, did not make any effort to manage the deteriorating situation. The scholar officials' misery represents the larger imbalance of power. It seemed that the only means of ending Zhou Shunchang's suffering and restoring the proper order of things was for the heavens to intervene. When the speed of moral decline had accelerated to such a pace that no human figure could

[93] The remaining five Ministries were located in Chessboard Street between Chengtian men (Tian'an men) and Zhengyang men.

[94] Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China,* 105.

[95] Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China,* 468.

salvage the situation, the explosion—a total destructive force, which razed everything equally—became the only way to solve the conflicts in the political system.

When information of one disaster circulates in various genres—from news reports to historical notes, from documentary accounts to private historical annals, different texts attest to distinct concerns of various historical contexts and literary genres. Presenting people's instantaneous responses in various locations of the city, the gazette reporting the explosion from 1620s is a hodgepodge, full of erotic, horrifying, exotic and incredible scenes. When writing the disaster into a local history, scholars from the 1630s deleted exotic episodes that might evoke the reader's unnecessary curiosity while restoring a fixed narrative perspective that could implicitly speak for their critique of a particular historical period. After the fall of the Ming, the Tianqi explosion were employed to criminalize Wei Zhongxian and establish a tyrannical image of him in the history. As a result, Wei Zhongxian became the demon deserving condemnation, whereas the Donglin members the heroes meriting eulogy.

Conclusion

My reading of the three essays from *A Sketch* indicates how the author reviews the dynastic past and commemorates death through the accounts of extraordinary events. The strange occurrences demonstrated the liminal condition of Beijing. As a capital located on the state's frontier, it constantly struggled with political crises. Meanwhile, the three cases drawn upon here exemplify the intertextual relationship between this urban miscellany and other types of anecdotal materials, including governmental newspapers, tales of the strange, and personal jottings of hearsay and rumors. The adaptation and rewriting of these materials—whether they were historically verifiable or not—create space for Liu Tong to present his reflections and critiques on certain political figures. Noticeably, Liu Tong's use of spatial rhetoric reveals that the text not

merely provided a record of what happened in specific time and place; indeed, its composition was practiced in response to certain environmental, institutional, and political contexts.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CITY IN DECAY:

WRITING THE NORTHERN LANDSCAPE

Essays on mountains and rivers surrounding Beijing constitute the most significant theme in *A Sketch*, making up half of the length of the book. Composed in refined language, today these pieces are widely appreciated as fine landscape literature, and their circulation promoted the literary fame of scenic sites in and around Beijing. In order to comprehensively describe the natural and humanistic environments of Beijing, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng searched various materials, from steles to local gazetteers, that recorded the geographical conditions. Most noticeably, they transferred early travelogues on Beijing into the book, and in the process, the primary author Liu Tong developed a new literary style to describe the northern landscape. In addition, they made in-person visits to Beijing's nearby mountains, which allowed them to discover the actual contemporary circumstances of the peripheral regions guarding the walled city. Therefore, the text in *A Sketch* is a synthesis, combining early travel writings with actual site visiting and seeing.

This chapter focuses on the writings about the northern landscape in *A Sketch* and explores the literary strategies that Liu Tong employed in his efforts to preserve Beijing's literary legacy and the surviving landscape, with particular attention given to his adaptation of earlier travel writing about Beijing, the development of a new lyrical style of prose, and the portrayal of the immediate reality of his living experience in the city. In what ways did the special spatial and temporal framework—a frontier capital in the waning years of a dynasty—affect the literary properties of *A Sketch*? And how did the perspective, style, and content of *A Sketch* support Liu Tong's agenda in the textual preservation of scenic sites? My analysis focuses on the literary

relationship between *A Sketch* and the earlier texts on Beijing, as well as on the interactive process between landscape experience and literary writing. I examine how the use of literary "precursor" and "the inspiration of real landscape" (in the words of Stephen Owen) contributed to the textual properties of *A Sketch*.[1] I pay particular attention to the emergence of the northern features of Beijing's landscape in texts, which generates a unique cultural image of Beijing, distinguishing the capital from other cities in China, especially those in Jiangnan. Rather than promoting an environmental-deterministic perspective, I seek to track the engagement of scholars, most of whom originated from south China, with the natural and social environments of Beijing—geographical, climatic, economic, and military—to discover how and why Liu Tong invented a new, poetic style in the prose writing of urban experiences.

This chapter locates selected essays from *A Sketch* in the literary pedigree of prose and the social environment of Beijing during the late Ming period. In the following sections, I first trace how Liu Tong rewrote early Beijing travelogues by the Yuan brothers: Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610), Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道 (1560–1600), and Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道 (1570–1623), who between them produced a large number of poems and essays during their sojourn in

[1] My inquiry on how the physical attributes of landscape affected the textual property of travel writing derives from the classic question in the study of Chinese landscape poetry, proposed by Paul Kroll in his influential article "Lexical Landscapes and Textual Mountains in the High T'ang," *T'oung Pao*, vol. 84 (1998): 62–101. Kroll questions the issue of verisimilitude in Tang poetry by asking, "How 'real,' how faithful, is a verbal description as a representation of scene?" (Kroll, p. 75) and suggests that "the primacy of the word—not the eye—and its accumulated resonances through time" had profound impacts on landscape writing (Kroll, p. 65). In response to Kroll's inquiry, Stephen Owen proposes a theoretical framework that during poetic invention, the writer needs to manage the "triple concerns of literary economy, the use of precursors, and the inspiration of [real] landscape" (Owen, p. 205). Owen, "The Librarian in Exile: Xie Lingyun's Bookish Landscapes," *Early Medieval China*, volume 2004, issue 1 (2004): 203–26.

the capital around 1599.[2] The Yuan brothers' travelogues circulated widely. They constituted the literary heritage of Beijing and served as sources for *A Sketch*, providing not only historical and cultural knowledge but also literary devices and ways of seeing that were deployed to give voice to the author's reactions. This chapter goes on to examine the records of the most up-to-date conditions of various sites, most of which were in varying states of desolation and abandonment. In *A Sketch*, Liu Tong not only laments on the loss of the structures now in ruins and sometimes indulges in longing for some "golden age" in the past when these sites flourished, but also, in highly restrained tones, delivers social commentary on economic policies and military affairs. The literary style subtly reveals Liu Tong's emotional reactions to the problematic reality and invites the reader to perceive the tragic atmosphere surrounding the capital in the years of social decline.

3.1 Landscape Literature on Beijing in the Ming

After Emperor Yongle (r. 1403–1424) relocated the Ming capital to Beijing, the windswept garrison town of old Beiping was gradually transformed into the metropolitan city of Beijing. Led by aristocrats from the imperial family and high-ranking court officials, lifestyle in the northern capital changed significantly in the centuries that followed: its spartan character gradually disappeared, to a great degree replaced by a taste for refinement.[3] In the chapters of *A Sketch* that discuss the western part of Beijing, Liu Tong sketches an intriguing picture where the

[2] For scholarship on the Gong'an school, see Chih-P'ing Chou, *Yuan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*. Zhou Qun 周群, *Yuan Hongdao pingzhuan* 袁宏道評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1999). For general study of xingling literature of the late Ming, see Wu Chengxue, *Wanming xiaopin yanjiu*; Tsao Shuh-chuan, *Wanming xingling xiaopin yanjiu*.

[3] For an introduction to the topographical and geographical properties of Beijing in the Ming, as well as its social life, see James Geiss, "Peking Under the Ming."

tranquility of natural scenery, which recalls the touristical imaginations of Jiangnan, encounters the masculinity and ruthlessness associated with the northern frontier.

The main scenic sites in Beijing were located in two regions. About ten kilometers west of the walled city, at the site of today's Summer Palace, the landscape was appealing, comprising picturesque mountains and lakes dotted with farmlands, villages, and monasteries.[4] About twenty kilometers northwest of the walled city, the mountainous area not only served as a protective barrier around the capital and supplied plenty of natural resources such as wood and stone, but also boasted beautiful natural scenery. The West Mountains (Xishan 西山) featured many Buddhist monasteries and summer villas that local residents frequented for leisure excursions.[5]

[4] The systematic construction of infrastructure in Beijing's mountainous area began in the late seventeenth century when the Qing court established governance. Emperor Kangxi built Changchun Garden 暢春園 ("Clear Spring"), Yongzheng expanded Yuanming Garden 圓明園 ("Perfect Brightness"), and Qianlong ordered the restoration of the early gardens and the construction of the Summer Palace 頤和園 (Yihe yuan).

[5] The construction began in the twelfth century during the Jin dynasty when Emperor Zhangzong 金章宗 (1168–1208) built mountain retreats and sponsored new monasteries, known as "Eight Grand Compounds of Water," which became the basis for the subsequent constructions in the Yuan and Ming dynasties. These compounds are Shengshui yuan 圣水院 (today Huangpu yuan 黄浦院) and Jinshui yuan 金水院 (today Jinxian'an 金仙庵). The other two Compounds are Shuangshui yuan 双水院 (today Xiangpanyuan 香盤院) and Lingshuiyuan 灵水院 (today Qiyin si 棲隱寺) located respectively in Shijingshan 石景山 and Mentougou 門頭溝. See Miao Jing'e 苗景娥, Jing Ai 景愛, "Jin Zhangzong xishan bada shuiyuan kao shang" 金章宗西山八大水院考上, *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋 no. 4 (2010): 28–34; "Jin Zhangzong xishan bada shuiyuan kao xia" 金章宗西山八大水院考下, *Wenwu chunqiu* no. 5 (2010): 21–27. By the time of the Wanli reign (1573–1620), West Mountains and Mount Fang (Fangshan 房 山) had been transformed into a "Buddhist Land" through continuous construction and renovation. Secluded in the mountains, the three grand temples—Xiangshansi 香山寺, Biyunsi 碧云寺, and Wofosi 卧佛寺—were the most popular tourist sites in the metropolitan region of Beijing. Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, 258–67. For Chinese scholarship, see He Xiaorong 何孝榮, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan yanjiu* 明代北京佛教寺院研究 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2007).

The southwestern and the northern parts of the city, by contrast—open areas that were arid and barren—preserved the harsher image of the northern frontier. Along the south city wall, the desert expanded and encroached upon the farmland. The turbulent Hun ("muddy") River, better known as the Lugou River, flowed from the Loess Plateau, carrying tons of sand and mud and bringing frequent floods to local peasants.[6] In the north of the walled city, defensive structures, such as fortresses, watchtowers, and barrier walls—known collectively today as the Great Wall—stood guard against invasion from the northern nomads.[7]

In his editorial remarks, Yu Yizheng briefly discusses the difference between *A Sketch* and other landscape literature on Beijing.

> The travel writings of the famous masters were fashioned to illuminate the mountains and waterways. The most important sentences were written occasionally under some obscure inspiration. When time passed by, the allure [of the text] changed accordingly; different people may have different understandings. Although there are many magnificent pieces, we don't follow their accounts, or include them in this book.
>
> 名公遊記，為光山澤。要其命筆，則一日偶然之玄對，歲月先後，致人人殊。雖甚宏篇，不仍不載。[8]

Yu Yizheng stresses the originality of the text by presenting *A Sketch* as the authors' own ingenious creation, instead of a copy or adaptation of early travelogues (*youji*, 遊記). However, a close examination reveals that travel writings on Beijing from the mid-fifteenth to the early-seventeenth century constituted primary sources for Liu Tong, as they provided not only the historical knowledge of various places and cultural knowledge of well-known figures, but also

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[6] In the Sui dynasty, the river was called Sanggan 桑乾河; in the Yuan and Ming, the Hun River, or Lugou River. It was also called "Muddy River" 渾河, and in the early Qing, the Emperor renamed it Yongding River 永定河 (the river of "permanent security").

[7] For an introduction to the defense system of Beijing, see Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*, 72–164.

[8] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 7.

such literary devices as the language, style, and expressionist techniques that could be used to delineate the scenic spectacles.

This section examines three groups of writers who contributed to the literary heritage of Beijing: Li Dongyang 李東陽 (1447–1516) as the representative of the early generation, Wang Heng 王衡 (1562–1609) as the transitional figure anticipating the expressionist trend in landscape writing, and the three Yuan brothers from the Gongan school, headed by Yuan Hongdao, whose landscape essays critically influenced *A Sketch*.[9] Among all travel writings, one noticeable phenomenon is the gradual emergence of the so-called "northerness" of the landscape—first the topographical and climatic features, and later the social and cultural features—which through the vehicle of textual representation, distinguished the northern capital from other famous cities in Jiangnan. Along with the literary construction of the northern landscape, the author's personal voice was gradually intensified. The subjective reaction to landscape developed from straightforward commentary to sophisticated, introspective reflection. The presence of northern scenery and the author's changing perceptions of such scenery became critical venues to accommodate Liu Tong's later observation of and reflection on Beijing's scenic sites.

From the mid-sixteenth century on, one series of books, described as "records of famous mountains" (*mingshan ji*, 名山記), collected literati travel writings and widely circulated in the book market. As an admixture of the imagination of the imperial spatial order, the passion for landscape literature, and the pursuit of commercial interest, these works were also used by Liu

[9] For studies on the Gongan school, including the literary style, the influence on other authors, and the criticism that it received, see Chih-p'ing Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*; and Jonathan Chaves, *Pilgrim of the Clouds: Poems and Essays by Yüan Hung-tao and his brothers* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978).

Tong as reference material.[10] In the early Ming, there was not much travel writing about Beijing when compared with the sightseeing accounts of Jiangnan. Up to the mid-sixteenth century, individual writings on the landscape of Beijing were largely confined to high-ranking officials who worked at court.[11] One of the primary objectives of these works was to provide official sightseers with geographical and historical knowledge of the metropolitan region. Travel accounts delineated the landscape not so much from an aesthetical standpoint as from an empirical and academic one in pursuit of an accurate record of the landscape based on what could be found in situ.

In "A Trip to the West Mountains" (Youxishan ji, 游西山記), Li Dongyang set the narrative interests mainly in the pragmatic presentation of factual information, such as that concerning the distances between various temples, the dates of their constructions, and the anecdotes learned from local folk.[12] Li Dongyang often uses three or four sentences to succinctly describe one site without extended descriptions of the scenery. To introduce West Lake (today,

[10] For an introduction to the publication of literary collections on famous mountains from the sixteenth century onward, see Li-Tsui Flora Fu, *Framing Famous Mountains, Grand Tour and Mingshan Paintings in Sixteenth-century China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2009), 51–82. I think Liu Tong used these books as reference, because most of the early travelogues on Beijing that were adapted in *A Sketch* could be found in the *Records of Famous Mountains*, specifically the edition published by He Tang in 1565.

[11] Landscape essays on Beijing composed before the mid-sixteenth century were first selected and collected in He Tang's 何鏜 (*jinshi* 1547) *Gujin you mingshanji* 古今游名山記 (1565). According to He Tang, scholar officials who contributed landscape writings include Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 (1365–1444), Qian Xili 錢習禮 (*jinshi* 1409), Zhou Chen 周忱 (1381–1453), Gao Gu 高穀 (1391–1460), Wang Zhi 王直 (1379–1462), Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1421–1495), Ni Yue 倪岳 (1444–1501), Zhang Sheng 張昇 (*jinshi* 1469), Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 (1446–1499), Li Dongyang 李東陽 (1447–1516), Qiao Yu 喬宇(1464–1531), Du Mu 都穆 (1459–1525), Chen Yi 陳沂 (1473–1532), and Lu Yi 陸釴 (1495–1534). See He Tang, *Gujin you mingshanji*, in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, shibu*, vol. 250 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1996), 351–73.

[12] Li Dongyang, "Youxishan ji" 游西山記, *Li Dongyang ji* 李東陽集 vol. 2 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1984), 132–33.

Kunming Lake in the Summer Palace), rather than elaborating how attractive the scenery looks, he only writes a simplistic description that reads, "Gigantic waves leap on the east; dark forests spread over the south" (洪波衍其東, 幽林出其南).[13] Noticeably, the writer's personal voice usually focuses on philosophical or political topics, while the outpouring of emotion or the expression of individual preferences is always held in restraint. To conclude the essay, Li Dongyang presents the reader with a philosophical reflection on how the perfection of West Mountains demonstrate the ideal skills of the "Creator" (zaowuzhe, 造物者).[14] Although fully refreshed by the beautiful scenery, he also shows concern about sightseeing and reflects on whether such pleasure might corrupt a scholar's personal integrity.[15]

From the mid-sixteenth century on, along with the popularity of an "obsession with landscape" (*youpi*, 游癖), the fondness for sightseeing was commonly shared among literati, and the fashion of travel flourished.[16] Around the same time, the writer's voice in travel writings on Beijing began to be individualized. Speaking in the tone of a connoisseur, writers expounded eloquently on what scenery in Beijing looked deceptively "southern" and how to appreciate the scenes in order to acquire the most pleasure. When the beauty of southeast provinces were widely recognized and admired, writers presented Beijing's environs in a "southern" descriptive format.[17] The word "Jiangnan" 江南 turns out to have been a significant trope in narrative

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[13] Li Dongyang, "Youxishan ji," 132.

[14] The writer's use of sightseeing to comprehend the totality of nature is a common theme from the travel writings of the Song dynasty, see Richard Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 45–48.

[15] Li Dongyang, "Youxishan ji," 133.

[16] The term *youpi* appears quite early in Du Mu 都穆 (1459–1525), *Youmingshna ji* 游名山記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 3. For a discussion on Du Mu and the development of the concept of *pi* in landscape writing, see Hargett, *Jade Mountains and Cinnabar Pools*, 136.

[17] The earliest piece that I found comparing the scenery of Beijing to that of Jiangnan is Gao Gu's 高穀 (1391–1460) "A Trip to the West Mountain" 游西山記. However, the writer did

around which descriptions of scenery were developed, and authors' emotional reactions to Beijing were constantly framed within their memories of Jiangnan.

Such was the case with Wang Heng, a scholar from Taicang, Jiangsu, living in Beijing around 1587,[18] who displayed an intricate use of the southern descriptive format in his "A Trip to Mount Fragrance" (You Xiangshan ji 游香山記).[19] To record an early-summer excursion to West Lake, Wang Heng relates:

> At that moment, lotus was blossoming. Slender and gorgeous, [they] spread [in the lake and covered areas of water] deep and shallow. Those [flowers] standing upright in water resembled curled-up hair coils; those drooping resembled bashful girls [bending their heads]. Sprouts of water bamboo and flowers of caltrop decorated [the lotus] with hues of green and yellow. All of a sudden, "tendrils and shells"[20] are topsy-turvy. In command of one hundred kinds of assorted fragrances, the pleasing breeze arrived. In a hurry, I whipped my donkey and [rode against the breeze] to embrace the fabulous scent. But in a short moment, it disappeared. Ruzheng burst out laughing and said, "Aha, doesn't it resemble the springtime of our Jiangnan—when orioles [sing among] flowers, vegetables, and the farmlands?" I laughed out loud and finished a large cup of wine.

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not fully explicate the scenic features of the place and his use of the "south" is very simple. Gao Gu's writing reads, "Tracing along the creek, [the water surface] was set off by thriving woods. Suddenly, we found ourselves in Jiangnan" (沿溪行，林木掩映，恍然如入江南). Gao Gu, "You xishanji," in He Tang, *Gujin you mingshan ji*, 360.

[18] A native of Taicang in Suzhou, Jiangsu, Wang Heng is the son of the chief grand secretary Wang Xijue 王錫爵 (1534–1614) and father of the early-Qing painter Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680). Wang Heng was also the disciple of the prominent scholar Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–1609), who was the most important figure of the Seven Later Masters (*hou qizi* 後七子) who significantly influenced poetry in the first half of the Wanli period (1573–1620). Wang Heng also maintained long-term friendships with Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558–1639) and Tu Long 屠隆 (1543–1605), who were famous publishers and essayists of the day. Wang Heng was famous for writing *zaju* drama, and his poetry and prose are collected in *Goushan ji* 緱山集.

[19] Other examples of the southern descriptive format could be seen in Li Liufang 李流芳 (1575–1629), "You Xishan xiaoji" 游西山小記, *Li Liufang ji* 李流芳集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2012), 176; and Shen Shouzheng 沈守正 (1572–1623), "You Xiangshan Biyun ersi ji" 游香山碧雲二寺記, *Mingshan shenggaiji* 名山盛槩記 (Waseda University Library, c.1633), 3.1a–3b.

[20] It is unclear what *xujia* means in this sentence. *Xujia* literally means "tendrils and shells." It might be a synecdoche for some sort of turtle, or a metaphor for the lotus flower. *Xu* refers to the threadlike filaments of the lotus and *jia* the budding flower in a tear-drop with pointy tip and tightly packed petals.

時荷花已開，甚纖縟，紛敷深淺。在水植者如翹髻，偃者如羞妝，葵芽菱花重以青黃相間。乍而鬚甲顛倒，好風將百和香來，余急披鞍迎之，咄嗟間未得其似。汝增忽笑曰：“嘻，何乃似我江南三月天，鶯花菜麥田中耶？”余大笑，浮一大白。[21]

The frequent shift of scenes found in Li Dongyang's early writing has disappeared. Instead, Wang Heng presents an extended description of the scenery, where he stands at a fixed point and elaborates on the physical quality of the lotus, including the color, shape, texture, and movement. In the quoted passage, imagistic similes—such as "curled chignon" and "bashful girls"—are employed to specify varied postures of blossoms. Assorted colors and scents, along with the touch of the spring breeze, create a unified experience that incorporates multiple senses. More noteworthy, the writer presents himself in the scene: he whipped the donkey, embraced the refreshing breeze, and made a toast to celebrate the scene. The writer was portraying himself as a perceptive connoisseur of the landscape. To establish further connections between the viewer and the site, Wang Heng used his knowledge of the southern scenery to evaluate what he observed in Beijing, and shared with the reader an imaginary verbal reconstruction of Beijing's West Lake, to make it resemble that in Hangzhou.[22] He concludes the account with a wishful saying that is fully charged with emotion: "I would love to spend the rest of my life in this place" (吾老此可矣)![23]

The skillful use of language and the flow of personal feelings in Wang Heng's work anticipated the later stylistic innovations that would appear in Yuan Hongdao's work. Venerated

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[21] Wang Heng, "You Xiangshan ji," in *Goushan xiansheng ji* 緱山先生集 (Harvard University Library, c.1617), *juan* 10, 8b–9a.

[22] Wang Heng, "Youxiangshan ji," 11a–11b. the allure of West Mountains resembles that of the West Lake at Hangzhou; although the arrangement of sites in Beijing is not as exquisite as Hangzhou, sometimes trees and flowers here are more luxuriant and thriving" (大約西山之勝仿佛武林之西湖，逶迤不如，而蒨潤或過之).

[23] Ibid.

as one of the most prominent essayists in late imperial China, Yuan Hongdao played a vital role in altering the direction of late-Ming literary culture—from archaistic and orthodox tradition to a more individualistic and expressive trend.[24] His work lent great force to the literary construction of Beijing's landscape. In the rest of this section, we examine the Yuan brothers' literary activities in the capital and their landscape essays composed between 1589 and 1600. While Yuan Hongdao invented a more flexible and relaxed language form in prose, new components appeared in travel writings on Beijing. First, a distinct northern feature—the snowy winters, the windy springs, the crude sandstorms that regularly frequented the city—was fully elaborated. Second, the author's unpleasant experience was recorded, and thus his voice—in most cases complaining about the hardship and reflecting on the meaning of life—came to the fore of the narrative while describing the scenic sites. Yuan Hongdao and his brothers' portrayal of Beijing generated a significant literary heritage, which was later consulted and developed by Liu Tong.

In 1598, the three Yuan brothers found themselves together in Beijing. In February, Yuan Hongdao, the middle brother, left his official posting in Suzhou and arrived in the capital; two months later, he was appointed lecturer at the Provincial Academy of Shuntian. In October of the same year, the youngest brother Zhongdao initiated his political career as an imperial student. Zongdao, the eldest of the three, was already in the capital working as lecture to the prince and felt thrilled about this family reunion.[25] Upon his arrival, Yuan Hongdao immediately established the Grape Society 葡桃社, whose core members, including Tao Wangling 陶望齡 (1562–1609),

[24] For English scholarship discussing this transformation, see Chin-p'ing Chou, "The Poetry and Poetic Theory of Yuan Hung-tao," *The Tsing Hua Journey of Chinese Studies* vol.15 (1983): 113–42. Tina Lu, "The Literary Culture of the Late Ming," in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, edited by Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 83–86.

[25] See Shen Weifan 沈維藩, "Yuan Hongdao nianpu" 袁宏道年譜, *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu jikan* 中國文學研究集刊 no. 1 (1999): 146–352; here 251–52.

Huang Hui 黃輝 (1554–1612), and Jiang Yingke 江盈科 (1556–1605), hosted regular drinking banquets and poetry competitions based in Chongguo Monastery 崇国寺, organized frequent excursions to the surrounding mountains, and composed a great number of poems and essays during society meetings.[26]

The sojourn in Beijing was a critical period for the development of the Gongan school. Yuan Hongdao finished four important works and proposed theoretical principles that fundamentally promoted individualist expressions in the writing of prose and poetry.[27] These theoretical discussions, whose practical application was displayed in the landscape essays composed around 1599 (and which help us approach Yuan Hongdao's literary style), cast far-reaching influence on prose writings in the subsequent seventeenth century.[28] In a letter to his brother-in-law Li Yuanshan, Yuan Hongdao relates his perception of literary ingenuity:

> There is no fixed procedure to write original and surprising essays. As long as one can express what others cannot and make the rules, syntax, wording, and rhyme, naturally flow out from his own bosom, his writing will be truly original and surprising.

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[26] Jonathan Chaves, "The Panoply of Images: A Reconsideration of the Literary Theory of the Kung-an School," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, ed. Susan Bush and Christian Murch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 341.

[27] The four works include one monograph on Pure Land Buddhist thought, *Xifang helun* 西方合論 (1598), a study of *Zhuangzi* titled *Guangzhuang* 廣莊 (finished in the winter of 1598), the connoisseur manual on flower arrangement titled *Pingshi* 瓶史 (finished in the early spring of 1599), and an anthology of poetry and prose titled *Pinghuazhai ji* 瓶花齋集. See Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, 74–84. Charles Jones, "Yuan Hongdao and the Xifang helun: Pure Land Theology in the Late Ming Dynasty," in *Path of No Path: Contemporary Studies in Pure Land Buddhism Honoring Roger Corless*, ed. by Richard K. Payne (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 89–126.

[28] Yuan Hongdao frequently exchanged letters with friends, stressing the principles of prose and poetry writing. For instance, see "Da Li Yuanshan" 答李元善 (1599), 763; "Da Mei Kesheng" 答梅客生 (1599), 766; "Da Tao Shikui (Tao Wangling)" 答陶石簣 (1599), 779; and "Da Tao Shikui," 791, all in *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981). For a discussion on the maturation of Yuan's theory in Beijing, see Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, 74–84; and Shen Weifan, "Yuan Hongdao nianpu," 261–63.

文章新奇，無定格式。只要發人所不能發，句法、字法、調法，一一從自己胸中流出，此真新奇也。[29]

In other words, although literary composition should follow "models" (*fa*), an excessive reliance on imitation is useless in affective writing. The advocation for innovation suggests the correlation between the writer's individual personality and literary style, so one should develop one's own models of syntax (*jufa* 句法), wording (*zifa* 字法), and rhyme (*diaofa* 調法). Moreover, literary tropes, especially allusions used by early writers, should be abandoned; in their stead, a writer should have the courage and confidence to "overturn the old ruts, and let the text derive from one's own hands and eyes" (盡翻窠臼, 自出手眼).[30] Yuan Hongdao stressed the faithful expression (*zhen* 真) of the writer's immediate response and promoted the application of unaffected poetic images in prose.[31]

The Yuan brothers projected their sentimental reactions to the natural environment and actively expressed their thoughts and emotions through the accounts of travel. In the last decade of the sixteenth century, the critical transformation in the depiction of the northern scenery of Beijing appears. The descriptions of northerness in earlier writings are general and brief. For instance, in a 1423 travelogue, Yang Shiqi relates, "The deep winter is extremely cold. Confronting winds and sands, eyelids can barely open. And we cannot see beyond tens of steps" (隆冬盛寒，風沙睖目，數十步外無所見).[32] Yet in the Yuan brothers' works, the interaction

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[29] Yuan Hongdao, "Da Li Yuanshan shu" 答李元善書 (1599), in *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 786.

[30] In a letter to Feng Qi 馮琦 (1558–1603), the current vice minister of the Ministry of Rites, Yuan Hongdao uses this sentence to praise Xu Wei's 徐渭 (1521–1593) poems that he occasionally acquired. Yuan Hongdao, "Feng shilang zuozhu" 馮侍郎座主 (1599), *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 769.

[31] For an introduction to the literary theory of Yuan Hongdao and the Gongan school, particularly the terms *fa* and *zhen*, see Chaves, "The Panoply of Images," 341–64.

[32] Yang Shiqi, "Jiaoyou ji"郊遊記, in He Tang, *Gujin you mingshanji*, 357.

with the northern landscape functions as a literary device, framing the structure of narrative, modifying the descriptive language, and staging lyrical moments.

The Yuan brothers were fascinated with seasonal transitions when unexpected weather changes in the city created dramatic spectacles and multisensorial experiences. In a letter to his friend Mei Guozhen 梅國楨 (1542–1605), Yuan Hongdao describes a freezing wintery scene in a straightforward yet lively way:

> On the Eve of the Festival of Flower Fairies, the moon was extraordinarily bright. Freezing wind pricked our eyes. With my younger brother I strolled along the road to Dongzhi [Gate]. My urge to enjoy [the wintery scenery] could not be checked, so we walked from Bei'an Gate to the Temple of Medicine God to appreciate the imperial guarding river. At that time, the ice on the surface had not melted. Gazing afar everything was misty silver. Cold light polished the moon, and the freezing air stung to the bone. We arrived at Chongguo Monastery, yet nobody was there. The tinkling of wind-chimes responded back and forth with the barks of dogs. Inscribed tablets over doors and ancient steles could be read clearly. We clapped our hands but the night crow in the trees was not startled. We threw a stone, but it did not flutter. We wondered if the bird was frozen stiff. All of a sudden, a strong wind roared along the roof. Dark sands converged from all directions. We covered our faces and quickly ran away, grit grinding between our teeth. Alas, we suffered a hundred times more than the short-lived pleasure we received!
>
> 花朝之夕，月甚明，寒風割目，與舍弟閑步東直道上，興不可遏，遂由北安門至藥王廟，觀御河水。時冰皮未解，一望浩白，冷光與月相磨，寒氣酸骨。趨至崇國寺，寂無一人，風鈴之聲，與猧吠相應答。殿上題額及古碑字，了了可讀。樹上寒鴉，拍之不驚，以礫投之，亦不起，疑其僵也。忽大風吼簷，陰沙四集，擁面疾趨，齒牙澀澀有聲，為樂未幾，苦已百倍。[33]

The writer, born and raised on the banks of the Yangtze River, found an unfamiliar side of nature on this night in Beijing. He found strong winds, chilly air, and clear skies to be new subjects that deserved illustration, and he told of his perceptions in original, fresh, and lively words. The coldness of the wintery night is intensified by the piercing wind. Yuan Hongdao uses the word "smart/sting" (*suan*, 酸) to convey the sharpness and the piercing power of wind, "to prick/cut"

[33] Yuan Hongdao, "Da Mei kesheng"答梅客生, *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 766.

(*ge*, 割) for the stinging feeling of skin, and "to polish/grind" (*mo*, 磨) to describe the extremely clear contours of the moon as seen in the clear heaven. In contrast to the south, where misty and humid air easily blur nocturnal vision, everything is brilliantly clear in this small yard, even the characters inscribed on an ancient stele and a black crow sitting in the dark. Yuan Hongdao presents their midnight stroll in a lively way full of twists and turns. Humans clap hands (*pai*, 拍), the bird remains unsurprised (*bujing*, 不惊); they throw stones (*tou*, 投), the bird remains still (*buqi*, 不起); then they feel uneasy (*yi*, 疑), but the hesitation is suddenly interrupted (*huer*, 忽而) by a wild wind. Sand is blown into their mouths; the sightseeing is forced to end as the visitors have to flee, and the enjoyment turns out to have been short lived.

The presentation of sincere feelings underlies the fundamental style of Yuan Hongdao's landscape essays. Scholars have provided insightful readings on his famous pieces, such as "A Trip to the Brimming Well" (Manjing youji, 滿井遊記), composed for one scenic site in Beijing, to elaborate his rhetorical skills in presenting pleasant moments of sightseeing.[34] Yet after examining the rest of the essays written in the same period, it is clear that pleasure seeking was only one of his concerns; bitter suffering became another. To write about the harsh weather and the complaints about unpleasant experiences of sightseeing enabled the writer to vent his frustration with his own career. Within only a few month of his arrival at Beijing in 1598, Yuan Hongdao encountered unexplained financial difficulties; with poverty troubling his life in the capital, he could no longer maintain his previous way of life. [35] Meanwhile, factional controversies between his friend Huang Hui and the current grand secretary, Shen Yiguan 沈一

[34] For instance, Hargett, *Jade Mountains and* Cinnabar *Pools*, 149–51.

[35] Yuan Hongdao, "Da Fan Guangfu shuibu" 答范光父水部, *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 744.

貫 (1531–1617), brought trouble to the Grape Society, which jeopardized Yuan Hongdao's and Yuan Zhongdao's political advancement.[36] At the end of the letter that we just examined, Yuan Hongdao complains to his friend: "This is what spring is like in the capital, and you can understand how disappointed a poor official like me would feel" (京師之春如此，窮官之興可知也).[37] The tone of this essay is playful, yet the atmosphere is gloomy. The discrepancy between the lively style and the author's frustration makes the expressive quality of Yuan Hongdao's work all the more poignant.

Literary historians have suggested that the Yuan brothers displayed special attention to their psychological states in the works that they composed in Beijing.[38] I propose that the external observation of and the physical engagement with the landscape stimulated such an introspective turn toward self-examination. For instance, in "A Trip to the Sorghum Bridge," Yuan Zhongdao records a spring excursion to West Lake in Beijing. The first half of the essay recalls the unpleasant encounter with the sandstorm and the second half shifts to grumbling about the hardship of living in the north.[39]

No direct evidence can explain why the northern quality of Beijing would be suddenly delineated in the Yuan brothers' writings, as it is impossible that significant changes in

[36] Shen Weifan, "Yuan Hongdao nianpu," 265–66. Yuan Hongdao did not clarify what the controversy was, but in his letter to family, he complained about political corruption. Yuan Hongdao, "Jiao Ruohou zuozhu" 焦弱侯座主, *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 773. Shen Defe 沈德符 (1578–1642) suggests that Shen Yiguan accused Huang Hui and Yuan Hongdao of social intercourse with the Chan monk Zibai, who was teaching "heterodox thoughts" among literati. See the entry "Zibai huoben" 紫柏禍本 in *Wanli yehuobian*, 690–91. Charles Jones proposes that Yuan Hongdao's unpleasant experience in the capital might stimulate him to convert his religious belief to Pure Land Buddhism. See Jones, "Yuan Hongdao and *Xifang helun*," 96–100.

[37] Yuan Hongdao, "Da Mei kesheng," *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 766.

[38] Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, 108–9.

[39] Yuan Zhongdao, *Kexuezhai ji* 珂雪齋集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1989), 534–35.

geographic or climatic conditions had occurred over such a short period as the Ming dynasty. I suggest that it is the stylistic emancipation of text that enables a full-fledged representation of the author's living environment. From the mid-fifteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century, prose was transformed from "rigid and heavy" (*banzhong*, 板重) to "light and cunning" (*qingqiao,* 輕巧), and the pursuit of writing from "affectation" (*fenshi,* 粉飾) to "originality" (*bense,* 本色).[40] Accordingly, the language used to express the landscape experience also changed. The formal restrictions of composition—to use Yuan Hongdao's words, on the levels of "syntax, wording, and rhyme"—largely disappeared. In stark contrast to Li Dongyang and Wang Heng, Yuan Hongdao constructed a faithful, imperfect, and more realistic landscape and presented immediate, individual responses to the surroundings.

Travel writing prior to the seventeenth century, as textual precursors of Liu Tong's work, has already staked out the sites that had significant reputations (such as West Lake and Sorghum Bridge) and that therefore needed to be transmitted to later readers. At the same time, they accumulated information about these places that built on the personal remarks of previous literati travelers. Most importantly, they provided available models of language, style, and expressionist techniques to the accounts of Beijing's landscape. As we will see in the next section, the

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[40] Ji Yun 紀昀 et al., ed. *Sikuquanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 1618. In the history of Ming and Qing literature, the Archaistic school (*fugu pai* 復古派) cast overwhelming influence on prose and poetry before the end of the sixteenth century. The archaistic movement in literature of the Ming dynasty can be divided into two stages. In the late fifteenth century, Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1472–1529) and He Jingming 何景明 (1483–1521) initiated the first stage. In the mid-sixteenth century, Wang Shizhen and Li Panlong 李攀龍 (1514–1570) led the second stage. For an introduction to the Archaistic school, see Liao Kebin, 廖可斌, *Mingdai wenxue fugu yundong yanjiu* 明代文學復古運動研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2008). For English scholarship on Li Mengyang and He Jingming, see Chang Woei Ong, *Li Mengyang, the North-South Divide, and Literati Learning in Ming China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). Daniel Bryant, *The Great Recreation: Ho Ching-ming (1483–1521) and His World* (Boston: Brill, 2008).

particular attention paid in these works to the northern feature of the landscape and the writers' passion for inserting personal ideas that formulated an individualized perception deeply affected the ways in which Liu Tong observed Beijing in the early 1630s.

3.2 The Innovation of the Literary Style

The writing of the northern landscape in *A Sketch* stored early scholars' involvement with scenic sites, including their past sightseeing activities and the accounts of those occasions. Noticeably, Liu Tong did not merely adapt the Yuan brothers' travelogues into *A Sketch*. He also launched linguistic experimentation that built upon their expressionistic techniques in order to "versify" the language of prose with an unprecedented degree of semantic obscurity and fragmentation. In *A Sketch*, there are at least six essays adapted from the Yuan brothers' landscape writings.[41] It also includes many poems written by the Yuan brothers and their friends and relates their anecdotes in the introduction of scenic sites.[42] Both Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng had close connections with the Yuan family,[43] and had probably received some of the Yuan

[41] In a short essay introducing *Dijing jingwulüe*, the Chinese scholar Luan Baoqun briefly mentioned that Liu Tong referred (*jiejian* 借鑒) to the Yuan brothers' work in the essays "Manjing," "Zhongfeng an," and "Fayunsi." I discovered additional similar passages between *A Sketch* and the previous landscape essays. In *A Sketch*, "Jile si" 極樂寺 (ch.5) is adapted from Yuan Zongdao's "Travel to Jile Temple" 極樂寺記游; "Manjing" 滿井 (ch.1) from Yuan Hongdao's "Record of Travel to Manjing" 滿井遊記; "Gongdesi" 功德寺 (ch.7), "Yuquan shan" 玉泉山 (ch.7), "Wofo si" 臥佛寺 (ch.6), and "Zhongfeng an" 中峰庵 (ch.6) from Yuan Zhongdao's "Ten Records of the Western Mountains" 西山十記. "Tomb of Li Zhuowu" 李卓吾墓 (ch.8) is rewritten from Yuan Zhongdao's "Biography of Li Zhuowu" 李卓吾傳.

[42] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 208. An anecdote about Huang Hui and a miraculous Buddhist spider is recorded in the essay "Cihuisi" 慈慧寺 from chapter five.

[43] Liu and Yu's mutual friend, Tan Yuanchun, befriended Yuan Hongdao's son, Yuan Shuzhi 袁述之, and frequently exchanged literary manuscripts with the Yuan family. Zhou Qun, *Yuan Hongdao pingzhuan*, 376–78.

brothers' manuscripts to include in *A Sketch*, since there are several poems in the book whose characters vary slightly from the "standardized" versions in individual anthologies.[44]

Three essays in *A Sketch* display a narrative structure identical to that found in the Yuan brothers' travelogues.[45] For instance, the *Sketch* essay "Jile Temple" (Jile si 極樂寺; see appendix 2.1a) not only has the same temporal and spatial framework as Yuan Zongdao's "A Trip to Jile Temple" (*Jilesi jiyou* 極樂寺記游; see appendix 2.1b), but also restages the very moment when Yuan Zongdao appreciated the beautiful scenery with friends on a late-spring day in 1598.[46] Replacing Yuan Zongdao with an anonymous narrator, Liu Tong's narrative follows the identical path described in the travelogue: heading northwest after exiting the Xizhi Gate, arriving at the Sorghum Bridge where the West Lake is located, walking along the dam or riverside, and finally reaching their destination. To conclude the essay "Jile Temple," Liu Tong transcribed Yuan Hongdao's comment on this site, which compared the West Lake of Beijing to that of Hangzhou. Such intertextual transference reveals Liu Tong's desire to retrace the Yuan brothers' steps temporally and spatially and to be connected to (or perhaps return to) the specific time at which the brothers visited this particular place.[47]

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[44] For instance, Yuan Zongdao's poem "Travel to the Sorghum Bridge in a late spring afternoon" (暮春游高梁橋即事) collected after the essay "Sorghum Bridge" in *A Sketch* is slightly different from the poem under same title that is collected in his anthology, *Baisuzhai leiji*. The two poems use identical rhymes, but the specific characters are different. *Dijing jingwulüe*, 192.

[45] They are "Jile si" 極樂寺, "Manjing" 滿井, and "Gongdesi" 功德寺.

[46] Yuan Zongdao, *Baisuzhai leiji* (Shanghai: Zazhi gongsi, 1935), 169. This gathering could also be corroborated by Yuan Hongdao's corresponding poem. See Yuan Hongdao, "A Trip to Sorghum Bridge in a Day of Late Spring with Huang Dajie, Cao Daxian, Huang Hui and Yuan Zongdao" (暮春同黃無淨、曹季和、黃昭制、家伯修遊高梁橋), *Pinghuazhai ji*, collected in *Yuan Hongdao ji jianjiao*, 590.

[47] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 287.

The late-Ming scholars of the Gongan and Jingling schools are traditionally regarded as promoting similar expressionistic styles that opposed the so-called archaistic approaches. Chih-p'ing Chou has pointed out that the Jingling writers, however, did not intend to become the heirs of the Gongan school. And indeed, Tan Yuanchun—another core member of the Jingling school and a close friend of Liu Tong's—once reproached the Yuan brothers for their "poetic absurdities and vulgar doggerel" and attempted to "redirect the expressive trends of the late Ming from colloquialism back to classicism."[48] The adaptation and transference of the Yuan brothers' essays in *A Sketch* reveals a sophisticated relation between the two generations.

Liu Tong refined the poetic tropes established in these early works, revised varied literary devices to enhance the descriptive and lyrical power of the prose language, and developed a new quality of prose that was identified as "the Jingling style." He extensively employed reduplicative words (*dieci* 疊詞, or *shuangshengci* 雙聲詞) from ancient poetry to present multisensory properties of one object, to form rhythms in the prose text, and to add an archaistic elegance to the landscape essay. He was also fond of highly imagistic descriptions that were composed of very brief and irregular sentences. This syntactic property broke down the cadence and created a convoluted reading effect. When the two techniques intertwined, a special kind of aesthetic quality was generated in the prose text that presents the reader with an unsettled reading experience.

Liu Tong's use of duplicative words generates an archaistic flavor, which makes the text resemble the ancient poetry of the Eastern Han (25–220) and Wei (220–265) periods.[49]

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[48] See Chih-p'ing Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, 113–20.

[49] For an introduction to the duplicative words in Chinese poetry, see Zhou Fagao 周法高, *Zhongguo gudai yufa: Gouci bian* 中國古代語法構詞編 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1959). Jonathan Smith, "Sound Symbolism in the Reduplicative

Originating in the *Classic of Poetry* (Shijing, 詩經) and fully matured in such Han-dynasty works as the *Nineteen Old Poems* (Gushi shijiushou, 古詩十九首), the synesthetic use of duplicative words in verse encapsulates sound, shape, color, texture, and even the direction of movement.[50] Liu Tong's use of this poetic device empowers his prose with an affective quality. In his account of a visit to the Temple of Reclining Buddha in Beijing, Yuan Zhongdao wrote the following paragraph to describe an aged teak tree:

> The tree has iron bark and twisted branches, with emerald leaves and distorted knobs. It hovers around the sun and lingers over the moon, camps in wind and rests in mist. Its frosty skin protrudes, bearing thousands of burls and tens of thousands of whorls. Angry roots burst out from the earth; they pile upon each other, bent and twisted. Knock on it, it makes the "ding-ding" sound of rock.
>
> 鐵幹褵枝，碧葉虯結；紆羲回月，屯風宿霧；霜皮突兀，千癭萬螺；怒根出土，磊塊詰曲。叩之，丁丁作石聲。[51]

In Liu Tong's essay on the same temple he rewrites Zhongdao's passage with an extravagant display of reduplicative words:

> Inside the monastery there is a teak tree. Its circumference is over nine feet. Scaly the tree bark, jagged the branches, voluminous the burl, twisting the roots. Lofty, nine flower bud; thick, seven canopies clustered; heavy, three fruits hang over. "Ding-ding" [the tree] tinkles when one knocks.
>
> 寺內即娑羅樹，大三圍，皮鱗鱗，枝槎槎，癭累累，根摶摶，花九房峨峨，葉七開蓬蓬，實三棱陀陀，叩之丁丁然。[52]

Vocabulary of the *Shijing,*" *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* no. 2 (November 2015): 258–85.

[50] On the use of duplicative words and its lyrical effect in *Shijing* and the Han poetry, see Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). This practice is also common in the poetic genres of lyrics 詞 and songs 曲, with irregular verse patterns under particular tune titles.

[51] Yuan Zhongdao, *Kexuezhai ji*, 538.

[52] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 260.

Zhongdao describes the solid and clawed texture of bark in metaphors like "iron" (*tie*, 鐵), "patterned-textile" (*li*, 褵), and "dragon" (*qiu*, 虯). However, without the repetition of these metaphors, Liu Tong's passage presents the material features—the hard, dried, and coarse texture—in the duplicative adjectives. These words not only specify the shape, volume, and appearances of different tree parts, but they also suggest a sense of movement. For instance, *linlin* 鱗鱗 uses the image of fish scales to represent the uneven texture; it also implies a movement that the exterior bark is peeling off while new material is growing inside. *E'e* 峨峨 represents the upward tendency of the flower bud's growth which resembles the elevation of a mountain into the sky; and *pengpeng* 蓬蓬 compares the luxuriant foliage to a chariot canopy extending outward. Moreover, the emergence of duplicative words in short sentences—here the repetition of one identical sound in trisyllabic or pentasyllabic sentences—creates a phonetic pattern, transforming the prose description into a text with rhymes. When reading the eight duplicative words in sequence aloud (*linlin*, *chacha*, *leilei*, *tuantuan*, *e'e*, *pengpeng*, *tuotuo*, *dingding*), the reader voices the sound of every part of the tree: the creaking of branches, the rustling of leaves, and the sound of opening when big flowers blossom.

Although the Gongan scholars had abandoned the use of literary allusions in prose, Liu Tong further avoided metaphors and similes and shifted the narrative to illustrating the transient moments of nature. For instance, in an account of a trip to the West Mountains, Yuan Zhongdao describes Jade Spring in this way in "A Trip to the Western Mountains":

> One could see rocks in the water, bright and clean. In vermilion and emerald [they] pile up, like golden sand spreading out on the ground and Seven Treasures adorning the place. [Waves] never stop swirling. Sun glitter sparkles, gleams, jumps, and flickers. Converged into a river, the water flows rapidly; [it is] deep and green, and limpid and clear. Every scale [of the swimming fish] could be seen clearly; every piece of *xing* plant and human hair could be calculated. Willow trees on the riversides caress the clear waves.

> 見石子磷磷，朱碧磊砢，如金沙布地，七寶粧施，蕩漾不停，閃爍晃耀。注於河，河水深碧泓渟，澄澈迅疾，潛鱗了然，荇髮可數。兩岸垂柳，帶拂清波。[53]

In the essay "Jade Spring Mountain" (Yuquan shan 玉泉山), which was adapted from Yuan Zhongdao's travelogue, Liu Tong portrays the limpid spring in a slightly different manner:

> The water is limpid and fresh. [When the water is] deep, color floats; [when the water becomes] tranquil, sun glitter sways. Stones [on the riverbed] are vermilion and emerald. Clear, the tiny bits of sand; In color of gold, they drift along. Waves and crests swirl around. Each visitor has one reflection [on the water surface]; each *xing* water plant has one shadow [on the riverbed]. A single thread of hair cannot be hidden [in the water]; nor a twig of the *xing* plant concealed. When water caresses the *xing* plant, it is like wind caressing willow. Each twig swings toward the east.
>
> 水澄以鮮，深而浮色，定而蕩光，數石朱碧，屑屑歷歷，漾沙金色，波波縈縈。一客一影，一荇一影，客無匿髮，荇無匿絲矣。水拂荇也，如風拂柳，條條皆東。[54]

This passage presents a succession of four-character lines, which produces a verse-like cadence in prose. Liu Tong expands Yuan's still-life description of the aquatic plant and the human hair.[55] Framed in parallel structures, the double-negation in *ke wuni fa, xing wuni si* 客無匿髮, 荇無匿絲 (underlined in quotation) stresses the clear contour of shadow and reflection, and in turn confirms the limpidness of the spring water. Liu Tong also indicates more interest in capturing the visual feature of natural objects shown in transient moments, such as swift shifts of light (*guang* 光), reflection (*se* 色), and shadow (*ying* 影). To convey the dazzling look of the swirling water, Liu Tong rejects Yuan Zhongdao's metaphor of the "Seven Treasures" and

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[53] Yuan Zhongdao, *Kexuezhai ji*, 536.

[54] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 296.

[55] It seems that literati of that period were particularly fond of the descriptions of water grass and human hair. For example, Yao Ximeng's 姚希孟 (1579–1636) account of an excursion to the West Mountain reads, "After several miles [one] arrives at the Jade Spring. The water is green as emerald. Every swimming fish could be counted. In the limpid water, one can see clearly [the reflections of] beard and hair, as well as the *xing* water plant and algae" (又数里至玉泉。一泓如碧，遊魚可數。澄澈處，可鑒鬚眉荇藻). Yao Ximeng, *Xuncang ji* 循滄集 (Qingbige edition, ca.1628–1644), *juan* 2, 8a–8b.

displays the scenery in non-figurative language. Reduplicative words *bobo yingying* 波波縈縈 evoke the movement of the rippling water, and *xiexie lili* 屑屑歷歷 suggest a natural distribution of numerous pebbles on the riverbed.

This kind of delicately constructed poetic imagery can be seen throughout *A Sketch*. Meanwhile, Liu Tong constantly designs irregular structures to break the parallel form, so as to challenge the reader's accustomed procedure of reading. The regulated sentence in the same number of characters, as seen in the previous quotation, serves to "heighten the effects of scenic imagery" and sometimes "the level of lyrical intensity."[56] However, the deliberate violation can create another aesthetic effect. Let us examine how Liu Tong portrays the seasonal permutation of willow trees in one of his most famous essays entitled "Villa of the White Stone" (Baishi Zhuang, 白石莊).[57] It reads:

> Spring, in pale yellow, [the tree] buds. In light green, [the willow leaves grow into the shape of] the eyebrow. [When the green becomes] darker, [the shape changes into] the eye. When spring turns old, catkins [occur and the tree becomes] white. In summer, when wind blows, the threads are endlessly long; when the sun rises, shadow thrives [under the canopy]. In autumn, foliage turns yellow and falls. Yet the dropped twigs creak. Yet frosted branches crack on the tree.
>
> 春，黃淺而芽，綠淺而眉，深而眼。春老，絮而白。夏，絲迢迢以風；陰隆隆以日。秋，葉黃而落，而墜條當當，而霜柯鳴於樹。[58]

[56] The regulated sentence in same number of characters is strongly reminiscent of the language in Yuan Jie's 元結 (719–772) travel writings. In his discussion of travel literature of the Tang dynasty (618–907), Hargett suggests that this language might be called a loose form of prose-poetry, which can "serve to heighten the effects of scenic imagery and even the level of lyrical intensity." I found this analysis useful in our reading of late-Ming landscape essays. See Hargett, *Jade Mountains and Cinnabar Pools*, 74–75.

[57] "Baishi zhuang" was frequently selected from *A Sketch* and collected in the prose anthologies published in the early modern and modern periods, such as Shi Zhecun 施蟄存, *Wan Ming shierjia xiaopin* 晚明十二家小品 (1935).

[58] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 197.

The description of willow leaves derives from the literary trope known as *liuyan* (Willow Eyes, 柳眼), which first appeared around the ninth century.[59] The delicately abbreviated expressions generate a series of isolated images. Without syntactical modification, the literal translation of the first sentence would be: "Spring, yellow pale, buds; green pale, eyebrows; dark, eyes. Spring old, catkins, white." So few characters are given that grammatically the sentence could be expanded in different ways. Two interpretations are equally plausible for the word *liuyan*: "the shape of the willow leaves grows into that of eyebrow, then that of eye," or "when the color changes, leaves first become the eyebrow and then the eye of the tree." The result is discontinuity and ambiguity.

Moreover, to accommodate these images, symmetry and regularity are deliberately violated on the syntactic level. For instance, in the first sentence, located at the same position of tetrasyllabic lines, *ya* (to sprout, 芽) and *mei* (eyebrow, 眉), respectively working as verb and noun, are from different word categories; in the following sentence, although the character *yan* belongs to the same category as *mei*, the sentence changes from tetrasyllabic to trisyllabic.

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[59] The word first appeared in Yuan Zhen's 元稹 pentasyllabic regulated-verse, "Shengchun" 生春: "Where is spring first born? Spring arises in the eyes of the willow" (何處春生早，春生柳眼中). *Liuyan* not only sketches the eye-shaped young leaves, but opens up the possibility of interpretation that the willow, here imagined as a living subject, is watching the spring through its leaf-shaped eyes. See *Yuan Zhen ji* 元稹集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 174. The willow is also animated in Li Shangyin 李商隱's poem, "The Second Day of February." It reads, "Mischievous, each whisker of flowers and eye of willows; affectionate, all violet butterflies and honey bees" (花須柳眼各無賴，紫蝶黃蜂俱有情). See Li Shangyin, "Eryue erri" 二月二日, *Li Shangyin shiji zhushu* 李商隱詩集註疏 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1985), 123. And when it comes to Li Yu's 李煜 song lyric, the willow eye is no longer a static image paralleling "flower whisker"; rather, it encodes spatial and temporal processes: "Wind returns to the small yard and makes the plants green. Willow eyes, [this is] where spring time arrives" (風廻小院庭蕪綠，柳眼春相續). See Li Yu, "Yumeiren" 虞美人, *Li Jing Li Yu ci* 李璟李煜詞 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1958), 55.

Inserted in varied positions within sentences, the conjunction *er* 而 occurs seven times and formulates a pattern linking the lines. The writer carefully arranges short sentences in asymmetric form and stresses the discontinuity in narrative flow.

When writing about place, Liu Tong certainly preferred this poetic style to others characterized by plain and straightforward descriptions, because of the provocative effects that could be generated among readers. As a result of applying poetic devices to prose, obscurity and discontinuity of the text punctuates the reading process with pauses. Lacking a plain or clear syntactic structure, the passage is difficult to digest, yet as long as the reader can work through the semantic obstacles, the jarring character becomes intriguing. This style of the Jingling school became particularly effective in enhancing the atmosphere of loneliness when describing ruinous and deserted scenery. Using these literary techniques, Liu Tong portrays the following scenes at Gongde Monastery near West Lake:

> A single gate survives whereas the rest of the buildings have been destroyed. Swallows nest among tiles, while storks [nest] on the roof ridge. "Coo—— Coo——," the mournful cry makes one feel sad. In the past, birds worked like a bell clock to announce the correct time every morning and evening.
>
> 寺，今一搭間地也，存者門耳。瓦壟燕麥，屋脊鸛巢，聲假假，餘悲生恐，在當年昏定曉報鐘時也。[60]

As human influence withdrew, nature encroached on the site:

> There are several ancient trees outside the gate. The circumference of each is about thirty to forty *wei*.[61] Roots pop up through the ground. People who suffer sunstroke can sit here [using the roots] as a small table, a stool, or a chair. From the frequent caresses of people, the upper surface of the roots has become smooth. The undersides are equally smooth, because insects and rats are [actively digging] holes underneath. Small anthills stand like giant mountains. We can never know how many ant kingdoms are accommodated here. [62]

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[60] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 291. For a complete translation of this essay, see appendix 2.2.

[61] One *wei* 圍 equals the length of two human arms, which is five to six feet. Here, Liu Tong exaggerated the circumference of the tree trunk.

[62] The phrase *yiguo*, the "ant country" 蟻國, refers to the classic Tang tale "An Account of the Governor of the Southern Branch" (Nanke taishou zhuan 南柯太守傳), in which an officer

> Ancient trunks scaffold the sun; old foliage rattles in the wind. Dwarf junipers are planted next to the ancient trees. Although they cast no shade, they help to enlarge the sound [of the wind].
>
> 門外二三古木，各三四十圍，根半肘土外。暍蔭者，坐差差，如几，如凳，如養和，滑其上膚及骨，蟲鼠穴其下，亦滑。垤壤巒如, 不知幾十國蟻。古幹支日，老葉鼓風，兩側偃柏，不成蔭蓋，亦助其響。[63]

Under the patronage of Emperor Xuande (r. 1426–1435) and Emperor Chenghua (r. 1468–1587), Gongde Monastery served the imperial family as a temporary traveling lodge and was one of the most prestigious temples in the capital. The monastery was also a popular tourist site among Beijing residents, and many scholars had given accounts of visiting this place.[64] In this essay, Liu Tong addresses Li Dongyang's travelogue, "A Trip to the Mountains," written in 1503, when the temple was still prosperous.[65] He then relates how a miraculous object—a large wooden ball—earned the temple great fame and brought in numerous donations. The heavy ball could move and jump dexterously and travel swiftly on the command of a monk named Ban'an. Upon hearing the fantastic feature of the ball, Emperor Xuande summoned Ban'an to court and bestowed an honorary title upon him; afterward, the monk founded Gongde Temple. By the early 1630s, however, very few traces of imperial splendor remained; the main buildings were destroyed, visitors had to rest on the tree roots, monks had to do farm work to earn a living, and the numinous ball was coated with rough red clay and stored in a small dilapidated house.[66] The

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makes a dream journey to a country of ants, and subsequently upon wakeup, reflects upon the illusory nature of fame, wealth, and fortune in human life. "An Account of the Governor of the Southern Branch"南柯太守傳, translated by William Nienhauser Jr., from *Tang Dynasty Tales: A Guided Reader* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2010), 131–88.

[63] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 291.

[64] For instance, Du Mu, "You jingshi xishanji" and Gao Gu, "You xishanji" in He Tang, *Gujin you mingshanji*, 354–55; 360. Yuan Zhongdao, "Xishan shiji" 西山十記, *Kexuezhai ji*, 535–41.

[65] Li Dongyang, "Shanxingji" 山行記, *Gujin you mingshanji*, 352–53;

[66] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 291.

only connection between Liu Tong and those earlier times were the giant trees in the courtyard, which thrived as vigorously as they had in the past, and the chirp of birds. Animals inhabited the place and made it their own.

Reading aloud the quoted passage, we are aware of a verse-like cadence. The repetitive use of *ru* 如, used to display a series of images to construct the simile, also forms a pattern among short sentences to create a phonetic effect. But such a pattern is soon deliberately broken. When describing actions of visitors and animals, longer sentences of six characters are inserted among shorter sentences of two or three characters. In the last few lines, when the narrative shifts to describing scenes of the courtyard, the sentence form changes again, to match the regulated quatrains. Such deployment of syntactical structure presents the reader with an unsettling reading experience and generates in the text an atmosphere of unease and desolation.

The case of Gongde Temple indicates how Liu Tong consulted the literature of the past and used a poetic style of prose to present what he observed in the current landscape. In doing so, historical and cultural knowledge about Beijing was preserved in a particular style that was developed from previous writing about this particular place. Thus, the cultural memory of the city that was formulated in *A Sketch* was not only stamped with the hallmark of the literati living in the 1630s, but was also a communal product of the scholar community in Beijing that was created and linked by text. Scholars in different generations contributed various components—information, language, and techniques related to representation and transmission—and they were all restaged in Liu Tong's work.

3.3 The Northern Landscape

By the early 1630s, the Ming empire was approaching what would be its last decade. Although derived from the pervasive travel culture that had been boosted by economic prosperity

in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Liu Tong's account of landscape clearly departs from the focus on leisure and pleasure that literati were accustomed to seek through travelling.[67] The last four chapters of *A Sketch* displays an alternative view of a Beijing entrapped in domestic and diplomatic crises. Chapters in *A Sketch* are organized according to a spatial logic so that as the narrative moves from the inner city to the peripheral mountains, the reader encounters more and more passages on the ruinous northern area, and the tranquil scenes that looked peaceful and deceptively "southern" gradually disappear. To the reader, the prosperity of Beijing acclaimed in the earlier chapters risks being revealed to be a total illusion.

This section examines how *A Sketch* captures the contemporary conditions of scenic sites and record as many traces of the past as possible. Liu Tong's search for traces (*fangji*, 訪跡) deep in canyons and high on peaks followed the conventional patterns of literati's exploration of landscape. However, what he observed and thought during these spatial movements demonstrate that the imperial glory of Beijing had been destabilized by desolation, barrenness, and peril. Thus, the individual voice of Liu Tong does not simply signal personal sensibilities of loss and nostalgia, but distinctively expresses his profound anxiety about the current conditions, which could potentially lead to a doomed future.

Throughout its eight chapters, *A Sketch* focuses intensely on ruinous sites. Within the area of the West Mountains, Liu Tong records nineteen places, most of which are Buddhist monasteries, which are completely or partly in ruins, or vanished altogether.[68] By contrast, *A*

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[67] For an introduction to the travel writing of recreational sightseeing in the late Ming, see Hargett, *Jade Mountains and Cinnabar Pools*, 145–51.

[68] Jile Temple 極樂寺 from the essay "Jile si;" Dajue Temple 大覺寺 from "Black Dragon Pond" 黑龍潭; The Ruined Guangquan Temple 廣泉廢寺 from "End of Waterway" 水盡頭; Yongshou Nunnery 永壽庵, Cuiyan Temple 翠岩寺, and Hongjiao Temple 弘教寺 from "Zhongfeng Nunnery"中峰庵; Monastery of Three Teachings 三教堂 from "Shrine in Honor of Master Yang"晏公祠; Lushi Temple 盧師寺 from "Mount of Master Lu"盧師山; Pingpo

Sketch records only eight temples and very few private gardens that are preserved in good condition.[69] For instance, the essays "Jile Monastery" and "Gongde Monastery" devote much of their narratives to describing temples that no longer exist, and Liu Tong carefully searched for poems written about these places and enlisted them to augment his prose descriptions.[70] In "Zhongfeng Nunnery" (Zhongfeng an, 中峰庵) and "Jade Spring Mountain," Liu Tong attempts to calculate accurately every desolated temple and map them out in the surrounding area, striving to trace what had been lost in the contemporary landscape. As a result, the text becomes an archive preserving information about ruined sites and trying to rescue them from being forgotten. For instance, the ending paragraph in the essay "Jade Spring Mountain" reads:

> A stone bridge crosses the creek. One pavilion on the east side of the lake is called "Lakeview." This is where Emperor Xuande stopped over during his journey. Nowadays, it is collapsed. What remains is a villa of the Shi family in the south part of this ruined temple site. Further south there used to be two Temples of Flower Adornment. In 1550, during the invasion of the northern barbarians, the temples were destroyed. Only two caves survived, named "Flower Adornment" and "Seven Truths." On the wall of one cave is inscribed a poem from a person of the Yuan under the surname Yelü. People say this might be Yelü Chucai, but this is unwarranted.[71] Further south, there is a villa for the family of imperial consort Zhou.[72] It just became prosperous recently. … Further north was a monastery named the "Golden Mountain." Now damaged and desolate, it has not been completely demolished. …Once there was a palace called "Hibiscus" on the mountain, which was the temporary palace for Emperor Zhangzong of the Jin dynasty. A temple named "Glorious Cultivation" was constructed by Kublai Khan. The records of these places are extant; however, we could no longer trace the sites.

Temple 平坡寺 from "Gongde Monastery" 功德寺; Lakeview Pavilion 望湖亭, the Upper Huayan Temple 上華嚴寺, the Lower Huayan Temple 下華嚴寺, Temple of Beijinshan 北金山寺, Hibiscus Hall 芙蓉殿, and Zhaohua Temple 昭化寺 from "Spring Jade Mountain"玉泉山; Yuanjing Temple 圓凈寺 and tomb of Yelü Chucai 耶律楚才墓 from "Mount Urn"甕山; Qiyin Temple 棲隱寺 from "Mount Yang" 仰山.

[69] Monasteries preserved in good condition are Xiangshan 香山寺, Biyun 碧雲寺, Hongguang 洪光寺, Wofo 臥佛寺, Yangongci 晏公祠, Jietan 戒壇寺, Tanzhe 潭柘寺 and Jiaxi 嘉禧寺.

[70] Yu Yizheng, "Ediorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 7.

[71] Yelü Chucai 耶律楚才(1190–1244) was one of the most influential scholar officials in the early Yuan; he promoted the study of Confucianism in the court.

[72] The maternal family of Chongzhen's Empress Zhou.

> 石樑過溪，亭其湖左，曰“望湖亭”，宣廟駐蹕者，今圮焉。存者，南史氏莊。又南，上下華嚴寺，嘉靖庚戌虜闌入，寺毀焉。寺存者二洞：華嚴、七真。洞壁刻元耶律氏詞也，人曰“楚材者”，訛。又南，周皇親別墅，今方盛。……又北金山寺，寺今荒破，未廢爾。……山舊有芙蓉殿，金章宗行宮也。昭化寺，元世祖建也。志存焉，今不可復跡其址。[73]

Although originally built in different periods, these places have equally fallen into irrevocable absence. The structures of the Jin and Yuan temples cannot be found; only steles, tablets, and caves have occasionally survived. Facing such ultimate loss, Liu Tong's only recourse is to come up with a record that testifies to the existence of sites in the past. Using the limited evidence available to him, the author attempts to clarify names, attribute exact dates, and specify as much as possible the historical information about each site's construction and destruction.

Although writing extensively on ruins, Liu Tong does not simply lament the loss of these structures. Instead, keeping a keen eye for beauty, he discovers appealing sites that had remained unnoticed by his peers. The essay "Mount of Master Lu" (Lushi shan, 盧師山) depicts a group of Buddhist statues:

> Nowadays there is no building for the Buddha. One statue of Brahmadhvaja sits in *wind and dew*. On the left and right, the disciples Kāśyapa and Ānanda serve the main Buddha in *wind and dew*. Lofty and unadorned, they are not in the popular Chinese style. Solemn and elegant, the facial impression of the statues does not suffer from *wind and dew*.
>
> 今佛無殿已。一梵相坐風露中，左右迦葉、阿難，風露中侍，喬樸非中土威儀，又端好無風露色。[74]

Repeated three times in this short paragraph, the word *fenglu* ("wind and dew," 風露) lends a phonetic pattern to the succinct sentences, and connects the description of a larger natural environment to the elaboration of the details of Buddhist statues. Having lost the architecture that

[73] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 296–297.
[74] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 271.

once protected them, these statues now stand in the harsh environment and are exposed to the forces of nature. Liu Tong does not elaborate on the sorrow of losing the temple; instead, he attaches his emotion to the inanimate objects with their peaceful postures and compassionate facial impressions, admiring them as actual people who are able to remain calm while suffering misery.

Landscape writings began to include descriptions of ruinous sites early in the fifth century, as in the *Commentary on Waterways Treatise* (Shuijingzhu, 水經注). Scholars of Ming-Qing studies have pointed out that "ruinous landscapes" appeared recurrently in literature and arts produced during the dynastic transition, specifically in the first decades of the Qing dynasty, when depictions of ruinous private gardens became a central motif in the writings of the *yimin* ("remnant" people, 遺民) loyalist literati.[75] The ruinous landscape, encapsulating the sharp contrast between memory and reality, served as the literary nucleus of nostalgia.[76]

My study on *A Sketch* suggests that ruinous sites had already become a literary subject in the ending years of the Ming, a vehicle through which the author contemplated the interchangeable relation between life and death, rise and fall, and expressed anxiety over the

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[75] Hou Nai-huei 侯廼慧, "Qingdai feiyuan shuxie de yuanlin fanxing yu lishi yiyi" 清代廢園書寫的園林反省與歷史意義, in *Taida wenshizhe xuebao* 臺大文史哲學報 (November 2006): 73–112; Wai-yee Li, "Gardens and Illusions from Late Ming to Early Qing," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 72.2 (December 2012): 295–336; Zhao Yuan 趙園, *Xiangxiang yu xushu* 想象與敘述 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2009). For visual culture, see Wu Hung, *A Story of Ruins: Presence and Absence in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (London: Reaktion, 2012); Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Qianshen Bai, *Fu Shan's World: The Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). For an introduction to the *yimin* scholars of the seventeenth century, see Tobi Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[76] For instance, Hou Fangyu, "Zhengshi dongyuan ji" 鄭氏東園記 in *Zhuanghuitang wenji* 壯悔堂文集 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chunbanshe, 2013), 320–321. Zhang Dai 張岱, *Tao'an mengyi; Xihu mengxun* 陶庵夢憶；西湖夢尋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007).

future of the nation.[77] However, unlike early-Qing *yimin* literature focusing on private gardens abandoned or destroyed during the dynastic transition, *A Sketch* is concerned with the decline of public sites at the city, such as monasteries, shrines, and infrastructure. The abandoned landscape in *A Sketch* serves as a platform from which Liu Tong could present his commentary on reality, including the search for solutions to local poverty and his concerns over the decline of the state's military prowess.

Poverty led to the poor maintenance of many sites. A story of irresponsible monks occurs in his description of Monastery of Green Summit (Cuiyan si, 翠巖寺). This place used to be a favorite of scholars and statesmen. The giant parasol trees in the spacious yard created cool shade in summer where visitors could host wine parties. As Liu Tong relates, an elegant poetry game used to be very popular at this place: visitors would pick up a palm-sized leaf, compete in making verses within a limited time, and write down their lines on the fresh green leaves. However, the monks who lived there strongly disliked these visitors since they looked forward to making profits through catering the guests, while the later did not donate much money to the temple. Therefore, the monks chopped all the trees down and sold the timber to zither workshops. Although frustrated by the monks' action, visitors were still fond of the beautiful scenery and kept visiting. Finally, the monks set fire to their own houses, and at last the visitors left. Since then, the monastery has remained in ruins.[78]

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[77] Editors of *xiaopin* readers from the late Ming onward often select essays on ruinous monasteries from *Dijing jingwulüe* as the quintessential works representing Liu Tong's literary style and virtuosity. These essays appear in the miscellaneous collection, *Meiyou ge wenyu erji* edited by Zheng Yuanxun around 1643: "Nunnery of Mahākāśyapa" 摩訶庵, "Zhongfeng Nunnery" 中峰庵, "End of the Waterway"水盡頭, "Jile Monastery" 極樂寺.

[78] *Dijing jingwulüe,* 267.

When traveling to West Lake and Sorghum Bridge, Liu Tong presented a detailed account of Mount Urn, the same hill mentioned earlier in the work of Li Dongyang, which, covered with red earth and shaped like a mound, appeared oddly barren and therefore stood out from its surroundings. Temples nearby were in ruins, and fragments of statues and tablets were buried among weeds.[79] Early writings on this area mainly focused on elaborating the attractive lake scenery, where acres of lotus were planted. In the essay "Mount Urn" (Wengshan 甕山; appendix 2.3) Liu Tong, however, first introduces a story about one stone urn discovered at the hill and then employs this account to discuss the problems of the local economy.

An old man (some sort of immortal) from an unknown period excavated the urn from the hill and presented a prophecy to local people that "when the stone urn moves, the imperial capital will be impoverished" (石甕徙，貧帝里).[80] Following this story, Liu Tong continues with a discussion on the financial difficulties suffered by Beijing residents:

> In the Hongzhi period, imperial officials were wealthy; in the Zhengde period (1506–1521), eunuchs were wealthy; in the Jiajing period (1522–1566), merchants were wealthy; in the Longqing (1567–1572) and Wanli (1573–1620) periods, knights-errant were wealthy. However, [nowadays] those who travel live in prosperity, while the local residents suffer from poverty.
>
> 傳者謂弘治時世臣富，正德時內臣富，嘉靖時商賈富，隆、萬時遊俠富，然流寓盛，土著貧矣。[81]

Liu Tong proposes that hydraulic and agricultural projects should be engineered in order to improve the local economy:

> If in the capital and the surrounding districts we could transform every acre of arable riverside to farmland, fill all low-lying lands with water to create ponds, and construct earthen dams near swamps and pools, then [the local economy would be significantly improved and] resemble that of the southeast provinces. Farmers would be rich and respectable and local residents would live in prosperity.

[79] Dijing jingwulüe, 307–08.
[80] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 307–08.
[81] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 308.

使畿輔他水次，可田也，皆田之；其他陸壤，可陂塘也，田而水之。其他窪下，可堤苑也，水而田之，一一如東南。本尊則富，土著其重。[82]

After the loss of the urn, this area experienced a series of abnormal scenes. To conclude this essay, Liu Tong addresses a strange event that happened in the tomb of Yelü Chucai (1190–1244), a famous scholar-official in the early Yuan, which was located at the base of the mountain. Liu Tong ends the essay in this way:

> In a summer evening, in the seventh year of the Tianqi regin (1627), hundreds of fireflies gathered around the head of the stone man. Local residents witnessed that scene, and they clamored at night, "The stone man's eyes are illuminated!" The next morning, they pushed the statue onto the ground and hurried to smash it. Later at night, fireflies came again. Deprived of the statue, they gathered in the trees. People again witnessed that scene, and again they clamored at night. They carried hoes and harrows there, and found fireflies resting on the tree. Now, there are no longer any objects in front of the tomb; just a single mound stands in the back.
>
> 天啟七年夏夜，有螢十百集翁仲首，土人望見，夜嘩曰："石人眼光也！"質明，共踣而爭碎之。後夜螢來，無所集，集他樹。人復望見，夜復嘩，鋤耰夜往，樹上乃螢也。而墓前無餘器矣，突然一丘。[83]

By the time of Liu Tong's visit, no human traces could be seen. The commemorative shrine was in total collapse. The only remnant of the complex was a stone man (Shiwengzhong, 石翁仲) guarding the shabby shrine—and even this did not escape the tragic fate of the rest of the complex.[84] The sudden illumination of the stone statue and the unusual gathering of fireflies frightened local residents and in turn this place suffered more from people's violent actions. With the flying insects' cold green light glittering around the tomb, the place seemed to be possessed by some ghostly power. When the numinous urn was stolen and the marvelous stone man violently crushed, the Mount lost its good fortune and was transformed into a land of

[82] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 308.
[83] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 308.
[84] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 308.

despair. Local residents might be blamed for their hasty and violent reaction, but they were equally innocent. When bad omens appeared in Beijing with greater frequency, how could local people guard themselves from danger? Like the bare tomb of Yelü Chucai, Mount Urn was changed into a mountain-sized tomb commemorating the death of prosperity and good fortune: the grave of the past days when people were wealthy and fortunate.[85]

The invasion from the Northern nomads and the wane of the state's military prowess also led to the general decline of built sites in Beijing. This part offers some of the vaguest and most convoluted writing in *A Sketch.* Liu Tong deliberately veils his accounts of these events with multiple rhetorical devices: short, succinct sentences to restage the violent moments, and accounts of mythic figures to allude to the doomed fate of the city. Although Mongol and Manchu armies had invaded Beijing many times and had left a great many scars on the Beijing landscape, Liu Tong was reluctant to give direct descriptions of the most recent battles. In the entire length of *A Sketch* the 1629 Manchu invasion is clearly discussed only twice, and these instances are buried in descriptions of the scenery.

In one of these instances, at the beginning of the essay "Lugou Bridge" (Lugou qiao, 盧溝橋), Liu Tong presents a panoramic snapshot of the landscape near the bridge in Wanping County 宛平, which was the passage that Hong Taiji's army took to expedite their march towards Beijing in the winter of 1629. By the time of Liu Tong's visit, the land of this region was scorched, while local people had moved into castle-like houses to guard themselves. The essay reads:

> Villages north of the bridge have hundreds of households. In the year of *jisi* (1629), the enemy burned this area into ashes. At the entrance of the village, guard forts are scattered

[85] In terms of the representation of tomb and death in the art of Ming-Qing transitional period, also see Jonathan Hay, "Ming Palace and Tomb in Early Qing Jiangning: Dynastic Memory and the Openness of History," *Late Imperial China* (June 1999): 1–48.

along the winding river. Look into the distance; [the castles] are like parapets on the city wall.

橋北而村，數百家，己巳歲，虜焚盡。村頭墩堡，循河婉婉，望之如堞.[86]

Another essay "Temple of Skanda" (Weigong si, 韋公寺) introduces a temple in the south city possessing many famous trees that used to appeal to visitors. At the very end of this essay, after relating various scenes on how to appreciate blossoms in the city, Liu Tong records the death of a beautiful apple tree to allude to the same military disaster.

When the alarming event happened in the winter of 1629, our troops were stationed in the temple [of Skanda]. The crabapple tree and phoenix-eye tree survived. But the wild apple tree was chopped down by the enemy for firewood.

崇禎己巳冬之警，我師駐寺，海棠、蘋婆以存，柰子樹虜薪之.[87]

No more words are used to criticize the invaders, but the negative attitude is clearly implied. Liu Tong uses the stigmatized appellation "*lu*" 虜 to refer to the Manchus, who were ignorant about the value of the fruit tree and chopped it down only to make firewood.

Liu Tong also employs local supernatural figures to address the Manchu invasion. The essay "Tomb of Little Immortal Peng" (Peng Xiaoxian mu, 彭小仙墓) presents an intriguing story that weaves the 1629 war into a biography of an immortal (appendix 2.4).[88] In the early years of the Zhengde reign (1505–1521), a boy visited an old man at the Peng village of Gu'an county and pleaded to work for him as a cowherd. Over the following thirty years, the boy watched over the cows and never grew old. He could not only predict future events but also control local weather through cowherding. Every day around noon, if he suddenly drove the cows back home, it would rain immediately; during the rain, if he suddenly opened the stockade,

[86] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 209.
[87] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 183.
[88] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 364–5.

the sky would quickly turn sunny. Villagers gradually realized that this unnamed boy, possessing eternal youth and many kinds of magic, must be an immortal. When government officials in the capital heard about the boy's unusual abilities, the police were sent to arrest him. Upon the police's arrival, the boy bid farewell to the villagers. Like the old man in Mount Weng, the Little Immortal left a prophecy that puzzled the villagers: "A hundred years from now, troops will arrive. Those who stay under the White Banner will survive."[89] On his way to the city, the boy picked up a piece of grass, wrapped it around his own neck, and in one moment his head was severed from his body. The police reported the situation and villagers hurried to collect the corpse and buried him in the village.

The tomb of the Little Immortal became a site where strange things constantly happened. During festivals like Qingming, people worshipping could hear music being played beneath the tomb. Ten years after the boy's burial, a villager saw the Little Immortal on the way to Nanjing. The villager asked how the boy had returned to life, but the Immortal just laughed and left without answering. When villagers opened the tomb, they found it empty, except for one shoe. The tomb became a shrine where people erected a statue and prayed for good harvest.

In *A Sketch*, Liu Tong states that in the year 1629, one hundred years after Little Immortal's death, his last prophetic words turned out to be true. The "white banner" turned out to be the White Banner unit of the Manchu army led by prince Dorgon, which was one of most powerful and victorious banner units during the dynastic transition. Little Immortal's benevolence prevented the villagers from being killed during the chaos. When the Manchu army assaulted Gu'an in the winter of 1629, the villagers recalled Little Immortal's saying and fled towards the White Banner. On the banner was written "Zhou Manji, the Third Army of the White

[89] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 365.

Banner" (白旗都三周滿機).[90] At the end of this essay, Liu Tong explains: "Zhou Manji was a native of Beijing who rebelled against the Ming dynasty and became a general for the enemy. Although he would sack and pillage, he did not usually kill his captives. When his army left, the villagers returned home safely."[91]

No more historical information can be found on this Han-Chinese banner leader, nor does Liu Tong provide more sources to explicate the event. But by framing the Manchu invasion within the biographical account of an immortal, Liu Tong transforms the distressing event of the Ming's military ineptness into a strange episode that testifies to the immortal boy's incredible ability. Liu Tong seems to be very reluctant to openly discuss military conflict between the Ming and the invaders. From his perspective, texts not only preserve the past, but also have the potential to change ominous signs into reality. On some level, he fears that writing about disasters might make the dynasty collapse in reality, and thus the description of the military emergency could never be too explicit. From the gestures of concealing recent events and his restrained voice in narration, we can glean the author's deep anxiety about his contemporary world as well as his fear and bewilderment about the future.

Liu Tong's contemplation of the present also surfaces in seemingly neutral depictions of the natural scenery. Some of the most imposing moments in *A Sketch* involve gazing far to the north from a mountaintop. In these unexpected moments of panoramic perspective, the spatial ascension up the mountain parallels a sharp shift in the narrative tone: the melancholic tones disappear and are replaced by a sense of emergency and vigilance.[92] Moreover, the lapidary

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[90] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 365.

[91] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 365. "周，薊人叛而將敵也，其所掠，偶無馘殺，比去，則縱還之。"

[92] See essays from *Dijing jingwulüe*: "Lugou Bridge"盧溝橋, 143–44; "Mount Yang" 仰山, 319–20; "Mount Shijing"石景山, 280–81; "Hill of Hundreds of Flowers" 百花陀, 325–26.

sentences arranged in rugged formats intensify the stressful atmosphere. Whirling rivers writhe among the mountains encircling the city, including Mount Yang 仰山 and Mount Shijing 石景山 in the northwest, Hill of Hundreds of Flowers 百花山 in the west, and Mount Fang 房山 in the southwest. As seen through the text, the Gobi deserts are starting to encroach upon the capital's high gate towers and luxuriously decorated palaces. The sudden revelation of the borderland confirms the vulnerability of the capital city.

Just before the final chapter of the book, the essay "Hill of Hundreds of Flowers" (Baihua tuo, 百花陀) describes the scenery of a small and beautiful hill in the city's west. The narrative structure follows the visiting routes, from the base of the hill to the top. Between meticulous descriptions of beautiful plants in the blossoming season, Liu inserts a panoramic view.

> When I am sitting and standing on the mountaintop and looking downward, the East and West Numinous Mountains stand erect like jade tablets. Gaze afar in four directions: in the east lies the capital city; in the south, the Muddy River is bubbling and rising over the horizon; in the west, there are Summit Tea Dew in dense forests and several mountains surrounding the Juyong Pass; in the north, the borderless desert extends over the vast land outside the fortresses.
>
> 坐立頂上，俯諸山揖如圭，東西二靈山也。乃旁四望：東京師也，南冉冉者渾河也，西鬱乎茶露頂，居庸諸山；北蕩蕩乎邊城外，沙漠際無窮也。[93]

Emplaced among details of flowers, birds, and rocks that people can find on the hill, this paragraph forms an enclave structure in the essay, where the narrative suddenly pauses and looks outwards to the lands outside the city. The border scene disappears as quickly as it appeared.

Topographical and geographical features of Beijing distinguish *A Sketch* from other books on the southern landscape. What is illustrated here is a unique image of the northern

[93] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 326.

frontier. For instance, resting in the pavilion of the Temple of the Golden Pavilion at Mount Shijing, Liu Tong describes this scene:

> On the top of the mountain is the Temple of the Golden Pavilion. Gazing afar from the temple into the remote distance, one can see a band of greenish yellow decorating the south. This is the Hun River ("Muddy" River). The Hun River is the ancient Sanggan Water, which flows from the old city of Baoan, passes by the Yanhekou ("Riverside Estuary") and the Shigangkou ("Stone Port Estuary") and arrives at Lugou. The Muddy River means "a river of turbidity" and Lugou "a black ditch." Turbid and black, they both belong to the same hydraulic system. The water sounds like booming thunder and looks like turbulent clouds. It is also called "Little Yellow River."
>
> 山最上，金閣寺。寺最遠眺望，望蒼黃一道，如帶南綴者，渾河也。渾河，古桑乾水，從保安舊城，過沿河口，過石港口，達盧溝。渾河，如云濁河也。盧溝，如云黑溝也。濁且黑，一水也。水雷殷而雲湧，亦曰"小黃河"。[94]

The muddy and black waves of the Hun River quickly flow like rumbling thunder and gushing clouds. Liu Tong depicts a vivid scene to stress the intimidating experience of walking across this "Little Yellow River:"

> In flooding season, the riverbank is always dangerous. People cannot step on the rocks and have to cover the rock with wood boards to make a "bridge." Walking on boards, you have to entrust your body to the open air since nothing is there to rely on. You can only step forward carefully with quick manoeuvres and not take any solid steps. Right before your eyes is water. The force of the river currents is terrifying. The bridge stretches over. Someone who is strong of mind and decides to run forward is tormented by what lies ahead. Someone who is frightened and wants to squat down is tormented by what lies behind.
>
> 河迅岸危，石不得趾，而橋之以板。行板者，委身空中，無傍籍，踏踏閃閃，無詳步，而目下見水，水勢懾目。橋則蜿蜒，強者欲趨，苦前，恇者欲蹲，苦後。[95]

In the poetic tradition of frontier scenery 邊塞詩, poetic representation of the north borderland is, in most cases, the exotic imagined from the perspective of a metropolitan writer. Chinese poets frequently addressed the "enemy" in a rhetorical way to emphasize the hardships of military life, or to lament the tragedy of death and sacrifice during wartime, or to praise the solemnity of the

[94] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 280.
[95] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 280.

grand view of nature. However, in *A Sketch*, the frontier is a constructed environment marked with layers of military garrisons, rather than an abstract concept; the imagined enemy as literary subject is concretized as the Manchu troops that are actually threatening the social order along the border.

In the essay "Mount Yang," Liu Tong guides the reader through the narrow mountain way. The volatile turbulence and steep cliffs create natural obstacles: "The water of Lugou River is as red and muddy as blood. The sound and force of the gushing waves shake the riverbank. Trees and grasses stand straight up as if they are startled" (河水赤濁如血，沸湧聲力，動搖兩岸，岸草木錯愕立).[96] The bloody color of the river is probably the result of the death of numerous soldiers. Right in this place (today known as Junzhuang zhen ["Military Fortress Town," 軍莊鎮] in Beijing), the Ming court constructed many military garrisons. During the Ming-Manchu war in 1629, local residents were forced to leave their homes and hide in a large cave on one of the cliffs here. Liu Tong depicts the following scene:

> The path is like a wooden-planked trail, pinned to cliffs on both sides. Peep down: the water makes high and narrow waves and cannot flow smoothly. Its sound makes one tremble: when encountering a deep pond, the water sounds like drums beating and bells striking; when passing over a boulder, [it sounds like] rocks being thrown and guns being fired. Every passenger has to face straight forward and take careful steps following what they see. The two cliffs were only arm's length apart, and we could barely pass. There is so little space that we had to put down our heels before we lifted toes. We could only move step by step. There are places even narrower where you can't get through. With our backs against one cliff, we inched slowly to the side. After walking over the path, we looked at each other and tried to calm down. We had to blink our eyes several times before we regained our composure.
>
> 道如棧，內倚絕壁，外臨絕壁。下窺水作仄浪，不得流。其聲戰戰，逢潭鼓鐘，過石擂炮。凡行者正面目前，履逐目處，壁左右容肘，乃行也。步步餘地，踵約趾開，踝左右交過，容兩足並，乃行也。崖道窄，又窄處，不成行已。拊壁移踵以過，既過，相顧脅息，目乃瞬睫，色青黃乃定。[97]

[96] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 319.
[97] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 319.

The shocking sound of the river resonates with the clamor of battle. The sentences "when encountering a deep pond, the water sounds like drums beating and bells striking; when passing over a boulder, [it sounds like] rocks being thrown and guns being fired" (*fengtan guzhong*, *guoshi leipao*, 逢潭鼓鐘，過石擂炮) has both figurative and literal meanings. It could be read as a metaphor for the sonic volume of the water, which is as loud as sounds made by drums, bells, guns, and rocks. At the same time, it could also be interpreted as recalling the battles that took place in this location where guns were fired, and military drums were beaten. Violence haunts this place. The sound of a past war is conflated with the sound of the turbulent present.

The emergent problems along the frontier continually haunt *A Sketch*, specifically the last four chapters. In the early seventeenth century, the mountainous area protecting the walled city was experiencing a comprehensive decline. Here the Buddhist world that thrived during the years of peace in the second half of the sixteenth century had fallen apart. The material demonstrations of previous emperors' benevolence had been tarnished. Before these scenes, Liu Tong's literary style creates a subtle resonance between literature and reality. The highly convoluted expressions full of twists and turns reveal a deep psychological anxiety about the future of the capital. Located on the frontier, Beijing had guarded the country for over two hundred years. But what could in turn defend Beijing, at a time when the large area outside the city had already became Manchu territory?

Conclusion

The decay of Beijing began long before its final fall. In Liu Tong's eyes, the capital, located on the borders of the state, was on the brink of collapse, perhaps even of extinction. The temporal and spatial features that he witnessed compelled him to devise a new writing strategy, which ultimately yielded a new form of prose writing and expanded the thematic and stylistic

scope of the urban miscellany genre. In *A Sketch* we see how the late-Ming author used his unique literary style to illustrate a northern landscape that was in the very process of decay. By actively drawing on earlier travel writing as both sources of information and models of literary style, Liu Tong moved beyond presenting nostalgic reflections on past glories to develop his own literary approach to portraying a city in crisis. The intensively versified language that was highly lyrical and poetic also served as medium for critical commentary. Though indebted to the literati travelers who came before, Liu Tong's formulation of the northern landscape in *A Sketch*, by virtue of its vitality, innovation, and rigorous observation, generated its own literary and historical legacy.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON POLITICAL LEGITIMACY:

READING STONE INSCRIPTIONS AND THE DISCOURSE OF THE PAST

As the last case study of the dissertation, this chapter examines how Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng sought to use historical knowledge to support their argument on behalf of Beijing's political legitimacy. It studies the first essay in the book (and one of the longest), titled "Stone Drums in the Imperial Academy" (*Taixue shigu* 太學石鼓, hereafter referred to as "Stone Drums"). The essay focuses on two topics: the National University of the Ming state, including its history and structure; and the cultural biography of the Stone Drums, a set of granite boulders bearing one of the earliest-known stone inscriptions, which were preserved on the university grounds. In this essay, site (*jing*) and object (*wu*) collaborate with each other. But compared to what we have seen in previous chapters, site and object neither enhance the mysterious aura of storytelling nor assist the sightseeing or the observation of urban landscape. Rather, they serve to solidify a scholarly perspective that on a formal level frames the narrative of the subsequent essays and to foreground the political agenda of *A Sketch* by constructing the legitimacy of Beijing as the imperial capital. Borrowing treatises on ritual decrees and epigraphical and philological studies, Liu Tong describes the current academy as having the best and most diligent scholars, all of whom were devoted practitioners of Confucian ceremonies. The essay also asserts that the Stone Drums' choice of Beijing as their final destination was demonstrable proof—presented by the voice of antiquity itself—of the city's worthiness to govern the country. Thus, on a discursive level, site and object manifested the "heavenly mandate" (*tianming*, 天命) and confirmed the political legitimacy of Beijing as the capital of the Ming.

However, “Stone Drums” is an unusual and somewhat problematic piece. From its detailed accounts of the academy’s itineraries emerges a eulogizing tone, standing in stark contrast to the book’s restrained style. Furthermore, when elaborating on the history of the Stone Drums, especially on how the objects traveled to Beijing over the course of a millennium, the copious citation of earlier scholarship on antiquarianism exhibits several factual errors. Both the eulogizing tone and the mistakes contradict the very writing principles proposed by Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng. In the Qing dynasty, this essay was harshly criticized, and when it was reproduced, it was severely edited.[1] Nonetheless, regardless of its many flaws, the work leaves us clues to Liu Tong’s writing process and choice of material to provide critical insight into the issues that were of greatest concern to him regarding the capital’s legitimacy.

Comparing the essay “Stone Drums” with the materials it used for reference, it becomes clear that Liu Tong carefully manipulated the text with layers of disguise, concealing various social problems and fabricating information to present a seemingly neutral and authentic account. Such strategies make the essay itself a paradox. The narrative details that contributed to its legitimacy function at the same time to unsettle such construction. First, when introducing the Imperial Academy, Liu Tong substitutes descriptions of the scholar-officials’ actual deeds with prescriptions from ritual treatises; thus, on the discursive level, the operation of the school was portrayed as being perfect and without hinderance. But as is evidenced in other essays in *A Sketch*, as well as in contemporary records, Liu Tong had first-hand experience of the crises that were enveloping the Confucian academies; thus, the credibility of the activities described in this essay is suspect.

[1] Ji Yun harshly criticized this essay in his editorial preface, and in the 1766 edition, he deleted all passages introducing the Imperial Academy and only preserved the sections on the stone inscriptions. Ji Yun’s edition will be discussed in chapter 5.

Second, Liu Tong used descriptions of the poor condition of the stone material—the loss of legible characters and the erosion of the inscribed surface—to achieve two goals. First, as a means of criticizing the non-Han powers that had previously governed Beijing, the dilapidated condition of the stone was used as evidence of the Jurchen people's "ignorance" of the Stone Drums' cultural value. But this misbehavior of the Jurchen was by and large fabricated through early anecdotes and was deliberately exaggerated by Liu Tong. Second, by engaging with the illegible inscriptions—which in Liu Tong's eyes were mysterious and numinous—he was able to connect to an idealized antiquity. At the same time, the very impossibility of accurate interpretation also isolated him from that heritage and compromised his project of building current legitimacy by evoking an idealized past.

The following sections will carefully and critically examine the essay "Stone Drums" to uncover Liu Tong's textual choices. I read the text along with two kinds of materials: other essays in *A Sketch* related to the construction of scholar identities, and the academic treatises on ceremonies and stone inscriptions that were used as references.

4.1 The Imperial Academy

Focusing on the first half of the essay, which introduces the operation of the Imperial Academy, this section examines the first layer of disguise in the text, in which the ideal image of the daily and ritual practices stands in sharp contrast to the actual state of crisis, caused by political corruption and factional controversy, in which academies in the capital were embroiled. Located in the northeastern part of the city—on the street named Becoming a Sage in the ward named Honorable Teaching—the Imperial Academy was a place of particular importance to cultural elites. Here, Confucian students received academic training, and the court regularly performed Confucian ceremonies. These grounds had once housed the prefectural academy of

Beiping; in 1404, after Emperor Yongle issued the edict that moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing, this institute was promoted to the national level.[2] To justify its superior status, Liu Tong uses a series of comparisons: strictly following the ancient rules from the Three Dynasties period (Xia, Shang, and Zhou, also known as the history prior to the Qin dynasty [221–206 BCE]), the academy in Beijing inherited its legitimacy from the old national university in Nanjing and demonstrated the court's respect for Confucian knowledge and morals.[3]

Rather than describing the physical environment of the site, such as its structures, layout, and surroundings—as we see in many essays of *A Sketch*—the narrative interest of the first half of the essay lies in describing people's activities. It relates how ceremonial procedures changed in the late sixteenth century, with the sages' statues replaced by "divine tablets," and from then on, scholars held annual rituals in a more diligent manner:

> When conducting ceremonies to our sages, [scholars who work here] must wholeheartedly practice the ritual of Presenting Vegetation. Wearing leather hairpins, holding the jade tablet, [they] bow twice and dedicate silks and wine vessels. Done. [They] bow twice. After arriving in the Yilun Hall, the primary director and the vice primary director sit down to deliver a speech and present the emperor's admonishments and instructions.
>
> 凡我列聖踐祚，必躬行釋菜禮，皮弁執圭，再拜而獻帛爵，畢，仍再拜，臨彝倫堂，賜祭酒、司業等坐講，賜敕戒諭焉。[4]

This quotation exemplifies how Liu Tong blended the descriptive language of what used to be done in the academy with a prescriptive narration of what *should* be done. Implying an imperative tone, the sentence pattern, "*fan*… *bi*…" (凡… 必…), which means "when…[happens], we must…," resembles the guidelines from ritual instructions that a reader could have found in books of historical knowledge. For instance, in the chapter on Confucian

[2] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3.
[3] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3.
[4] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3.

rites (*shidian*, 釋奠) from *Comprehensive Records* (Tongzhi, 通志), an encyclopedia composed during the twelfth century that established the model for most of the later works of the same type, on customs of schools, it reads, "The system of the Zhou dynasty: when the new academy is established, the *shidian* rite must be conducted to show respect to previous sages and masters" (周制，凡始立學，必釋奠于先聖先師).[5] The instructive tone was borrowed in the essay of *A Sketch* to describe people's actions, and in so doing, idealized what actually happened in situ.

Liu Tong continues to elaborate on six aspects that demonstrate the unprecedented prosperity of the Beijing Imperial Academy. Various disciplines and rules were strictly carried out, including those in the daily curricula, the proper use of garments and utensils during rites, the criteria to assess students' performance, and the instruction on Confucian morals. Besides, Liu points out, students who studied at the academy were always able to acquire significant advancement in their careers.[6] The institute's overseas influence on the tributary countries is also included:

> The fame [of the academy] has been transmitted beyond the four seas. Ryukyu islands, Jiaozhi [today Vietnam], Luoluo [near Yunnan and Burma], Wusa [near Guizhou] and so on, all send their young people to the academy. Many of them acquire the degree, perform successfully in the exams, and return to their homeland. The past cannot compete [with today].
>
> 其聲教訖四海之外。琉球、交趾、囉囉、烏撒等，遣子入學，有舉制科，歸其國者，古莫比也。[7]

As seen in the last sentence of the quotation, Liu Tong adds the phrase "The past cannot compete with today" (*gu mo bi ye,* 古莫比也), which aims to distinguish the Ming academy

[5] See Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, *Tongzhi* 通志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 660.
[6] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 3–4.
[7] This quotation appears in the 1635 woodblock print; see *Dijing jingwulüe* (Ming Chongzhen edition, collected in Harvard University Library), *juan* 1, 2a–2b. However, for unknown reasons, it is missing in the 1980 Beijing guji edition.

from its ancient predecessors. In view of the seventeenth century's cherishing of antiquity, which by then had become a cultural convention, Liu Tong's claim that their present time had surpassed the ancient emerges as a strange deviation. Moreover, the repetitive use of the same phrase not only punctuates the flow of approval, but also formulates a pretentious style. The following passage is marked by a more hyperbolic language. Here, Liu Tong continues to stress how hardworking the imperial students are:

> At this time, the order in the Confucian lecture hall [is strictly maintained]. Erudites of the academy, assistant instructors,[8] instructors of second class, and instructors of third class in the academy—there is no single morning that they did not attend lectures. Officers, commoners, those with outstanding military services, and students by grace[9]—when returning to dormitory, there is no single night that they did not recite [books] under the lamp light. The grade registers in the College of Guiding Human Nature[10]—there is no year that has no records. Immersed in the study of antiques and inscriptions and engaged in the discussion of performing ritual music with drums and bells—literary statesmen are equipped with [the knowledge of] military arts, and warriors are equipped with that of literature. Therefore, books collected in the library and archive *never* suffer from dust. Seats in the Hall of Illuminating the Way are *always* warm. The sound of drums in the archery field can be heard *every day*.
>
> 蓋是時，儒雍之秩，博、助、正、錄，無不參不座之晨。官、民、軍功、恩生，退省號房，無不燈不誦之夜。率性堂積分簿，無不歲不紀之資。薰濡器識，論樂鼓鐘，文士備武，武士備文。故載道所、典籍庫之板本*無塵*，明道堂之席*恒燠*，射圃之鼓*日有聞焉*。[11]

A careful reader would easily understand the distinctive style of this quotation—lavish, exaggerated, and rhapsodic. The underlined sentences, written in double negation— "*bu* X *bu* X"

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[8] The instructional staff of the Imperial Academy consisted primarily of erudites (*boshi*), often bearing prefixes specifying the classical works in which they individually specialized, and instructors (*zhujiao*). Charles Hucker, "Guozijian 國子監," *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 299.

[9] "National University student by grace" is a status awarded to sons of officials who served the state with extraordinary merit. Hucker, "Ensheng 恩生," *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 209.

[10] The College of Guiding Human Nature (Shuaixing tang) is one of the Six Colleges (Liutang, 六堂) among which students of the Imperial Academy were distributed. Hucker, "Shuaixing tang 率性堂," *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 438.

[11] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.

(there is no… that is not…)—formulate a pattern that not only accommodates details that demonstrates students' diligent work, but also emphasizes that such a degree of hard work is extraordinary. Adverbs and conjunctions indicating the frequency of actions (marked in italics), such as "never" (*wu*, 無) "always" (*heng*, 恆) , and "everyday" (*ri*, 日), are employed. So according to Liu Tong's account, students are fully engaged with their literary and military assignments, which could be observed from the frequent use of the library, the seminar room, and the archery field. Similar descriptions constitute the rest of this section. Liu Tong concludes the introduction of the Imperial Academy with an expression of esteem: "How ardent our ancestors are in acquiring talented people! Today, how magnificent this is!" (祖宗得人之烈，今斯盛哉!)[12]

Throughout *A Sketch*, such unrestrained compliments are rare. The sudden outpouring of a subjective voice, especially in describing the organization and operation of one institution, deserves further investigation. Later readers of this essay also noticed the problematic feature of this section. In his 1766 edition of *A Sketch*, Ji Yun removed this section, which takes up one third of the total length, from the essay "Stone Drums." From this Qing editor's perspective, in a piece of writing focusing on the "past traces" (*guji*, 古蹟), namely the Stone Drums, to "flatter and laud" (*yusong*, 諛頌) the institution violates conventions (*bulei*, 不類).[13] Ji Yun had his own reasons to criticize *A Sketch*, which we will discuss in the next chapter, but such a comment underlines the fact that this part of the essay is out of place. Why was the introduction of the Imperial Academy written in an overtly emotional and redundant manner? I think the idealistic

[12] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.

[13] Ji Yun 紀昀, "Shanzheng *Dijing jingwulüe* xu" 刪正《帝京景物略》序, *Ji Xiaolan wenji* 紀曉嵐文集 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 164.

description conveys Liu Tong's configuration of what the academy *should* be like, and thus it can be read as a response to the chaotic reality of Confucian academies in Beijing.

By the early 1630s, the Imperial Academy had been engulfed by severe corruption. Before the reign of Emperor Chongzhen (1628–1644), a great number of imperial students "donated" money to the government in order to secure admission to the academy. When Chongzhen ascended to the throne, he immediately abandoned this policy as a demonstration of his determination to restore the integrity of the court. However, with military emergencies arising along the northern borderland and insufficient resources to supply the army to acquire silver and grain, the court forced local magistrates to propose candidates from wealthy families and then asked them to purchase the student titles.[14] As a late-Ming miscellany relates, rumors circulated that some local officials were put to death for failing to convince their constituents to buy the title.[15] One scholar commented on this appalling situation: "In the early years of our dynasty, the Imperial Academy selected the most qualified scholars for the country. From a distance, the solemnity of this place was not different from that of the Forbidden City. But now, they have murdered people to acquire students. What a strange situation!" (國初太學，為天下精選士，望之不異中禁。今殺人求之，誠咄咄怪事也).[16]

[14] Zhang Guangli 張光莉, "Mingdai guozijian yanjiu 明代國子監研究" (master's thesis, Henan University, 2003), 13–15. Also Zhan Jiahao 詹家豪, "Mingdai taixue zhong de yuanli jiansheng 明代太學中的援例監生," *Guangdong shehui kexue* 廣東社會科學 (December 2001): 72–78.

[15] Wang Jiazhen 王家禎 (1581–1644), *Yantang jianwen zalu* 研堂見聞雜錄 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1960), 1.

[16] Wang Jiazhen, *Yantang jianwen zalu*,1.

Local academies also struggled with political pressure. At the Capital Academy, which is introduced in the fourth chapter of *A Sketch*, scholars suffered from persecution and violence.[17] Liu Tong composed the long essay "Capital Academy" (shoushan shuyuan, 首善書院) to commemorate two leading scholars from the Donglin society—Zou Yuanbiao 鄒元標 (1551–1624) and Feng Congwu 馮從吾 (1557–1627).[18] As a type of public space, the Confucian academy played a vital role in the formation of the Donglin society, and the academy in Beijing further secured the expansion of the Donglin's position in the national political landscape.[19] In 1604, scholar officials Gu Xiancheng 顧憲成 (1550–1612) and Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562–1626) established the Donglin Academy in Wuxi, Jiangsu. They not only gave lectures on Confucian classics, but more importantly, regularly organized public meetings to discuss current affairs, thereby gradually constructing an influential base of political power.[20] The confrontations between Donglin members and their enemies—in the early stage, the grand secretariat Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582) and later the chief eunuch Wei Zhongxian—further reinforced their reputation among both literati and commoners throughout the country.[21]

In *A Sketch*, Liu Tong, who was politically affiliated with the Restoration society, the successor of the Donglin, clearly expressed his admiration for the Donglin lectures and his

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[17] For an introduction to the Capital Academy, see Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, 220–21.

[18] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 149–52.

[19] Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, 220.

[20] For the history of the Donglin society and the Restoration society, see Ono Kazuko, *Minki tōsha kō: Tōrintō to Fukusha*. For a Chinese translation, see Ono Kazuko and Li Qing 李慶, *Mingji dangshe kao* 明季黨社考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2006). For a study on the factional controversies between the Donglin members and the eunuch faction, see Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572–1644*, 95–136; and John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China*.

[21] Ono Kazuko and Li Qing, *Mingji dangshe kao*, 137–67.

sympathy for those who were persecuted during factional controversies.[22] From Liu Tong's perspective, the academy was a critical place serving the proper development of the country, because it not only cultivated qualified statesmen, but also collected public opinion and functioned as an agency of independent inspection. To begin the essay "Capital Academy," Liu Tong presents a philosophical discussion on the necessity of moral education: "Heaven must be defended by humankind; a human being must be protected by a [righteous] mind; and a mind must be enlightened by learning."[23] Lectures at the local academy played a vital role in supporting and supplementing what the Imperial Academy promoted, especially on rejuvenating one's nature through filial piety, loyalty, and benevolence, and eliminating moral corruption from the outside.[24] But this didactic tone does not last long, and soon it shifts to a harsh assault on the corrupt behavior in society. Liu Tong denounces the fact that in the current day, people could hardly distinguish loyalty from hypocrisy or erudition from pedantry. Lacking a solid moral education, they blindly followed the "truly vicious" (*zhen'e*, 真惡) and the "straightforwardly sly" (*zhijian*, 直奸) who monitored the government and shamelessly participated in the persecution of righteous scholars. As the only local academy in the northern capital over the course of the preceding two centuries, the Capital Academy endeavored to improve this situation.

The major part of this essay displays teachings of Zou Yuanbiao and Feng Congwu. Through the meticulous citation of their dialogs, Liu Tong preserves these scholars' astute debates on topics such as social responsibility, human morality, political legitimacy, and a

[22] Zhang Yonggang, *Donglin dangyi yu wanming wenxue huodong*, 165–89; Wu Guopin, *Jingling pai yu mingdai wenxue piping*, 15–25.

[23] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 149. "謂天下不以人守，人不以心固，心不以學明，烏可哉！"

[24] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 149.

premodern concept of the "public" (*gong*, 公).[25] The two conducted seminars between 1621 and 1623, but this academy was soon forced to close following slander from the eunuch faction. Liu Tong sorrowfully recalls the shutdown of the academy in 1623:

> Their lectures did not last long. When Cui Chengxiu (1571–1627) and Wei Zhongxian gradually acquired unbridled power, Investigating Censor Ni Wenhuan (?–1627, *jinshi* 1619) slandered [their teaching] as heretical. The masters were banished. A memorial was sent [to the emperor], proposing that all steles [erected in the academy] should be smashed. The memorial says, "People gathered here are neither respectable nor estimable. The words they said are neither serious nor important. The greetings they made are neither sincere nor genuine. The pancakes they ate are neither cold nor hot."[26] Then the steles were crushed, and the broken pieces were displayed outside the gate to the public. Tablets in honor of sages were destroyed. Books on classics, history, regulations, and decrees were burned into ashes in the hall. And then the building complex was torn down.
>
> 講未幾，崔、魏盛，黨禍深，御史倪文煥等詆為偽學，斥逐，請碎其碑。有疏曰："聚不三不四之人，說不痛不癢之話，做不深不淺之揖，啖不冷不熱之餅。"乃碎碑，暴其碎於門外。乃毀先聖主，焚棄經史典律於堂中。院且拆矣。[27]

Physical violence from the court led to the demise of the academy, and accusations from the court put an end to the two scholars' philosophical teachings. In the quoted passage, the language of the accusatory memorial denouncing the Donglin scholars is vulgar and vernacular, which contrasts with the speeches on "mind" (*xin*, 心) and "learning" (*xue*, 學) presented in the early part of the essay. In 1628, the enemies of Donglin were punished, and Wei Zhongxian and many of his confidantes were sentenced death. But rather than being restored, the Capital Academy was confiscated by the court and transformed to other use. Between 1629 and 1634, Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562–1633) from the Ministry of Rites and his missionary colleague

[25] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 150–51.

[26] The meaning of the last sentence on pancakes is unclear. I interpret this sentence as the author saying that these people were planning to do bad things.

[27] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 151.

Johann Adam Schall von Bell (in Chinese, Tang Ruowang 湯若望 [1591–1666]) established their offices in the defunct academy and worked there to compile the new calendar.[28]

Three years later, after the publication of *A Sketch*, another political movement broke out, this time led by the Restoration society. In 1638, imperial students from the Imperial Academy at Nanjing, led by Wu Yingji 吳應箕 (1594–1645) and Chen Zhenhui 陳貞慧 (1604–1656), posted a public impeachment of Ruan Dacheng 阮大鋮 (1587–1646) and Ma Shiying 馬士英 (1596–1647), who had been Wei Zhongxian's henchmen and were persistently scheming against their political opponents. As many sources recorded, violent conflicts and bloody protest broke out, and the Imperial Academy at Nanjing, as a place of honor in Confucian learning, became a theatrical site staging political farce.[29]

After investigating the social movements in which Confucian scholars had participated, the tension between the text of "Stone Drums in the Imperial Academy" and its historical context became obvious. Liu Tong's diligent description of the perfect organization of the academy is by no means the reality. Ironically, what actually happened with the imperial students of the academy was almost precisely the opposite of what the text presents. Therefore, I propose that concerns about scholarly identity and anxiety over the political climate provoked Liu Tong's "redundant" and "garrulous" discourse on the Imperial Academy. This long passage disguises and, paradoxically, betrays the troubles scholars faced. Liu Tong intended to convince the reader

[28] Pingyi Chu, "Archiving Knowledge: A Life History of the 'Calendrical Treatises of the Chongzhen Reign (Chongzhen lishu)'," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* (2007): 159–84.

[29] For instance, in the famous drama *Peach Blossom* Fan, Kong Shangren restages the ceremony at the Imperial Academy at Nanjing as a farce. See "Hongding 閧丁," *Taohuashan* 桃花扇 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1959), 22–29.

that the Imperial Academy was still functioning well, when in reality, in the early 1630s, all educational institutions were in a state of deep and widespread crisis.

4.2 The Stone Drums

When writing about the Imperial Academy, Liu Tong eulogizes his present condition hyperbolically; in the case of the Stone Drums, his full attention to historical information reflects a nuanced interpretation of the past. In the second half of the "Stone Drums" essay, the narrative shifts from descriptions of the academy to a study of the ancient stone inscriptions, in which Liu Tong employs the travel story of these objects to demonstrate the political legitimacy of the capital. The physical movement and the transformation of the stone material—from the provinces to Beijing over the course of more than one millennium—were intricately involved with several significant events related to Beijing. Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng both engaged extensively with the scholarship on antiquarianism; Liu Tong carefully selected episodes of the objects' experience, weaved them into a seemingly authentic and coherent narrative, and then formulated his account in *A Sketch*.

Before the analysis of *A Sketch*, we first review Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng's broader research on antiquarianism. Yu Yizheng compiled a catalogue, titled *Records of Metal and Stone under Heaven* (Tianxia jinshi zhi 天下金石志, referred to as *Records of Metal and Stone*), and published it in 1632.[30] Enlisting thousands of steles from each province of the Ming state, this

[30] Yu Yizheng, *Tianxia jinshizhi* 天下金石志, *Xuxiu sikuquanshu* 續修四庫全書 (XXSKQS), *shibu* 史部 vol. 886 (Shnaghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995). The edition collected in XXSKQS was printed during the Chongzhen reign, and the original book is collected in Beijing Library. There is another edition published in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編, *erji* 二輯 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1979), 79–874. This is a reprint of one woodblock edition published in 1868.

book is an important bibliography on stone inscriptions.[31] The description in the *Records of Metal and Stone* is quite simple, providing only the basic information of the stele's name and location. But this book demonstrates a new direction in the study of antiquarianism in the late imperial period that began to use knowledge of epigraphy in the study of historical geography and local history.

Although recording stone inscriptions in the writing of places appeared very early in China, new trends occurred in the early seventeenth century.[32] When the study of historical geography developed into a significant academic field, stone steles, stone tablets, and cliff inscriptions were included in researching the history of both famous sites and local administrative units. [33] Located in a physical environment, such as a monastery, a village, or a scenic spot, these kinds of texts are testaments to specific events that either happened in or were related to this place. As the Qing epigrapher Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818) relates, "The [inscription on] metal and stone constitutes one independent type of document. It can be used to examine [the information of] cities, mausoleums, waterways and canals, and garrisons and passes. The traces reflecting the rise and fall from the past to the present are greatly useful to

[31] See Rong Yuan 容媛, *Jinshi shu mulu* 金石書目錄, (Beiping: Guoli zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1930), *juan* 1, 1a. Ye Jun 葉鈞, *Shilu jinshi shuzhi* 石廬金石書志 (Nanchang: Baodaige, 1923), *juan* 1, 1a–3b.

[32] For instance, in Li Daoyuan's *Commentary of the Waterways Treatise* (a.515 CE).

[33] As Naitō Konan argues, from the Song to the Qing, the historical and historiographical values of *jinshi* were gradually exploited in depth. Meanwhile, along with *jinshi*, the treatise on *duyi* (capital and city, 都邑) became another crucial category in historical writing. In the twelfth century, epigraphy primarily lingers in recording and categorizing primary information of ancient objects. When it comes to the eighteenth century, epigraphers, represented by Qian Daxin and Ruan Yuan, were able to comprehensively employ inscriptions into the study of multiple disciplines, for instance, to re-discuss the content of Confucian classics through ancient pronunciations and graphic forms. See Naitō Konan 内藤湖南, *Shina shigakushi* 支那史学史, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2013), 221–36.

formulating policies" (夫金石實一方文獻，可以考證都邑、陵墓、河渠、關隘。古今興廢之迹，大有裨益於政事). [34] Throughout the Qing dynasty, we find epigraphic monographs composed according to geographical categories, such as *The Evidential Study on the Metal and Stone in the Capital* (Jingji jinshikao, 京畿金石考).[35] Yu Yizheng's and Liu Tong's research can be treated as the precedents of this later scholarship.

Yu Yizheng's *Records of Metal and Stone* was excluded from the *Siku* project and remains to be studied.[36] My research indicates that Yu's work once appealed to several scholars who were interested in the local culture of Beijing. Sun Guomi 孙国敉 (1582–1648), an active figure in the literati circle in the capital during the early seventeenth century, left a large collection of commentaries on Yu's book. He added explanatory entries as annotations to the main text, corrected the inaccurate information, and composed several long colophons on the blank pages of the book. This hardcopy was later acquired by the famous Qing epigrapher Weng Fanggang 翁方剛 (1733–1811), who was also a native of Beijing.[37] Sun also composed *Records of Sightseeing in the Capital of Yan* (Yandu youlanzhi, 燕都游览志), an urban guidebook finished before *A Sketch*, which, though no longer existent, was once popular in the late Ming.[38]

Scholars' mutual interests in antiquarianism, local history, and social customs were merged and exemplified in *A Sketch*. By 1632, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng had already set up the

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[34] Sun Xingyan 孫星衍, "Preface," *Jingji jinshikao* 京畿金石考 (Shanghai: Shangwu yishuguan, 1939), 1.

[35] More works could be found in Ye Jun, *Shilu jinshi shuzhi*, *juan* 1–4, "Fengdi lei 分地類."

[36] Ji Yun et al. ed. *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 748.

[37] *Tianxia jinshizhi*, 2, 447.

[38] For an introduction to Sun Guomi and his *Records*, see Wang Canchi, *Yandu guji kao,* 140–58. Although this book is lost, many of the passages were transcribed in Zhu Yizun's *Rixia jiuwen* (1688).

writing plan of this urban miscellany. They had collected considerable numbers of textual sources and started doing fieldwork in Beijing. In his preface to Yu Yizheng's *Records of Metal and Stone*, Liu Tong lists the epigraphic scholarship that Yu Yizheng used as reference, which includes the same materials that they consulted to during the writing of the essay "Stone Drums."[39]

Discovered in the seventh century, the ten stone drums remain one of the earliest stone inscriptions in China. From the Tang dynasty (618–907) onward, Chinese scholars conducted comprehensive research on this set of ancient objects and generated discussion on its historical, philological, and calligraphic value.[40] Liu Tong employs two vital topics in the study of the Stone Drums to show how the objects contributed to establishing the political legitimacy of Beijing. The first concerns the historical discussions about when and why the stone boulders were carved and the subsequent transformations that the objects experienced. The second topic relates to the preservation, interpretation, and appreciation of the stone inscription, made in the ancient and mythic Grand Seal style (*dazhuan* 大篆 or Zhou style 籀体) (Figure 4.1). We will examine the first topic in this section and the second topic in the next.

[39] Yu Yizheng, *Tianxia jinshizhi,* 30–31.

[40] For an introduction to the historiography of the Stone Drums, see Gilbert L. Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in* (Nettetal: Steyler Verl-Wort und Werk, 1988), 37–112.

Figure 4.1 An ink rubbing of the Stone Drum “Wujü,” made during the Song dynasty. Source: *Songta shiguwen* 宋拓石鼓文 (Osaka: Yuya Hakubundo, 1913), 1.

In the essay “Stone Drums,” Liu Tong gives a thorough review of all the studies on this set of ancient objects, from the Tang dynasty to the late Ming. He not only lists the names of scholars who contributed knowledge about the drums, but also carefully summarizes their arguments and compares their controversial opinions, specifically on the date of the inscriptions.[41] Liu Tong believed that the stones were treasures transmitted from King Xuan of Zhou (Zhou Xuanwang 周宣王, r. 827–782 BCE), recording an imperial hunting ceremony of the Zhou court and demonstrating the ancient king’s virtue at performing military arts. With the use of archaeological materials, modern scholars have proposed that the Stone Drums were most

[41] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4–5.

likely carved between the late fifth to the early fourth century BCE, in the state of Qin during the Warring States period (fifth c.–221 BCE). In *A Sketch*, although inaccurate from our perspective, Liu Tong's attribution to the Western Zhou indicates a desire to be connected to this great period of the remote past.

Such admiration for antiquity frames the account of the Stone Drums. The arrival of the stones at the Imperial Academy is employed to demonstrate the acquisition of the "Heavenly Mandate" by Ming Beijing. Liu Tong's description of the Stone Drums begins with an introduction of their physical features:

> Stone Drums placed inside the temple gate are made of stone in the shape of a drum, with a height of two *chi* [about 90 cm] and a diameter measuring over one *chi* [about 60 cm]. There are ten of them. The inscriptions are in the Zhou style. The content eulogizes a hunting ceremony conducted by the Son of Heaven.
>
> 廟門內之石鼓也，其質石，其形鼓，其高二尺，廣徑一尺有奇，其數十，其文籀，其辭誦天子之田。[42]
>
> The travel history follows:
>
> First, they were hidden in the wilderness of Chencang. Zheng Yuqing from the Tang dynasty rescued and placed them in the Confucian Temple of Fengxiang. However, one of the drums was lost. In the fourth year of Huangyou (1052), Xiang Chuanshi acquired it among the people. At that time, the ten drums were reunified. In the second year of Daguan during the Song dynasty (1108), they were moved from Xi'an to Bianliang, firstly placed in the Royal Learning Retreat and later in the Hall of Preserving Harmony. Inscriptions were inlaid with gold. The pattern was elegant and refined. In the second year of Jingkang (1127), the Jurchen carted them off to Yan (Beijing), scraped the gold off the stone, placed the drums in the household of Wang Xuanfu, and later moved them to the provincial academy of Daxing. In the eleventh year of the Dade reign (1307), after being appointed as the prime lecturer of the Grand Capital, Yu Ji found them amid mud and grass. From then on, the drums were moved inside the Gate of the Grand Achievement and finally arrayed on the left and right sides [of the entrance].
>
> 初潛陳倉野中，唐鄭余慶取置鳳翔之夫子廟，而亡其一。皇祐四年，向傳師得之民間，十數乃合。宋大觀二年，自京兆移汴梁，初置辟雍，後保和殿。嵌金其字陰，

[42] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.

錯錯然。靖康二年，金人輦至燕，剔取其金，置鼓王宣撫家，複移大興府學。元大德十一年，虞集為大都教授，得之泥草中，始移國學大成門內，左右列矣。[43]

In the quotation, a narrative pattern emerges in the discourse of what the Stone Drums experienced after their first discovery. During critical moments of political transformation, specifically the dynastic transition, material features of the drums often permutated along with their relocation to new places. In the Tang dynasty, the boulders were discovered in the wilderness and later transported to the local Confucian temple at Shaanxi, and in this process one drum was lost. During the Northern Song, the lost piece was reunited with the group, and the complete set was transported to the capital, where it entered the imperial collection. When the Jurchen conquered Bianliang during the collapse of the Northern Song dynasty, the drums were vandalized.

From Liu Tong's perspective, bearing ancient poetry on the hunting ceremonies conducted by the king of the Zhou, these objects testified to the legitimacy of a dynasty's governance. If one dynasty could take good care of the drums, the objects would reciprocally demonstrate cosmic approval. The symbolic meaning of ancient ritual objects as "portable monuments" was initially established in the *Zuo Tradition* (the *Zuozhuan* commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, 左傳) in the story of "inquiring about the weight of the nine cauldrons."[44] Ambitious to challenge the rulership of the Zhou, the master of Chu asked the Zhou king's envoy about the size and weight of the monumental cauldrons, a set of ritual utensils that were transmitted from earlier periods and currently preserved in the Zhou court. The envoy

[43] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.

[44] See Wu Hung's analysis of the story in *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 1–16.

replied, “Size and weight depend on virtue, not on the cauldrons.”[45] After explaining how the cauldrons were created based on the ancient sages’ observation of nature, he continues to explain how cauldrons were transmitted during the dynastic successions of Xia, Shang, and Zhou: When the last king of Xia possessed dimmed virtue, the cauldrons moved to the house of Shang. When the last king of Shang became violent and tyrannical, the cauldrons moved to the house of Zhou. When virtue is bright and resplendent, the cauldrons, though small, are heavy; when virtue is distorted, dimmed, and confused, the cauldrons, though large, are light. Thus, heaven blesses those of bright virtue. This is called the “Heavenly Mandate.”[46]

The envoy’s narration on the transmission of the nine cauldrons sets up the primary agenda for the story of the Stone Drums. Representing the “bright kingly virtue” (*mingde*, 明德) and the submission of the “nine states” (*jiuzhou*, 九州), the cauldrons symbolize the political legitimacy and cultural authority of the ruler. The envoy’s explanation indicates that human efforts in reduplicating the vessel could interfere with neither the maintenance nor the transformation of legitimacy. The cauldrons have their own rule determining their choice of place of residence: they would only leave the old house and move toward the next meritorious one when the heavenly mandate changed.[47]

In *A Sketch*, the correspondence between ancient objects and the heavenly mandate was woven into an account of spiritual resonance between the human world and the cosmos. As Liu Tong relates in the preface, in Beijing, “legendary figures gathered, and things [found there] are

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[45] See Kong Yingda 孔穎達, “Xuangong sannian 宣公三年,” *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), 602–03. English translation cited from Stephen W. Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg ed. *Zuo Traditions: Commentary On the "Spring and Autumn Annals”* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 601.

[46] *Zuo Traditions*, 601–3.

[47] Ibid.

bright and great: ancient inscriptions from the Zhou and miraculous images from the Han. Why did they appear in Beijing? It is because of the cosmological resonance [between the capital and heaven]" (於焉神人萃，物爽馮，成周古文，漢代瑞像，脛翼謂何，氣先符應).[48] Similar to the legendary cauldrons, the Stone Drums also represent the heavenly mandate. Their presence in Beijing manifests the legitimacy of the contemporary dynasty.

Nonetheless, the narrative of the Stone Drums further complicates the direct relation between object and legitimacy. Liu Tong distinguishes the Ming from the previous regimes; to be specific, he criticizes the nomadic dynasties that once possessed the objects and governed north China, particularly the Jurchen Jin. Reading through miscellaneous accounts from the Northern Song to the Republican era, sinologist Gilbert Mattos clearly unravels the controversial statements and doubtful facts that were accumulated during the thousand-year study of the Stone Drums.[49] Based on Mattos's research and my own reading of the original sources, I propose that there are two suspect parts of Liu Tong's passage on the non-Han Chinese past of Beijing that are critically important in implying his concerns beyond the antiquarian issues. The first concerns the practice of inlaying gold on the inscribed characters; the second relates to how the Stone Drums were finally transported to Beijing.

The account of inlaying gold initially appeared in *Records of Steles from the Fu Studio* (Fuzhai beilu, 復齊碑錄), written by the connoisseur Wang Houzhi 王厚之 (1131–1204) of the Southern Song. Wang relates: "[Emperor Huizong] issued an imperial edict to fill the inscriptions with gold, in order to demonstrate their value and solve the troubles caused by

[48] Liu Tong, "Preface," 4.
[49] Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*.

repeated rubbings."[50] According to Wang, gold was inlaid so that the uneven inscribed surface would be filled in so as to protect the Stone Drums from excessive erosion brought by the heavy tapping used in making rubbings.[51] Meanwhile, the precious and glittering metal symbolized the emperor's dignity and represented his admiration for antiquity. However, this account is unfounded, because among the many descriptions from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, none of them mentions any practice related to gold.[52] Modern archaeologists, represented by Ma Heng 馬衡 (1881–1955), have questioned the plausibility of inlaying solid metal on stone and suggested that during the Northern Song, people might have applied gold-colored paste, a soft, creamy material, to restore and decorate the eroded surface. But what actually happened to the Stone Drums cannot be fully demonstrated. Today, no trace of gold can be found on the actual objects.[53]

In the story of inlaying gold, Wang Houzhi romanticizes Emperor Huizong's deeds; here Huizong was an erudite emperor who keenly loved art and literature and cared deeply about the Stone Drums. This characterization seems to be particularly appealing to later readers, as seen in the account from Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348), who was an eminent poet and high-ranking official of the Yuan:

> Tradition has it that the drums were moved from Jingzhao [today, the Xi'an area] to Bianliang [Kaifeng, the capital of the Northern Song] during the reign of Huizong. Placing value and importance on them, their inscribed characters were filled with gold. When the Jurchen people took Bianliang, all its valuables were carried off to the capital

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[50] Wang Houzhi 王厚之, *Fuzhai beilu* 復齋碑錄, from Wang Chang 王昶, *Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin meishu chubanshe, 1990), vol. 1, 5b. "(宋徽宗) 詔以金填其文，以示貴重，且絕摹拓之患."

[51] For an introduction to rubbing and stone inscription and their connections to the past, see Wu Hung, *A Story of Ruins*, 51–61.

[52] See Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 47.

[53] Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 47. Also see Xu Baogui, *Shiguwen yanjiu yu zhengli* 石鼓文研究與整理 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 12.

> of Yan [Beijing]. At first, those who moved them had no idea what these drums were. But on seeing their gold-filled characters, [they reasoned] that these must be valuable objects and therefore, the drums were set aside for removal to the north.
>
> 此鼓據傳聞徽宗時自京兆移至汴梁。貴重之，以黃金實其字。金人得汴梁，奇玩悉輦至燕京。移者初不知鼓為何物，但見其以金涂字，必貴物也，亦在北徙之列。[54]

Yu continues to relate that after being moved to the north, the drums were stored at the house of Wang Ji (Wang Xuanfu), which later became the prefectural academy of Beijing. However, the drums remained unknown to people and were only rediscovered in 1300. As Yu relates:

> Toward the end of the Dade period (1297–1304), when I was an instructor in Dadu [Beijing], I retrieved these drums from amid the mud and sow-thistles. I scrubbed them and stood them erect. There were ten in all. When I was an assistant instructor at the Imperial Academy, I pleaded to the prime minister of that time [regarding the drums] and got the Ministry of War to dispatch ten large carriages for transporting them. They were then placed inside the main gate of the present Imperial Academy, in sets of five, at the bases of the right and left partition walls. Brick pedestals were made to support them. Furthermore, open-lattice screens were made to enclose them, allowing them to be seen but not approached.
>
> 大德之末，集為大都教授。得此鼓於泥土草萊之中，洗刷扶植，後助教成均，言於時宰，得兵部差大車十乘載之，置於今國子學大成門內，左右壁下各五枚，為磚壇以乘之。又為疎欞而扃鐍之，使可觀而不可近。[55]

Yu Ji not only included Wang Houzhi's account of the Song-Jin transition, but also provided additional references about the Stone Drums' experience during the Jin-Yuan transition. His account has considerable authority and was widely quoted in epigraphic studies. Liu Tong also used this piece to write about the objects' most recent history. Notably, a highly subjective view is evident in Yu's text. He derides the Jurchen as being outside Confucian

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[54] Yu Ji, *Daoyuan xuegulu* 道園學古錄, in *Yu Ji quanji* 虞集全集 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2007), 596–97. Translation from Mattos with slight modification. Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 47.

[55] *Yu Ji quanji*, 597. Translation from Mattos with slight modification. Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 48.

learning, for they could "only see" (*danjian*, 但見) the material value of the gold and were blatantly ignorant of the drums' cultural significance. Moreover, mainly focusing on his personal contribution to the rescue—for instance, "*I* retrieved" and "*I* pleaded"—the latter half of the text indicates Yu Ji's intention to formulate a personal attachment to the ancient objects.

Liu Tong tells a similar story to problematize the deeds of the Jurchen. If the passage about the inlaid gold is suspicious in terms of the insufficiency of solid evidence, the following plot added in *A Sketch* about the Jurchen people's scraping the gold from the stone was even more dubious. Wang Yi 王祎 (1321–1372), a scholar who lived in the late Yuan, writes that the Jurchen scraped off the gold and abandoned the Stone Drums on their way back to Beijing, rather than in the city:

> Stone Drums from Qiyang are the only stone inscriptions that survived from the Three Dynasties. In the Eastern Capital of Song [Bianliang], gold was cast to fill in the inscribed text. [The drums] were moved to the Xuanhe Palace. When the Jurchen people conquered Bianliang, they scraped the gold off and abandoned [the stone]. … When our dynasty [Yuan] captured the central land, [the drums] were transported to the capital by carriages and then placed inside the main gate of the Imperial Academy.
>
> 岐陽石鼓，三代石刻之僅存於今者也。宋東都時，嘗鑄金填其刻文，移置宣和殿。金人入汴，剔取其金而棄去之。……國朝既取中原，乃輦至京師置國學廟門下。[56]

Multiple sources have suggested that the objects arrived in Beijing during the Jin dynasty; therefore, the chronological framework of Wang Yi's narrative is wrong.[57] The only record that corresponds to Wang Yi's claim is found in an art catalogue compiled in 1643 by a late-Ming art connoisseur named Wang Keyu 汪珂玉.[58] In terms of the arrival time of the drums

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[56] Wang Yi 王祎, *Wang Zhong ji* 王忠文集, in *Wenyuange siku quanshu* 文淵閣四庫全書 *jibu* 集部 vol. 1226 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 347.

[57] Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 47.

[58] Wang Keyu, "Shigu wen"石鼓文, *Shanhu wang* 珊瑚網 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 435–38. Wang Keyu's language is almost identical to Wang Yi's: "The

in Beijing, Wang Yi's statement is at odds with Yu Ji's. But Liu Tong strove to combine these two stories about inlaying and removing gold in one coherent narrative. As Liu Tong relates in *A Sketch*: "The Jurchen carted them off to Yan (Beijing), scraped the gold off the stone, and placed the drums in the household of Wang Xuanfu." Yu Ji's account and Wang Yi's notes were merged into an unquestionable "fact." It explained partly why the aged Stone Drums were preserved in such poor condition, and implicitly blamed the Jurchen people, who caused physical damage to the stone surface.

To better comprehend Liu Tong's criticism of the Jurchen, we should also examine how he represents the Northern Song dynasty—the regime conquered by the Jurchen—in the "Stone Drums" essay. It seems that during the Northern Song, these objects were well protected and remained in a pristine state until the Jurchen invasion. But in fact, Liu Tong conceals one especially unfortunate fact about the objects: one of the drums—lost during the Tang and recovered in the Song—had been refashioned into a stone mortar, with many inscriptions permanently lost and the stone material severely damaged (Figure 4.2). Although there are different opinions about the specific time, location, and finder of this discovery, the misfortune of the lost piece certainly caught scholars' attention, as we can see in many anecdotes and poems lamenting it.[59] These literary works, also collected in *A Sketch* following the essay, imagine the

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Jurchen entered Bianliang—they scraped the gold off and abandoned the Stone Drums. When the Yuan took over the central land, they transported the stone to Yanjing by carriages."

[59] According to Ouyang Xiu, nine drums were preserved in the prefectural academy at Fengxiang by Zheng Yuqing (746–820), and one of the ten drums was lost sometime between the late Tang and the early years of the Song and was recovered by Xiang Chuanshi in the year 1052. Liu Tong followed this account. Yet a different version, related by Wang Houzhi and Xue Jixuan 薛季宣 (1134–1173), asserts that Sima Chi 司馬池 (980–1041), the father of the celebrated Song scholar Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), acquired the nine drums and had them placed in the academy of Fengxiang, and Xiang Chuanshi retrieved the lost one in 1052. Xue Jixuan 薛季宣, "Qiyang Shigu ji" 岐陽石鼓記, from *Quan Song wen* 全宋文, vol. 5794 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2006), no. 258, 4. Mattos discusses the two versions in

miseries that the lost drum suffered during its truncation and repetitive poundings, and they often conclude by celebrating the final reunion of the set. Here, for example, is the poet Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 (1003–1060):

> When transmitted down to our dynasty, one drum was missing;
> The nine others were flaking, and their inscriptions had lost lines.
> A man of late accidentally saw affixed to a foot-pestle
> The missing drum serving as a mortar, scooped out in the center.
> His heart was overjoyed at the sight of the remaining script still on its side;
> And in exchanging one mortar for another, what harm could there be?
> Repairing the depression with stone for fear of its reuse to pound millet.
> The divine objects were brought together and settled in one place. [60]
>
> 傳至我朝一鼓亡，九鼓缺剥文失行。
> 近人偶見安碓床，亡鼓作臼刳中央。
> 心喜遺篆猶在旁，以臼易臼庸何傷？
> 以石補空恐舂粱，神物会合局一方。

detail and suggests that Zheng Yuqing might have initially moved the Stone Drums to Fengxiang, that it was Sima Chi who moved the Stone Drums to what was then the prefectural academy, and that Xiang Chuanshi found the lost boulder in 1052. Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 43–44.

[60] Mei Yaochen, "Shigu shi wei Lei yilao yincheng Jijiu Wugong," 石鼓詩為雷逸老因呈祭酒吳公, collected in *Dijing jingwulüe*, 5–6. Translation from Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 44–45.

Figure 4.2 Photo of the mortar-shaped drum. Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Shiguwen yanjiu* 石鼓文研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1955), 42.

Today collected in the Palace Museum at Beijing, this mortar/drum is half the height of the other nine, and its center material has been clearly scooped out. Liu Tong, who visited the Imperial Academy to examine the actual objects, must have known quite well its physical condition. However, in *A Sketch*, instead of elaborating on the "tragic" suffering of the mortar boulder, the narrative focuses on the return of the lost piece, presenting only the reunion of the set. The successful retrieval during the Northern Song underlines this dynasty's possession of the

heavenly mandate. In the subsequent transition between the Song and Jin dynasties, they became a trophy, similar to what we see in the story of the nine cauldrons. However, Liu Tong's narrative suggests that cosmic legitimacy was not automatically transferred to the Jin, even though the Jurchens had physically acquired the objects and had swept away the Song court. Because of the Jurchen's inability to recognize the drums' cosmic value—as they only paid attention to the inlaid gold—the heavenly mandate skipped them, lingered for a while in the Yuan, and finally resided with the Ming.

In the editorial remarks, Yu Yizheng reminds the reader that one of the most urgent purposes of their writing is "to repel [the influence from] the *yi* barbarian and promote [the spirit of] the *xia* Chinese" (退夷進夏).[61] Liu Tong's critique of the Jurchen certainly reflects a conventional disdain of the nomads from a Han Chinese perspective. But this stance reflects the social reality of Beijing in the mid-1630s. The Manchu people, who declared themselves to be the descendants of the Jurchen (the Later Jin 後金), had developed into a promising state known as the Great Jin and were steadily expanding their territory and scheming to conquer the Ming.[62] Here, the story about the discovery, abandonment, restoration, and preservation strove to reach two goals. The objects' constant movement and vulnerability were used rhetorically, to highlight the legitimacy of the Ming and at the same time to discredit and satirize the "misbehaviors" of the nomads.

4.3 The Challenge of Reading

Stone inscription is the medium connecting the reader to the past. But as stones erode, so too do the stone inscriptions carved in them. This was especially true in the case of the Stone

[61] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 6.

[62] Hong Taiji (1592–1643), also known as Emperor Taizong of the Qing, changed the name of the Manchu state from Great Jin to Great Qing in 1636.

Drums. Since its first discovery, the drums' inscriptions have challenged every attempt to decode them, and generations of fascinated scholars—Liu Tong among them—have been compelled to discern their meaning. This section examines the second topic about the drums that Liu Tong spent considerable effort discussing: the considerable challenge of reading the inscriptions. The existent text enabled late-Ming scholars to connect their present time to a great, ancient era and demonstrated the legitimacy of Beijing as the capital. Nonetheless, the many parts of the text that remained illegible—through a combination of damaged and incomplete characters and the philological knowledge required to decode them—put full comprehension of the inscription out of reach, confirming the ultimate isolation of the present and its irreversible disjunction with the past. In this sense, Liu Tong developed new strategies for interpreting the significance of the text's illegibility. In this section, we will first examine how the late-Ming authors read the Stone Drums and then discuss how they read other steles related to the illegible inscription that can be found in *A Sketch*.

The restoration of the Stone Drums' inscription has been a difficult task for epigraphers. The unfamiliar script style, the incomplete strokes, and the gradual loss of characters over time make the reading process extremely difficult.[63] The drum Wujü (My chariot, 吾車) is the most famous of the ten, partly because its opening lines are reminiscent of those in the ode "Strong Chariot" (Chegong, 車攻) from *The Classic of Poetry*, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry (from the eleventh to the seventh centuries BCE), and partly because it is the only one of the ten to have survived more or less intact. This drum describes a scene of noble hunting in

[63] There are diverse opinions about the sequence, purposes, and names of the ten drums. Here I follow the general approach of the Qing dynasty, which is to select the first two characters in the inscription as the name of the drum. According to this naming convention, the ten drums are Wujü, Qianyi, Tianju 田車, Luanju 鑾車, Lingyu 霝雨, Zuoyuan 作原, Ershi 而師, Majian 馬薦, Wushui 吾水, and Wuren 吾人.

which chariots and horses competed in the field.[64] The drum Qianyi (the Qian River, 汧殹) had been well preserved in the Northern Song and was severely damaged only after the Yuan. Hence, using early rubbings, the content, which depicts a nobleman's fishing scene, has been restored.[65] The remaining inscriptions are more or less incomplete, with the number of characters varying. By the early seventeenth century, over half the inscriptions could no longer be read.

In *A Sketch*, following the story of the Stone Drums, Liu Tong reviews the number of characters that existed in each period and notes the accurate number of characters remaining on each boulder:[66]

> Nowadays, the drum inscription has been abraded. But still, we can calculate the number of the "*squares*"—there should be six hundred and fifty-seven *words*. What was preserved before [the Song dynasty] could not be verified. In the Zhiping era of Song (1064–1067), there were 465 *characters*; in the Zhiyuan era of Yuan (1335–1340), there were 386 *characters*. Later on, Yang Shen said that in the Zhengde reign (1506–1521), only thirty more characters were left.[67] According to the rubbing today, the first drum [has] sixty-one characters, the second forty-seven, the third sixty-five, the fourth forty-seven, the fifth twelve, the sixth forty-one, the seventh eight, the eighth thirty-eight, and the ninth six. The total number of remaining characters is three hundred and twenty-five. No character is preserved on the tenth drum.
>
> 鼓文今剝漫，而可計數其方，要當六百五十七言。先所存無考。在宋治平中，存字四百六十有五，元至元中存字三百八十有六。楊慎乃曰：正德中存字僅三十餘。據今拓本，則甲鼓字六十一，乙鼓字四十七，丙鼓字六十五，丁鼓字四十七，戊鼓字一十二，己鼓字四十一，庚鼓字八，壬鼓字三十八，癸鼓字六，共三百二十五字存。惟辛鼓字無存者。[68]

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[64] For the study on this drum, see Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 135–65.

[65] For the study on this drum, see Mattos, *The Stone Drums of Ch'in*, 167–96.

[66] To further elaborate the change of legible numbers, Ji Yun, in the 1766 edition, added marginal comments, telling the reader that the data of the Song was from Ouyang Xiu's *Jigulu* and that of the Yuan from Pan Di's *Yinxun*. *Dijing jingwulüe*, edited by Ji Yun (Jinling: Chongdetang), *juan* 1, 2b.

[67] Yang Shen 楊慎, *Shiguwen yinshi* 石鼓文音釋, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編, edited by Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936).

[68] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 4.

Here, Liu Tong's account reveals two important points. First, the loss of legible characters often coincided with the dynastic transitions: from the Northern Song to the Yuan, eighty characters were lost, and from the Yuan to the Ming, another fifty characters disappeared. Second, the impossible task of retrieving the original inscription, comprising the lost characters and the remaining ones, indicates the epistemological limit of reading them. The tension occurs between what actually existed in the past and what can be transmitted to and thus known by people in the present.

With the help of ink rubbings, Liu Tong meticulously examined the stone surface and tried to calculate the number of squares (*fang*, 方) in each stone, with each square corresponding to the space that should have been occupied by a single character. The total number of squares would then equal the total number of characters that had originally been inscribed on the stone. Liu proposed that based on his examination by squares, "there should be (*yaodang*, 要當) 657 *words* (*yan*, 言);" now, about half of the original inscriptions, "the 325 *characters* (*zi*, 字)" were preserved (*cun*, 存). In classical Chinese, *zi* refers to the graphs, whereas *yan* often implies a speaker, a subject who conducted the action of speaking and telling. The early dictionary *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* (Shuowen jiezi, 說文解字; Xu Shen 許慎 [ca.58–ca.148]) explains, "*yan* is a direct speech" (直言曰言).[69] In this sense, the six hundred squares formulate utterances from the past. And thus, the Stone Drums, as the carrier of these utterances, acquired some kind of subjectivity. Here the drums attempted to deliver a message, but their meaning could not be completely transmitted because of the loss of the characters.

[69] Xu Shen 許慎 and Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字註 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 89.

The tension between legibility and illegibility has unsettled scholars for a long time. In *A Sketch*, Liu Tong included eighteen poems after the essay "Stone Drums" that displayed the impressions of several scholars upon reading the inscription. Scholars from an array of historical periods, including Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) of the Tang, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) of the Song, and Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636) and Fang Fengnian (1585–1646) of the Ming, shared similar interests in exploring the meaning of the text and pondering the mythic face of the past shown through the carved strokes. But it wasn't until the time of *A Sketch* that the illegible parts of the inscription stood out from the rest, actively and positively engaging with the reading process rather than merely working as a testament to the passage of time.

Han Yu's "Song on the Stone Drums" (*shigu ge*, 石鼓歌, 811 CE) is one of the earliest records about the objects. In it, the poet pays special attention to the visual quality of the inscription and praises the winding strokes as "wings of flying phoenix" and "branches of coral and emerald jade."[70] In the Stone Drums poem written by Su Shi in 1061, the illegible part began to be noticed, but it was depicted as a negative element that impeded the reading process. Su Shi relates:

> Indistinct, half [of the inscription] already is hidden by scars and calluses.
> Among the sharp angles one still can discern heels and elbows.
> The clear brightness of the waning moon hidden by clouds and mist.
> The glistening of millet standing out among the useless weeds.
>
> 模糊半已似瘢胝，詰曲猶能辨跟肘。
> 娟娟缺月隱雲霧，濯濯嘉禾秀稂莠。[71]

[70] Han Yu, "Shigu ge," *Han Changli shiji biannian jianzhu* 韓昌黎詩集編年箋注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), 408–14. Also in *Dijing jingwulüe*, 5–6. The English translation of this poem is from Stephen W. Bushell, see Bushell "The Stone Drums from the Chou Dynasty," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Shanghai, 1874): 136–37.

[71] Su Shi, "Fengxiang baguan, Shigu" 鳳翔八觀：石鼓, in *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 蘇軾全集校注 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2010), 298–99; *Dijing jingwulüe*, 6–7.

Su Shi's observation of the stone surface includes not only the legible strokes, but also the illegible part that resists comprehension. In contrast to Han Yu, who seems to have had no interest in the erased area, Su Shi frankly admits the problems encountered during reading and further elaborates on the visual feature of the illegible section.[72] As seen from the underlined sentences in the quotation, from Su's perspective, the character remnants are like the "graceful waning moon" (*juanjuan queyue*, 娟娟缺月) and "glistening growing millet" (*zhuozhuo jiahe*, 濯濯嘉禾); although incomplete, they are still beautiful by nature. But the erased surface surrounding the strokes is visually unpleasant like "calluses and scars" (*banzhi*, 瘢胝) on human skin and obscure and blurry like "clouds and mists" (*yunwu*, 雲霧) and "useless weeds" (*langyou*, 稂莠).

However, Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng had different feelings about the illegibility of the inscription. In their eyes, the lost characters are by no means unappealing "calluses" or meaningless "weeds." In the poem attached after the "Stone Drums" essay, Yu Yizheng speaks with delight:

> Within the incomplete text, the principle of the cosmos can be observed.
> From the first [drum] to the tenth, Fate preserves them.
> Please, do not lament the lost characters!
> The strokes remaining and graphs left have the essential spirit.
>
> 完缺半滿閱乾坤，自甲至癸數則存。
> 君莫空悲失去字，殘鉤剩畫宛精魂。[73]

Translation from Michael Anthony Fuller, *The Road to East Slope: The Development of Su Shi's Poetic Voice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 99–102.

[72] Fuller also mentions the difference of perspective in Han Yu's and Su Shi's poems. He interprets the difference as reflecting the philosophical principles of Su's literary activity. I appreciate his interpretation. Fuller, *The Road to East Slope*, 104.

[73] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 13.

The material form might change, characters might disappear, and strokes might have become incomplete, but the "essential spirit" has been preserved in the stone. Along with Liu Tong's calculation of the grid-like squares—the now indecipherable spaces where characters used to exist—Yu Yizheng's embrace of the imperfection drained the sadness that was common in early accounts. They did not treat the Stone Drums simply as bearing historical information. For Liu and Yu, this set of objects carried more than mere historical records; they bore witness to the historical transformation of regimes. Their existence per se constituted part of the history. While the legible part of the inscription had its historical value, the illegible part demonstrated the very existence of history itself.

As Yu Yizheng relates in the editorial remarks, stone inscriptions, venerated as the "essential part of the landscape" (*shanchuan meimu,* 山川眉目, literally translated as "the eyebrows and eyes of mountains and rivers"), are of great importance in writing the history of a place.[74] However, throughout *A Sketch*, a detailed discussion of stone inscriptions as a genre per se is rarely found, and in most cases, Liu Tong offers only a succinct record of dates, titles, and locations. From the perspective of Liu and Yu, most of the inscriptions in Beijing were produced during the periods ruled by non-Han dynasties, namely the Liao, Jin, and Yuan, so that "the text was uncultivated" (*wenzi huangwu*, 文字荒蕪) and thus not worthy of remembrance.[75] The only two exceptions are the Stone Drums and a group of "exotic" steles depicted in the essay titled "Chongguo Monastery" (Chongguo si, 崇國寺). In the rest of this section, I will examine how Liu Tong describes the challenges of reading brought by these exotic inscriptions. Then, through

[74] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 6.
[75] Ibid.

comparison, I will summarize how the illegibility of the drums' text distinguishes itself from all other cases.

Founded during the reign of Kublai Khan (1260–1290), the Chongguo Monastery, one of the most prestigious Buddhist institutes in the city, received constant imperial patronage during the Yuan and Ming dynasties. It was a place of ethnic diversity. Buddhist monks from Tibet, Mongol, and Inner Asia preached here. As related in *A Sketch*, in its yard stood six unusual steles, the inscriptions of which were not written in classical Chinese. Two of them had Sanskrit texts and were established by foreign monks in 1512. The foreign language, completely unfamiliar and strange, was particularly appealing. As Liu Tong relates:

> We have no idea whether these Sanskrit characters are refined or not. [They are arranged in] a neat and clear manner, so it must be a work of refinement. The Sanskrit sentences are truly incomprehensible. Those who claimed to know the language explained the meaning to the viewers [but such explanation cannot be verified]. [Still, the inscription] has inspired awe and respect among us.
>
> 梵字不知其工焉否也。濟濟歷歷然，此必工矣。梵語乃不可識，矧可解以不識解，生人齊遫。[76]

Fascinated by the exotic style and graphic beauty of the Sanskrit, visitors were eager to read the steles, but without expertise in this foreign language, efforts to translate them were frustrated. Viewers had quite the opposite response, however, to another "exotic" stele in the same yard, which carried on it an imperial edict from Emperor Shundi, the last emperor of the Yuan dynasty. Composed in vernacular language rather than the classical Chinese that was usually used in monumental text inscriptions, this stele became the target of Liu Tong's mockery. He continues to relate:

> There is one stele recording the Emperor's edict from the fourteenth year of the Zhizheng reign (1354). Although [the Yuan writer] learned Chinese characters, the hands were constrained by the brush. The strokes are weak and stiff. It is difficult [for them] to

[76] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 33.

> properly design the layout. [The edict] has been translated into Chinese, [but in order to read it out,] [the reader must] stick his tongue between his teeth, and then stutter and stammer. [We] laughed while reading.
>
> 至正十四年皇帝敕諭碑其一。學中國字而手未忘乎筆，波畫弱硬，其排置甚難也，譯為中國語而舌未伸於齒，期期支支，笑且讀之。[77]

In addition to directly giving negative comments on the vernacular stele, the authors also transcribed its complete text and attached this short passage right after the essay (appendix 2.5). This is the only case in *A Sketch* in which a stele inscription is fully copied, "because its barbaric style of language should be ridiculed" (夷語可姍故).[78] The edict on the stele was issued to protect the temple property. As a translation from Mongolian, the edict has many transliterations of Mongolian combined with Chinese words, which hindered the semantic flow and severely downgraded the literary quality of the text. The late Ming period was known for the approbation of using vernacular language in literature, because it was fresh and lively and represented the genuine (*zhen*, 真) thinking of the writer.[79] However, its overtly vernacular style was inappropriate in the context of a commemoration, for which the text, carved in stone, was intended to be preserved permanently. Moreover, the visual quality, here represented by the "weak and stiff" (*ruoying*, 弱硬) strokes composed in a disgraceful layout, also undermined its value. These shortcomings made the Yuan stele inferior and an object that "should be ridiculed,"

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[77] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 33.

[78] Yu Yizheng, "Editorial Remarks," *Dijing jingwulüe*, 6.

[79] In the twentieth century, this stele was brought back into academic investigation for the "genuineness" 真 of its vernacular language. See Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞, *Yuandai baihuabei* 元代白話碑 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1931). For the promotion of *zhen* as a crucial aesthetic concept in literary criticism, see Wang Guowei, *Song Yuan xiqushi* 宋元戲曲史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1998); Zhou Zuoren, *Zhongguo Xin wenxue de yuanliu* 中國新文學的源流 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1996).

while the ineptness of its writing implied that the Mongol regime lacked the cultural legitimacy to govern the country.

The comparative study of the steles in Chongguo Monastery reveals that first, the textual quality of the inscription naturally reflects the cultural status of its period in the pedigree of Chinese history. The Yuan stele, poorly translated and carved, demonstrates the uncultivated status of the "barbarians," while the mythic characters on the drums prove the high civilization of the antiquity. Second, somewhat ironically, the very unfamiliarity of the inscription—as seen in the Stone Drums and the Sanskrit steles—serves to evoke respect. The illegible characters on the Stone Drums demonstrate the solemnity of the ancient dynasty, but at the same time prevent the reader from comprehending the past. Without knowing the full meaning of the inscription, a reader's connection to it is, in the end, superficial, and the gap between the present and the ancient past remains unbridged.

Concluding Reflections

In concluding his essay "The Stone Drums in the Imperial Academy," Liu Tong adds his final thoughts on the relation between the possession of the ancient objects and the demonstration of political legitimacy, summarizing the writing culture of the Three Dynasties on commemoration and celebration:

> This is the discipline of making inscriptions during the Three Dynasties: The literary virtue is [carved] on *yi* and *ding* tripod cauldrons; the military achievement on gongs and drums; the accomplishment in battlefield on hatchets. The hunts were hosted to inspect the military power [of the country]. When King Wu [of Zhou] firstly declared his rulership, he hunted wild beasts to display the Mandate of Heaven so as to order the leadership of all lords. Therefore, the military event recorded in the "Successful

Completion of the War" was preserved on bamboo slips.[80] The hunting ceremony at Qiyang was inscribed on drums.

蓋三代之銘制，文德于彝鼎，武功於鉦鼓，征伐之勳，表於兵鉞。田狩以閱武也。武王初集大統，因伐獸陳天命，策命諸侯。故《武成》之記事也，以策；岐陽之記獵也，以鼓。[81]

Written in plain and pseudo-documentary language, Liu Tong's quotation of ancient tradition again inserts an authoritative voice. The Imperial Academy is the place cultivating "literary virtue" (*wende*, 文德), and the Stone Drums are testaments to "military achievement" (*wugong*, 武功). Thus, the final arrival of the ancient objects and their successful preservation at the academy attest to Beijing's command of the heavenly mandate. However, this claim is accomplished only on a discursive level. When reading the essay against multiple materials and within the contemporary social context, many details presented in the "Stone Drums" essay become suspect and even controversial: the academy is corrupt, a place where Confucian scholars engaged in factional struggles instead of diligent learning; much of the story of the Stone Drums is unfounded; and although they praise the cosmic power of the ancient text, the authors are unable to understand its content. In this sense, the essay "Stone Drums" reveals an important principle that we need to note when reading *A Sketch*: the textual representation of sites and objects should always be examined together with the social conditions of the time. The discrepancy between the text and reality is probably always larger than we anticipate.

[80] Wucheng ("Successful completion of the war [on Shang] 武成) is one chapter from the classic *Shangshu* (Book of Documents, 尚書), depicting how the Zhou succeeded in their war with the Shang.

[81] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

READING *A SKETCH:*

THE CIRCULATION AND RECEPTION OF THE URBAN MISCELLANY

This chapter shifts the analytical perspective from the process of writing to the modes of reading. It examines the circulation of *A Sketch* after its first publication in 1635, from the concluding years of the Ming to the Republican period (1912–1949), *A Sketch* inspired various responses among readers. They mainly reflected on two different but related topics: first, whether this urban miscellany was a successful format for the authors' literary commemoration of late-Ming Beijing—in other words, whether it accommodated their cultural memory; and second, how to interpret the literary style of the prose text specifically in the late-Ming historical and political contexts. These responses not only showcase how the evaluation of *A Sketch* evolved from the late imperial to modern times, but also reveal how the debates—on the dialectic relation of literary creation and historical writing—varied in association with changing intellectual trends. This chapter explores three modes of reading—which I call commemorative reading, literary reading, and modern reading—that can be traced from paratextual materials in multiple editions of *A Sketch*.

Over the course of *A Sketch*'s circulation, these three types of reading were sometimes in competition, but mutual influences always occurred among them. In the seventeenth century during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, the commemorative mode of reading reached its climax. Represented by Wang Yongji 王永積 (*jinshi* 1634) and Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1680?), readers who had experienced the period of chaos attempted to search for the memory of the Ming dynasty. From the eighteenth century on, under the pressure of the textual censorship from the

Qing government,[1] the literary mode of reading became dominant when readers, represented by Ji Yun, strove to repress *A Sketch*'s political references to the Ming regime and instead stressed the literary value of the text. The attention paid to the artistic qualities anticipated the modern reading of the book in the early twentieth century. During the 1930s, with the hope of demonstrating that Chinese literary modernity originated from native literature rather than from foreign counterparts, Republican intellectuals led by Zhou Zuoren grouped *A Sketch* with several other Ming-Qing prose works, formed theories about their literary and artistic values, and presented these textual qualities as signaling what later became vital in modern literary criticism, such as the ideas of individuality and self-expression.

In addition to elaborating on the three reading modes and their connections and conflicts, this chapter explicates how and why readers' perceptions of *A Sketch* changed, from considering the work to be a large miscellany systematically written to preserve the cultural memory of the capital to cataloging it as a collection of casual essays. As introduced in chapter 1, during the process of circulation, essays composed by Liu Tong became the most prominent part of the book, while poems collected from other literati were gradually removed. By the 1930s, *A Sketch* had been widely accepted as being a piece of *xiaopin* literature, that is, a collection of "casual essays" showcasing the literati's knowledge of urban culture and providing literary pleasure to the reader. The "serious" narratives that Liu Tong implied in *A Sketch*—such as his review of the dynastic history and the social critique of current affairs—correspondingly disappeared in the

[1] For studies on the *wenziyu* (literary inquisition or textual censorship, 文字獄) of the Qing dynasty, especially of the *Cases of Ming History* 明史案 in 1616 and the *Case of the Erudite Literatus Imperial Exam* 博學鴻祠案 in 1679, see Meng Sen, *Ming Qing shi jiangyi*, 555–60; Lawrence Kessler, "Chinese Scholars and the Early Manchu State," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 31 (1971): 179–200.

realm of criticism. Today, this opinion is still a general consensus among the book's readers. This chapter will elaborate this process of transformation.

Multiple editions of the book published between 1643 and 1935 are also examined in this chapter. These include reprints containing the complete set of essays that are the same as the 1635 edition, and literary anthologies and prose collections containing selected essays from the set. Editors of these editions, who were also the most critical and thoughtful readers, adjusted *A Sketch's* content and form according to their own intellectual agendas. Whether they fully comprehended or partially misread Liu Tong's writing strategies, the impulse to interpret Liu Tong's motivation and to judge the quality of his writing never ceased. Such an impulse demonstrates the complexity of *A Sketch* as a cultural source that can be read politically, historically, and as a work of literature. The debates over the textual quality of *A Sketch* and the trend of "*xiaopinization*" reveal again that the miscellany was by no means merely recording "facts" about the city. The editors' interpretations demonstrated how later readers took different approaches to interpret the pre-Manchu past and refashion the late-Ming sensibility. In the following sections, I investigate the three modes of reading through analysis of the editorial principles and strategies that were implied in different editions.

5.1 Commemorative Reading

The commemoration of loss is the dominant theme of the reading responses from the 1640s to 1670s, a period known in Chinese history as the transitional time from the Ming dynasty to the Qing. This section elaborates on three cases, all of which occurred immediately before and right after the Manchu conquest of Beijing, to investigate how *A Sketch* helped to anchor the reader's remembrance of the Ming dynasty. Notably, all of the editors-cum-readers were colleagues or friends of Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng. Through reading, reprinting, and even

rewriting *A Sketch*, they lamented the loss of the authors and the past dynasty. The first case considers the republication of *A Sketch* by two official scholars in 1643, one year before the Manchu conquest. The paratextual materials of this edition demonstrate how these readers projected into *A Sketch* their own feelings of the tragic atmosphere of Beijing. The second case considers a reprint of the 1660s under a new title called *Yanjing guji* ("Old Traces in the Capital of Yan," 燕京古跡), which reflects the intensified mood of lament in the early decades of Manchu governance. The last case focuses on the famous essayist Zhang Dai and the adaptation of *A Sketch* in his "dream memoirs"—*Tao'an mengyi* ("The Dream Recollection of Taoan," 陶庵夢憶) and *Xihu mengxun* ("Search for West Lake in My Dreams," 西湖夢尋). Here, the convoluted and obscure literary style that we discussed in chapter 3 expresses a highly lyrical power, not only in the commemoration of his lost country, but also in the nostalgic recall of his youth. In these cases, *A Sketch* functioned as the medium linking personal memories and individual experiences to the grand changes of nation and history.

In the early summer of 1643, two officials working in the Ministry of the War, Wang Yongji and Geng Zhangguang 耿章光 (*jinshi* 1637), collaborated in editing a new version of *A Sketch*. They deleted all poems, preserved the complete set of essays and Liu Tong's preface, and added two prefaces by Wang Yongji and Wang Wei 汪偉 (dates unknown). Printed in Beijing, this edition is the earliest abridged version that can now be identified.[2] From the two editors'

[2] This original 1643 woodblock-print edition (often referred to as Bingbu cangben 兵部藏本) should exist, but I have not been able to find a copy. A poet and playwright named Ōda Nambo 太田南畝 (1749–1823) from Edo Japan transcribed the woodblock version in 1770, and Ōda's manuscript (写本, *xieben*, or *shahon*) is currently preserved in the Naikaku bunko 内閣文庫 (the Archive of Cabinet) at Tokyo. My discussions of the 1643 edition will be based on this Naikaku manuscript. The copywriter's colophon on this manuscript reads, "*A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital*, eight volumes, collected by Aoyama Tae yu an: In the midsummer of 1770, I borrowed the book and transcribed it. The work was done in the early

perspective, Liu Tong's *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* "preserves the heritage of both famous mountains and the gates of the country" (使名山國門兩存其業).[3] Wang and Geng were able to appreciate the historiographical value of *A Sketch* when they themselves were trapped in Beijing on the eve of the Manchu enemy's conquest.

Wang Yongji, a native of Wuxi at Jiangsu, became acquainted with Liu Tong in 1634, the year in which both Wang and Liu acquired the *jinshi* degree.[4] As the primary editor of the 1643 edition, Wang proposes that the geopolitical discussion presented early by Liu Tong in his preface could be used to "contemplate the arts of war" (可悟汰兵法者); the whole book has "the meaning of *Spring and Autumn*" (有春秋之義), and reading carefully, one can tease out the author's critique and satire (*ji*, 譏) on current affairs. Wang stresses that the marvelous part of Liu Tong's wording lies in the practice of "avoiding the obvious main points and challenging the weak ones" (*bishi jixu*, 避實擊虛), which reminds us that *A Sketch* is not a literature of mere entertainment, but rather that it contains the author's assessments of past events.[5]

The anxiety over the ultimate annihilation of the country is easily observed in the despair that is so clearly evident in Wang Yongji's preface:

> Rebellions had just broken out across the country. The emperor was distraught, and the officials suffered disgrace. In the middle of the night, we anxiously walked back and forth, but what a shame that no one was able to find an effective solution to remedy the

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autumn of 1771. —Remarked by the Master of Ikiyenkan." (帝京景物略八卷，青山妙有庵所藏。明和七年庚寅 (1770) 仲夏七日借而繕寫。至八年辛卯 (1771) 初秋廿日業成。息偃館主人誌。) See *Dijing jingwulüe*, the Naikaku bunko Manuscript, *ce* 册 4, 112a.

[3] *Dijing jingwulüe*, the Naikaku bunko manuscript, *ce* 1, 14a. "Famous mountains" refers to the natural landscape, and "gates of the country" can be taken to refer to the built structures in the city. Here the author is saying that the importance of *A Sketch* lies in its commemoration of both types of scenic sites in the capital, those made by the nature and those made by men.

[4] *Jiaqing Wuxi Jingui xianzhi* 嘉慶無錫金匱縣志, *juan* 15, 11a. Wang wrote a book titled *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in Mount Xi* (Xishan jingwu lüe 錫山景物略), recording the history and culture of his hometown Wuxi, imitating Liu Tong's practice.

[5] Wang Yongji, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe The Naikaku Manuscript*, *ce* 1, 17a–18b.

> situation. When time permitted, my colleague Geng Xuandu (Geng Zhangguang) and I always read carefully through this book. Master Geng would then wail in despair.
>
> 方又值逆奴內犯，主憂臣辱，中夜徬徨，而實愧無一籌少裨。廟算羽書之暇，輒與耿子玄度取是書而審閱之。耿子愾然興嘆。[6]

As stated earlier in Wang's preface, the editors had already lost their friends and family; soon they would lose their country as well. To Wang Yongji, reading and reprinting *A Sketch* was an act of remembrance for a talented friend who died before realizing his personal ambitions. He compared Liu Tong to Li He 李賀 (790–816), the great Tang poet who died prematurely, and suspected a correlation between the unexpected death of Liu and the forthcoming chaos of the country.[7] Geng Zhangguang, a native of Liaocheng at Shandong, ascended to *jinshi* status in 1637 and worked as the vice director of the Ministry of the War in 1642. Beijing was where his father, Geng Ruqi 耿如杞 (*jinshi* 1616, d. 1631), a famous military official, sacrificed his life.[8] In 1629, when the Manchu army besieged Beijing, Geng Ruqi led troops from Shanxi to support the emperor when the court was in trouble. But as soon as he arrived at the Miyun fortress near Beijing, the Ming soldiers staged a mutiny. Geng lost control of the troops and was immediately arrested and later sentenced to death in 1631. From Wang's statement, we can infer that Geng Ruqi's death, as well as the sacrifices and endeavors of an entire generation, only undermined the military prowess of the Ming and pushed the country further into disorder. Wang wrote in despair:

> Now the Manchu armies can win every battle when laying siege to the city. [Their] commanders and soldiers become ever more arrogant and aggressive. Outside nine city

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[6] Wang Yongji, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe The Naikaku Manuscript*, *ce* 1, 18b.

[7] Wang Yongji, "Preface," *The Naikaku Manuscript, ce* 1, 21b–22a.

[8] Wang Yongji, "Preface," *The Naikaku Manuscript, ce* 1, 19b. In this preface, Wang Yongji also appraised Geng Ruqi as a righteous official who opposed Wei Zhongxian's eunuch faction. During the Tianqi reign (1620–1627), Geng Ruqi was imprisoned after his refusal to participate in the ceremonies honoring Wei Zhongxian. The biography of Geng Ruqi can be found in *Mingshi* 明史, *juan* 248, 6422–23.

> gates, the northern horses are braying. Our country has trained soldiers and scholars over the course of three hundred years, but what is the use [of these people]? I longed for Tongren's company even more.
>
> 今且四入四利，將驕卒悍，視昔有加，九門以外，即為胡馬長嘶地。國家三百載養兵養士之謂何？予則更念同人矣。[9]

Inserted among "military reports and urgent messages" (*yitang qingbao*, 夷情塘報),[10] *A Sketch* provided temporary comforts to Wang and Geng.

After months of editing, the book acquired a new look; with poems deleted and the length decreased to one third of the original, the new edition could easily be bound into three or four volumes. In this abridged version, the book became portable; as Wang Wei describes in his preface, the book can be

> carried on one's shoulders in a travel pouch.
> a manual for [identifying] the capital's springtime trees,
> an official inventory notice of the flower market,
> and a letter concealed in a bamboo tube [with content] to carry out secret actions.[11]
>
> 攜入行囊肩上，
> 可當帝城春樹譜，
> 可當花市露布檄，
> 可當郵筒行秘書.[12]

Presenting scenic sites of Beijing within the book's pages, *A Sketch* guides readers on a journey. But in such a period of turmoil, who could safely stroll in the landscapes near the suburban area? Outside the city gate, "the northern horses are braying," and the reader had no choice but to take an "armchair travel" (*woyou,* 臥遊), to imagine the alluring scenery through text and recall the peace and security that had been long lost.

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[9] Wang Yongji, "Preface," *The Naikaku Manuscript, ce* 1, 19b–20a.

[10] Wang Yongji, "Preface," *The Naikaku Manuscript, ce* 1, 19b.

[11] I interpret the passage as the author saying that the book reveals hidden aspects of the city that the reader can discover.

[12] Wang Wei, "Preface," *Dijing jingwulüe The Naikaku Manuscript, ce* 1, 15a–15b.

Upon the establishment of the Qing dynasty, scholars who remained loyal to the Ming republished *A Sketch* under a new name: *Yanjing guji*, translated as "Old Traces in the Capital of Yan." This edition no longer exists, but its bibliographical information is preserved in a preface written by Zhang Zilie 張自烈 (1597–1673), a friend of Liu Tong and a famous Ming loyalist.[13] In about 1665, Zhang traveled extensively along the Yangtze river to observe the changes of social customs in the new dynasty. In Piling, he found a copy of *Yanjing guji*. As Zhang relates in the preface, "holding the volumes and pacing back and forth, my friend and I could not help but look at each other and choke on our tears" (掩卷低徊，又未嘗不相視嗚咽也).[14] This book made the early-Qing editor weep bitterly by evoking his memory of his deceased friend and the past dynasty. Zhang writes:

> I recall that my old friend Liu Tongren (Tong, a native of Macheng county, Huangzhou, who was appointed magistrate of Wujiang but passed away before claiming the post) compiled *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* and traveled all over the capital. Now moth-eaten, the book is difficult to read, yet a perceptive reader would cherish it.
>
> 憶先是余友劉同人（名侗，黃州麻城人，筮仕吳江縣，未至官而卒）輯《帝京景物略》，馳走遍都市。書蝕蠹不易讀，識者惜之。[15]

Zhang continues by saying that a man named Hua Fangruo had been determined to publish Liu Tong's book decades ago, but before the woodblocks were carved, the country was destroyed. Ten years after the founding of the new dynasty, the reprint was finally published, but under a new title. Zhang explains the reason:

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[13] Zhang Zilie 張自烈, "Yanjing guji xu" 燕京古跡序, *Qishan wenji* 芑山文集, *juan* 12 (Nanchang: Delu, 1916), 20b–22a. Though this edition has been lost, it was recorded in Xu Qianxue's 徐乾學 (1631–1694) book catalog *Chuanshi lou shumu* 傳是樓書目 (Weijing shuwu chaoben, 1828), "Shibu," 61b.

[14] Zhang Zilie, "Yanjing guji xu," 20b.

[15] Zhang Zilie, "Yanjing guji xu," 20b.

> [At the time of] grand unification, [the book] used the title of *Dijing* ("imperial capital"); preserving the complete set of famous scenes, [it] used the title of *Jingwu* ("sites and objects"). Today, the territory is the same as [it was in] the past, and originally, the extent of its territory was simply as [it is today]. But in general, sites and objects of Yan no longer resemble those of the past. Old traces keep changing, like the alteration of deep canyons; in ancient times as in modern, [the situation of old traces changing] has always been like this.
>
> 大一統則稱"帝京"，紀全勝則稱"景物"。今幅員猶昔也，本其地云爾；故燕之景物非舊也，睹其概云爾；故蹟之岸谷遞易也，古今一致云爾。[16]

To avoid the words *Dijing* and *Jingwu* implies a negation of the legitimacy of the Qing regime; compared to the Ming dynasty, it is neither a period of "grand unification" nor an era of comprehensive prosperity. Although the territorial dimensions of the capital remained the same, from Zhang's perspective, the scenery and social customs had been permanently changed. Therefore, the old title, which reflected the glory of the Ming, should be substituted with a neutral one. *Yanjing*, the historical name of this place, has few political implications. *Guji* stresses that the sites recorded in the book are all "old traces" of the past and thus refers to the editor's mourning of the previous regime. Nonetheless, for early-Qing readers, *A Sketch* connected the present to the past and brought them back to the Beijing of the Ming. A poem written by Jiang Xun 蔣薰 (1610–1693) responded to Zhang Zilie's comments:

> I plan to build a high tower on the horizon,
> I will devise a plan [to go visit] the famous mountains, and then set off on my armchair travels.
> Upon your return from the capital, please don't breathe a sigh of sorrow.
> Holding this book in our arms, we should still recognize the Ancient August Precincts.
>
> 擬從天際結高樓，收拾名山作臥游。
> 京洛歸來莫噫嘆，擁書猶識舊皇州。[17]

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[16] Zhang Zilie, "Yanjing guji xu," 21a.

[17] Jiang Xun 蔣薰, "Du Liu Tong *Dijing jingwulüe*" 讀劉侗帝京景物略, *Liusutang shishan* 留素堂詩刪 (The Kangxi edition collected in Beijing Library), *juan* 1, 31a.

By the end of 1649, the ethnic segregation of the capital's urban space had been accomplished under imperial order. Many old bureaucratic offices were renovated and relocated, and while Manchus moved into the inner city, the large population of Chinese residents were forced to live in the outer city, a crowded district located in the south.[18] As Zhang mentions in the preface, the scale of the city remained the same, but sites had lost their previous appearance. *A Sketch* allows the reader to take an armchair travel to the old capital. We should note that such travel, which in the Ming had been associated with delightful imagination, in the early Qing became nostalgic and filled with misery.

The commemorative mode of reading is observable not only from the reprints of *A Sketch*, but also in the rewriting of its essays and the adaption of its literary style in other prose works. After the collapse of Beijing in 1644, Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1679), who had survived the fierce battles in north China, returned to his hometown Shaoxing in Zhejiang province. In the following years, he completed two "dream memoirs." The privileged, self-indulgent life that Zhang Dai enjoyed in his youth, which he describes in the text, makes a stark contrast with the real-life misery and poverty that he suffered after the Manchu conquest.[19] It is not entirely clear

[18] For an introduction to the spatial transformation of Beijing in the early Qing, see Naquin, *Peking: Temple and City Life*, 287–95.

[19] For the introduction to Zhang Dai's memoirs, see Kafalas, *In Limpid Dreams*. Wai-yee Li, *Enchantment and Disenchantment*, 47–50.

how Zhang acquired the copy of *A Sketch*,[20] but the fascination with sightseeing was assuredly shared by Zhang Dai, Liu Tong, and their common friends.[21]

Chinese scholar Luan Baoqun has pointed out that Zhang Dai adapted certain passages from Liu Tong's work, as seen in five essays from *Tao'an mengyi* and one from *Xihu mengxun*.[22] Moreover, Zhang Dai not only used *A Sketch* as a source of information, but also imitated its literary style on the levels of syntax, wording, and rhyme. With its many convoluted expressions and obscure meanings, Zhang's memoirs achieve a unique literary effect. Luan Baoqun briefly analyzes the formal similarities that help us clarify the intertextual relation between *A Sketch* and

[20] Zhang Dai might have acquired a copy of Liu Tong's work from his friend Zheng Yuanxun 鄭元勛. Zheng compiled an anthology titled *Meiyouge wenyu erji* (The second collection of pleasant literature from the Pavilion of Meiyou, 媚幽阁文娱二集). The fourth chapter of the book selected forty-four essays from *A Sketch*, including the four pieces that Zhang Dai used as reference in the two memoirs. Zheng's anthology preserved not only the largest number of essays from *A Sketch* in the seventeenth century, but also other pieces written by Liu Tong, such as "Yingyuan ziji ba" (Colophon to "My own record on Shadow Garden, 影園自記跋; *juan* 2; Shadow Garden was Zheng's private garden at Yangzhou); "Yaobian guanyin zan" (A verse in praise of the porcelain Bodhisattva, 窯變觀音贊; *juan* 4). Zheng Yuanxun, *Meiyouge wenyu erji*, in *Siku jinhuishu congkan* 四庫禁毀書叢刊, *jibu* 集部, vol.172.

[21] Zhang Dai writes, "Obsessed with traveling, Liu Tongren (Liu Tong) and Qi Shipei (Qi Biaojia) are my soulmates in [the appreciation of] landscape" (余好遊覽則有劉同人、祁世培為山水知己). See Zhang, "Ji Zhou Jianbo wen" (An elegiac essay to commemorate Zhou Jianbo, 祭周戩伯文), *Langhuan wenji* 琅嬛文集 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1985), 274. The Ming loyalist official Qi Biaojia 祁彪佳 (1602–1645, *jinshi* 1622) was a close friend and hometown fellow of Zhang Dai. Qi was also known as a book collector and opera connoisseur and the owner of the famous Yushan garden. Qi's work includes *Yuanshan tang qupin* 遠山堂曲品 (Criticism of Song from the Studio of Yuanshan) and *Qi Biaojia riji* 祁彪佳日記 (Diaries of Qi Biaojia).

[22] In *Taoan mengyi*, "Plants from Jin Rusheng" (Jin Rusheng huacao, 金乳生草花) is adapted from "Grass Bridge" (Caoqiao 草橋; ch.3, 119–21), "Yunzhi Pavilion" (Yunzhi ting, 筠芝亭) from the "Garden of Duke Yingguo" (ch.1, 32–33), "Fireworks from Lufan" (Lufan yanhuo, 魯蕃煙火) from the "Lantern Market" (ch.2, 57–59), and "Villar of Master Yu" (Yugong gu, 愚公谷) from "Garden of Duke Dingguogong" (ch.1, 29). In *Xihu mengxun*, "Tomb of Yu Qian" (Yufen,于墳) is adapted from the "Shrine in Honor of Yu Qian" (ch.2, 49–51).

the memoirs.[23] But Luan did not fully elaborate on the question of why and how this literary style served Zhang's commemorative purpose or enhanced the affective power of his text. The rest of this section aims to answer these questions.

When telling the same story, in addition to directly copying certain passages, Zhang Dai restructured Liu Tong's narrative to create a more tragic atmosphere, as seen in the following case. The essay "Tomb of Yu Qian" (Yufen, 于墳) from *Xihu mengxun* is adapted from the concluding section of the essay "Shrine in honor of Yu Qian" (Yu shaobao ci, 于少保祠) in *A Sketch*.[24] Both essays present an overview of the official Yu Qian's 于謙 (1398–1457) political career, depict in detail his psychological struggles when Emperor Yingzong and his brother fought ruthlessly for the crown, and focus on the unusual events that occurred in the capital when Yingzong ordered the execution of Yu.[25] The narrative interests of both essays lay in these episodes as relayed by a story featuring Yu's wife, Lady Yu. After Yu's death, Lady Yu was sent into exile. One day, Yu Qian's ghost visited her in a dream and asked to borrow her eyesight to be manifested in the human world.[26] The next day, Lady Yu lost her sight, and the Fengtian Palace Gate suddenly caught fire. When Yingzong arrived at the scene of the disaster, Yu's ghost manifested in the flame. Upon seeing the unusual image, Yingzong felt guilty about his false accusation of Yu and exempted Lady Yu from punishment. The story ends with Lady Yu's sight being restored.

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[23] See Luan Baoqun's editorial preface, *Dijing jingwulüe* (Gugong chubanshe, 2013), 6–9.

[24] *Xihu mengxun*, 199; *Dijing jingwulüe*, 75.

[25] For the biography of Yu Qian in the official history of the Ming dynasty, see *Mingshi*, 4543–51.

[26] This episode seems to appeal to readers. This story was also rewritten by Chu Renhuo 褚人獲 in *Jianhuji* 堅瓠集, titled "Borrowing Eyesight" (Jie muguang 借目光). See Chu Renhuo, *Jianhuji* (S.I.: Baixiang shuwu, 1926), *Guangji* 广集, *juan* 6, 15b–16a;

While this episode of spirit manifestation appears in both episodes, it is positioned in a different section of each. In *A Sketch*, the narrative proceeds chronologically. The manifestation of the ghost concludes the essay so as to indicate Liu Tong's sympathy for Yu Qian. But with the knowledge of dynastic fall, Zhang Dai reframes the story in a gloomy atmosphere. In his work, all the strange plots have a twist. Yu's brutal death, his spiritual manifestation, and the fire disaster in the palace occur at the beginning of the narrative. After recounting these events, Zhang Dai returns to Yu's early career and reviews his achievements in governmental management. By encountering Yu's unjust death at the beginning, the reading experience is gloomy and mournful.

The adaptation of Liu Tong's style of writing has more far-reaching effects than the change of narrative structure. In a preface to *Xihu mengxun*, Qi Zhijia 祁彡佳 (*juren* 1624) presents a literary pedigree of Ming essayists and compares Zhang Dai's writing with examples written by the older Yuan Hongdao and the contemporary Liu Tong:

> [Zhang Dai's writing] has the erudition of Li Daoyuan's work, the fresh and pungent flavor of Liu Tongren's (Liu Tong) work, the astute and appealing look of Yuan Zhonglang's (Yuan Hongdao) work, and the humor of Wang Jizhong's (Wang Siren) work.
>
> 有酈道元之博奥，有劉同人之生辣，有袁中郎之倩麗，有王季重之詼諧。[27]

Shengla, which literally means "raw and spicy," indicates a special quality of the works written by Liu Tong and Zhang Dai. Their innovative wording is exemplified by the use of poetic imagery, irregular syntactical structures, and duplicative words. As I discussed in chapter 3, such rhetorical devices give the reader a feeling of defamiliarization. Zhang Dai transferred this skill from an urban miscellany to a personal memoir.

[27] Qi Zhijia, "Preface," *Xihu mengxun*, 115.

For instance, Zhang Dai's essay "Villa of Master Yu" (Yugong gu, 愚公谷) is rewritten, based on the essay "Garden of Duke Dingguo" (Dingguogong yuan, 定國公園). The villa of Master Yu was a private garden owned by Zhang's friend, which was located near Wuxi, Jiangsu province, while the garden of Duke Dingguo belonged to a high-ranking official and was located in the north city of Beijing. The two essays again demonstrate an identical narrative structure, first depicting how rustic and natural the garden was designed to be and concluding the passage with an appraisal of the owner's pursuit of the simple lifestyle.

Most notably, similar syntactic patterns occur in the two essays. In the following quotation, each underlined sentence from Zhang's essay has an identical counterpart in *A Sketch*, which I have marked in the footnotes:

> Master Yu was a literatus. ①His garden was designed by someone who had an ingenious understanding of garden ornamentation. Stones were piled up to form a wall; firewood was bound together to make a door. ②The main hall had neither multiple floors nor a frontal lounge. Trees were arranged neither in pairs nor in lines. In the south of the hall stood tall locust trees that were rustic and robust. Every tree was so large that one can embrace its trunk with two arms. ③Branches and leaves thrived so that the canopy shaded the yard completely. Lotus flowers were in a small pond. On the other side of the pond bank, rocks rested on the ground in a jumbled mix. Mosses grew on the earthen wall. It looked like [a natural scene] at the bottom of a mountain or near the riverside, rather than [an artificial scene] cultivated in the human world. In the east of the garden, a terrace stood close to the wall and faced a monastery. ④Resting in a corner of the wall, an old willow did not intend to make space for the terrace. Therefore, the terrace could not fully enjoy a view of the outside. ⑤It is different from other gardens, where flowers and trees were arranged deliberately to decorate the kiosk and the terrace, and the scenery was designed specifically to serve the owner. [28]

[28] *Tao'an mengyi*, 90.

愚公文人，①其園亭實有思致文理者為之，[29]磥石為垣，編柴為戶，②堂不層不廡，樹不配不行。[30]堂之南，高槐古樸，樹皆合抱，③茂葉繁柯，陰森滿院。藕花一塘，隔岸數石，亂而臥。土牆生苔，如山腳到澗邊，不記在人間。[31]園東逼牆一臺，外瞰寺，④老柳臥牆角而不讓臺，臺遂不盡瞰，[32]⑤與他園花樹故故為亭臺意特特為園者不同。[33]

In this short passage, the reader finds inanimate objects animated and the static scene enlivened. Unlike other gardens where things were arranged in an order that would better serve the human viewer, this place respects every subject in nature; thus, the willow becomes the actual master of the garden and humans become the guests. When Zhang composed this fascinating essay, the villa of Master Yu had become dilapidated; terraces and walls had fallen down, and only stones and trees remained on the site.[34] A similar fate befell Duke Ding's garden. Instead of asking how "reliable" the accounts in the two essays were or whether the text "realistically" portrayed two distinct gardens located far from one another (one in Beijing and the other in Jiangnan), we

[29] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 43. "The construction of gardens near the North Lake started with the Garden of Duke Ding. Therefore, this garden was the earliest and the most unadorned one. But it was designed by someone who had an ingenious understanding of garden ornamentation" (環北湖之園，定園始，故朴莫先定園者。實則有思致文理者為之).

[30] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 43. "The hall was neither a pavilion, nor a kiosk. Trees had neither flowers nor fruits, and they were arranged neither in pairs nor in lines" (堂不閣不亭，樹不花不實，不配不行).

[31] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 43–44. "After many years, branches thrived so that the canopy shaded the yard completely. Lotus flowers were in a small pond. On the other side of the pond bank, rocks rested on the ground in a jumbled mix. Mosses grew on the earthen wall. It looked like [a natural scene] at the bottom of the mountain or near the riverside, rather than [an artificial scene] cultivated in people's gardens" (以歲久繁柯，陰遂滿院。藕花一塘，隔岸數石，亂而臥，土牆生苔，如山腳到澗邊，不記在人家圃).

[32] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 44. "The old willow looked down to the lake and did not intend to make space for the terrace. Thus the terrace could not fully enjoy the distant view" (老柳瞰湖而不讓臺，臺遂不必盡望).

[33] *Dijing jingwulüe*, 44. "As for other gardens, flowers and trees were deliberately designed in an orderly way; pavilions and kiosks were constructed specifically to admire the lakeview. They could not avoid [seeming] frivolous" (蓋他園，花樹故故為容，亭臺意特特在湖者，不免佻達矣).

[34] *Tao'an mengyi*, 90.

should focus on the literary effects brought by such intertextual reference and ask why Zhang Dai chose to "plagiarize" certain sentences and images from *A Sketch* when recalling the memory of a vanished site.

Zhang Dai extended the repetitive use of negative sentences that appeared in *A Sketch*. For instance, to depict one kiosk built by his great-great-grandfather (which might have been destroyed by the time of writing), Zhang Dai writes, "Outside the kiosk, *neither* one beam *nor* one tile was added. Inside the kiosk, *neither* a threshold *nor* a door was installed" (亭之外更不增一椽一瓦，亭之內亦不設一檻一扉); "*neither* a wall *nor* a terrace was erected, so that pines grew in delight" (不垣不臺，松意尤暢).[35] The sentence structure "neither X nor Y" (不 x 不 y) pushes the reader to frequently pause to digest the content. In the quotation from "Villa of Master Yu," the repetition of "*bu*" 不 (no; not to), which occurs seven times, creates a distinctive rhythm in the prose. Moreover, it signals a gesture of refusal and delivers a deep feeling of loneliness and nostalgia. The owner refuses to follow the fashion, and his eccentric personality is often unfavored by the world; everything in his garden refuses to imitate popular design, so with its rustic look, it is out of place. Because the garden was ruined and thus no longer existed in the current landscape, it could only reside as a site in the author's dislocated memory.

From the mid-seventeenth century on, the convoluted poetic style of the Jingling school—represented by *A Sketch* and later practiced by Zhang Dai—received harsh critiques. In the biography of Ming poets composed for *The Collected Poems of the Dynasties* (Liechao shiji, 列朝詩集), Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582–1664) described the Jingling style as "deep and convoluted, solitary and piercing" (*shenyou guqiao*, 深幽孤峭) and proposed a political

[35] *Tao'an mengyi*, "Yunzhi ting," 16.

interpretation, attributing the popularity of the style in the last decade of the Ming as contributing to the dynastic fall.[36] From Qian's perspective, the Jingling style, which was highly esteemed among Ming scholars, severely violated academic norms and eroded the moral integrity of the elites. The devotion to the "chilly sounds and frigid spirits" (*qisheng hanpo*, 悽聲寒魄) and "munching sounds and rushed phrasing" (*jiaoyin cujie*, 噍音促節), which were indeed considered defects in literary writing, not only hindered scholars from accumulating true learning (*xue*, 學), but also enticed them into engaging in empty talks and shirking their governmental obligations.[37]

Thus, the Jingling style was associated with the disorder of the court and acquired a cosmological interpretation as an ominous portent of the Ming dynasty's ultimate demise.[38] Qian Qianyi's comment triggered a long-held negative assessment of these writers in the history of Chinese literature.[39] Literary historians such as Laurence Yim have carefully studied Qian's critique in relation to its historical and intellectual contexts.[40] Taking into consideration the

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[36] Qian Qianyi, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1983), 571.

[37] *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan*, 572. "To summarize the problem of [the Jingling school]: they have no [true] learning. To summarize the problem of those who followed them: [writing in such style] is a convenient excuse to avoid discussion of learning." (以一言蔽其病曰：不學而已；亦以一言蔽從之者之病曰：便于不說學而已。).

[38] *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan*, 571.

[39] From the early eighteenth century onward, Qian Qianyi's comments on Ming literature were absorbed into the official history. The phrase *shenyou guqiao*, "deep and convoluted, solitary and piercing," became a standard term to describe the Jingling school. The *Siku quanshu* project widely consulted Qian's biography of Ming poets to compile the abstracts of books that were collected in the subsection of the Anthology (*jibu* 集部).

[40] Laurence Yim (Yan Zhixiong) 嚴志雄, "Qian Qianyi gongpai Jingling Zhong, Tan xinyi" 錢謙益攻排竟陵鐘、譚新議, *Muzhai chulunji* 牧齋初論集 (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–42; Chou Ch'i-ping, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 118.

social situation during the composition of *A Sketch* and the dream memoirs, I would like to add two additional points.

First, from our perspective, the political reading of a literary style assuredly demonstrates a conservative and somewhat pedantic stance of the critic. It restages the old rhetoric from the *Book of Rites* that "the music of a chaotic age is resentful, so as to express dissatisfaction and anger; the governance is perversely bad. The music of a perishing state is mournful, so as to express sorrow and troubled thought; its people suffer in difficulty" (亂世之音怨以怒，其政乖。亡國之音哀以思，其民困).[41] However, this rhetoric also illustrates the close connection between the style of a given text and its author's psychological state, which, I suggest, can help us better understand why Jingling literature gained such popularity during the transitional period. It was not the ghostly style that contributed to the downfall of the country; rather, on the eve of the collapse, scholars genuinely perceived the tragic atmosphere and were inspired to present their observations and perceptions through their writing of "solitary and piercing" texts, and to express their feelings of frustration and nostalgia.

Second, the attention to the textual properties of Jingling literature, specifically the characteristic use of sound and rhythm, continued to develop and became the central topic in the analyses of later scholars. In the Qing and the Republican periods, the literary quality of *A Sketch* claimed a dominant position in criticism. Meanwhile, along with the final consolidation of Qing governance, the commemorative reading of Liu Tong's work gradually disappeared; the late-Ming scholars' cultural memory of the old capital, as well as their social critiques of dynastic

[41] Sun Xidan 孫希旦 ed. *Liji jijie* 禮記集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 978. The English translation comes from Scott Cook, with slight modification. See Cook, "'Yue Ji' 樂記—Records of Music: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary," *Asian Music*, vol. 26, no. 2, (Spring-Summer, 1995), 29.

affairs, were dismissed. In this context, the literary mode of reading flourished. This will be examined in the next section.

5.2 Literary Reading

Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) and Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805), the greatest writers of strange tales in the late imperial period, were both deeply fond of *A Sketch*, and each compiled an abridged edition, Pu in 1684 and Ji in 1766. Both Qing scholars categorized *A Sketch* within the tradition of travel writing and stressed that Liu Tong's literary talent distinguished the book from all other records of sightseeing. Such categorization not only downplayed the book's relation to Beijing's history and dismissed the social concerns of late-Ming scholars, but also formulated *A Sketch* into a literature of leisure and emphasized its entertaining function as a collection of "casual essays." Pu's edition no longer exists, but Ji's has become the most widely circulated version since the late eighteenth century. Notably, Ji Yun's attitude towards the literary value of Jingling literature is rather sophisticated; the seemingly dismissive voice of his two prefaces belies his personal admiration for the work, which was evidenced in his commitment to its editing, publishing, and promotion. Contextualizing these readers' responses in the cultural policies of the eighteenth century, this section examines how and why the literary quality of *A Sketch* became their central concern.

In the year 1684, Pu Songling acquired a copy of *A Sketch* from a friend. Deeply impressed by Liu Tong's idiosyncratic way of depicting the landscape, he selected seventy-seven essays that best represented the literary quality of the book, edited out all the poems, and made a

booklet that was "simple, portable, and perfect for an armchair travel" (簡而可攜，便臥游也).[42] Pu Songling suggests that Liu Tong's writing was a true novelty (*chuang*, 創), differing from "travel accounts (*youji*, 遊記) of the past" because "there is no word that is not piercing, and no sentence that is not profound" (*wudou buqiao, buzhe buyou*, 無讀不峭，無折不幽).[43] In addition to producing a new version of *A Sketch*, Pu Songling also consulted the book for reference during his own writing of strange tales. According to Meng Zhaolian's research, the story "Crickets" (Cuzhi, 促織) from *Liaozhai zhiyi* has a complicated relation with the essay "Hujia Village" (Hujiacun, 胡家村). Liu Tong's record of the cricket culture in Beijing—specifically the glossary of technical terms that Pu used in his tale, such as the methods of insect breeding and the rules of cricket combat—provides expert knowledge about cricket connoisseurship.[44]

In contrast to Pu Songling's direct expression of favor, Ji Yun adopted a nuanced attitude when commenting on Liu Tong and *A Sketch*. In 1766, Ji Yun temporarily resigned from the government and returned home to fulfill the mourning obligation for his deceased mother. In the summer, he finished reading *A Sketch*. Fascinated with Liu Tong's accounts of the strange events

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[42] Pu Songling, "*Dijing jingwu xuanlüe* xiaoyin"《帝京景物選略》小引, in *Pu Songling quan ji* 蒲松齡全集 vol. 2 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1998), 23. For an introduction to Pu's preface, see Li Maosu 李茂肅, "Du Pu Songling *Dijing jingwu xuanlüe* xiaoyin" 讀蒲松齡《帝京景物選略》小引, *Shandong shida xuebao zhexue shehui kexue ban* 山東師大學報哲學社會科學版 no. 6 (1981): 64–67.

[43] Pu Songling, *Pu Songling quanji*, vol. 2, 23.

[44] Meng Zhaolian 孟昭連, "Cuzhi yu *Dijing jingwulüe*"《促織》與《帝京景物略》, *Qilu xuekan* 齊魯學刊 no. 3 (2000), 44–49; "Cuzhi chuanzuo zhong de jiejian yu shulou"《促織》創作中的借鑒與疏漏, *Pu Songling yanjiu* 蒲松齡研究 no. 2 (1992), 50–60. For the English translation of "Cricket," see Pu Songling, Zhang Youhe, ed. *Liaozhai zhiyi huiping huijiao huizhu ben*, 484–90. H. C. Chang, "The Cricket," *Chinese Literature 3: Tales of the Supernatural* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 159–69.

in the capital and his depictions of the urban scenery, Ji Yun thoroughly edited and revised the book. Like Pu Songling, he deleted all poems, carefully proofread the content of the essays, inserted his commentary in the main text, and published the manuscript in Nanjing.

The two prefaces published in the 1766 edition seem on first reading to indicate Ji Yun's "distaste" of this late-Ming miscellany. Ji Yun reproaches late-Ming publications, for their habitual practices of plagiarism and the shoddy proofreading.[45] He specifically criticizes them as *weiza* (indecent and untidy, 猥雜) that could be observed in most miscellanies and points out that the primary problem of *A Sketch* is its indeterminate genre: "it is not a gazetteer, but it follows the conventions of a gazetteer; it is not a collection of poetry, but it follows the conventions of a poetry collection" (非邑志而有邑志習，非詩社而有詩社習).[46] He also carries on Qian Qianyi's negative assessment of Jingling literature and further strengthens the political interpretation by connecting the genre "problem" with the decay of social order. From Ji's perspective, as a "deceitful type" (*weiti*, 偽體) of writing, the "crafty and clever" (*guijun xianqiao*, 詭俊纖巧) text led to the deterioration of moral standards among scholars, and he warns that readers should be cautious about being obsessed with verbal cleverness.[47]

Nonetheless, Ji Yun's unflattering commentary served as a foil for what was in reality a quite favorable opinion of the book. When commenting on the literary quality of *A Sketch*, Ji Yun relates:

> This book is derived from *A New Account of the Tales of the World* and *Commentary on the Waterways Treatise*. The way of composition follows [that of] the Jingling and Gongan [schools]. The style of narrative is detached and unusual, and sometimes it deserves to be read. Indeed, although the literature of the Jingling and Gongan [schools]

[45] Ji Yun, "Shanzheng *Dijing jingwulüe* xu" 刪正《帝京景物略》序, *Ji Xiaolan wenji*, 164.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

> cannot compete with ancient masterpieces, the casual essays (*xiaopin*) can embellish [our literary life] and correspondingly have some merit. Every genre has its strong points, and thus [the book] should not fade into oblivion.
>
> 其胚胎，則《世說新語》《水經注》；其門徑，則出入竟陵、公安；其序致冷雋，亦時復可觀。蓋竟陵、公安之文，雖無當於古作者，而小品點綴，則其所宜，寸有所長，不容沒也。[48]

After making several concessions in his argument, Ji Yun finally—albeit reluctantly—reveals his approval. Although as a product of the late Ming, *A Sketch* cannot be equated with the ancient masterpieces, its generic and stylistic imitations of early canonical works do give it distinction. Ji Yun points out that in creating witty phrases, *A Sketch* resembles *A New Account of the Tales of the World* (Shishuo xinyu, ca. early fifth century CE), one of the earliest collections of short stories in China and when describing the landscape, *A Sketch* echoes Li Daoyuan's *Commentary on the Waterways Treatise*, one of the earliest geographic accounts and an important antecedent of Chinese travel writing. Here, the rhetorical use of early canonical works helps legitimize Ji Yun's reprinting of *A Sketch*.

We should note that Ji repeatedly stresses the *xiaopin* quality of *A Sketch*. In this passage, Ji Yun defines *xiaopin* as the antithesis of "ancient masterpieces," which refers to the formal treatises on Confucian learning that were often composed for moral instructions. Scholars have often evaluated Ji Yun's editorial stance as prudish and convention-bound, but I read his deprecation as a tactic to "protect" *A Sketch* so as to guarantee its circulation in the eighteenth century, a period during which textual censorship had become unprecedentedly fierce.[49] From

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Luan Baoqun suggests that Ji Yun's editing reveals this Qing scholar's "particular liking" (*tebie pianai* 特別偏愛) to the book. Luan proposes that because *A Sketch* was excluded from the *Siku* project, Ji Yun decided to publish it by himself. Luan's observation is in general correct, but the explanation is not supported by the chronology of events, which I will explain below. See Luan Baoqun's editorial preface, *Dijing jingwulüe* (Gugong chubanshe, 2013), 11.

the 1660s onward, along with the increasing controls in publication from the government, a tendency toward "self-repression" occurred in the intellectual world, where scholars carefully inspected their own writings in order to avoid the risk of being punished.[50] In such an atmosphere, writings concerning the Ming dynasty became a sensitive topic. Books related to the previous regime, including novels, dramas, poetry, and gazetteers, were often treated with suspicion, which might bring unexpected disaster not only to the author but also to anyone engaged in printing, selling, purchasing, or reading them.[51]

By 1766, Ji Yun had been extensively engaged in editorial projects for several years and clearly knew the "rules" of publication. He was one of the chief editors in both Gongchenguan 功臣館 (1759) and Fanglüeguan 方略館 (1761), the two imperial agencies responsible for writing official histories, and he participated in compiling *The Unified Gazetteer of the Great Qing* (Daqing yitongzhi, 大清一統志, 1764).[52] His concerns about *A Sketch* resulted from his observation of current policies; it was highly risky to publish and circulate a book that records the history and culture of the Ming capital. Therefore, in the prefaces, Ji Yun repeatedly reminds the reader that *A Sketch* is only a "minor" piece that has no association with serious topics. Indeed, after examining the main text of the 1766 edition, one easily sees that Ji Yun preserved the complete content of what he described as "crafty and clever." The accounts of strange stories and the poetic depictions of Beijing's landscape remain untouched. The only passages that he deleted were those introducing bureaucratic institutions of the Ming and the biography of Li Zhi

[50] Wang Fansen 王汎森 discussed the phenomenon of "self-repression" in his *Quanli de maoxiguan zuoyong: Qingdai de sixiang, xueshu yu xintai* 權力的毛細管作用: 清代的思想、學術與心態 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 2013), 394–500.

[51] Wang Fansen, *Quanli de maoxiguan zuoyong*, 413–18.

[52] *Ji Xiaolan nianpu*, 30–44.

李贄 (1527–1620), whose works were banned by the Qing court.[53] Thus, by treating the book as a minor type of literature, Ji Yun ultimately helped secure its position in the literary pantheon.

In 1773, *Siku quanshu* (the Complete Library of the Four Treasures, 四庫全書) project was launched under the charge of Ji Yun.[54] *A Sketch* was excluded from the project, but an overview was preserved in the imperial catalogue. The overview presumably indicates a completely negative attitude toward the work. It deplores the strangeness of Liu Tong's writing and considers this Ming miscellany to be an inferior piece among books about Beijing, especially the gazetteers that were recently collated in the Qing.[55] Here, we observe the contradictions in Ji Yun's criticism. As an official taking on imperial assignments, he had to present words of reproach. But as a fan of short stories himself and the author of the tale collection *Miscellany from the Thatched Hut of Subtle Views* (Yuewei caotang biji, 閱微草堂筆記, 1789–1798), Ji Yun had a natural affinity toward *A Sketch* that was obscured by his official posturing. Indeed, his true admiration for the work was expressed in his commitment to its publication. As Ji Yun wished, the 1766 edition gradually occupied a central position in the book market. In the following centuries, most readers consulted Ji's edition, and very few of them knew of the existence of the thousand poems that had accompanied the essays in the first 1635 edition.

As a result of Ji Yun's promotional efforts, *A Sketch* remained popular in the early-modern reading world as a collection of well-written short essays composed in a poetic style that

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[53] Ji Yun deleted Liu Tong's accounts of the Imperial Academy and the Capital Academy in the essays "Taixue shigu" and "Shoushan shuyuan". He also removed the essay "Li Zhuowu mu" because Li Zhi's thought was labeled as heterodox and banned by the Qing court. Ji Yun, "Shanzheng *Dijing jingwulüe* xu," 164.

[54] For an introduction to *Siku quanshu*, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

[55] Ji Yun et al. ed., *Siquan kuanshu zongmu*, 673.

introduced the natural scenery, urban customs, and anecdotes of Beijing. We should note that presenting *A Sketch* as a piece of *xiaopin* literature signals a tendency toward depoliticization and dehistoricization in the history of its reception. Decoupling the referential relation between the text and its historical period was a safe choice, especially when any topic related to that period could have been interpreted as being politically suspect. The symbolic connection between *A Sketch* and late-Ming society—at least as perceived by readers of the dynastic transition and Ji Yun—is the common ground on which both the commemorative and the literary modes of reading stand. The difference, however, is that the former strengthens the relation between the text and the period, while the latter conceals such relation and alters to (whether deliberately or not) another direction in criticism, to make the discussion of the properties of the text fall within the domain of literature rather than the domain of history or historiography. This new direction continued to develop. In the early twentieth century, it was adapted into the discourse of how to modernize Chinese literature. And in this new context, the modern mode of reading *A Sketch* emerged.

5.3 Modern Reading

From the mid-1910s to the 1920s, Chinese society was swept up in the New Cultural movement, which called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on Western standards such as democracy and science and a new literature that would embrace vernacular works and stand in opposition to the Confucian tradition.[56] In the decade that followed, however, a group of intellectuals, represented by Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), sought to reverse the blanket

[56] There is much scholarship on the New Cultural movement and its influence on Chinese culture. For an introduction to the quest for modernity, see John Fairbank ed., *The Cambridge History of China: Republican China, 1912–1949*, *Part I,* vol. 12, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 451–504.

denial of classical literature and shifted their perspective to the past in search of the writings that could be credited as the origin of China's literary modernity. They studied prose works composed on private occasions, such as travelogues, diaries, letters, and miscellaneous jottings. Writings attributed to the Gongan and Jingling schools received their special attention. The term *xiaopin*, once used loosely by Ji Yun to refer to minor and insignificant textual types, was recast as the name of a literary genre that represented a pre-modern "bourgeois culture." It was now presented as a literature of leisure, displaying an author's craft as wordsmith and his refined taste in daily life. Besides, written with fewer moral obligations and formal restrictions, these essays expressed the author's feelings and ideas in a more explicit way.[57] As a result of searching for the counterparts of Western models in Chinese literary tradition, *A Sketch*, along with many other miscellanies, was finally established as part of the *xiaopin* canon in the history of Chinese literature. This section investigates these discussions that occurred during the republication of *A Sketch* and analyzes how modern scholars reinterpreted the value of late-Ming prose to counter the judgements made earlier during the imperial Qing period.

Under the influence of Qian Qianyi and the *Siku* project, the literary achievements of the Gongan and Jingling schools did not receive much recognition until the 1930s. This situation can be observed from textbooks on the history of Chinese literature, which first appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century.[58] In Lin Chuanjia's 林傳甲(1877–1922) *History of Chinese Literature* 中國文學史 (1904), the first Chinese textbook compiled for the Grand University of

[57] Charles Laughlin, *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity*, 24–45.

[58] Dai Yan 戴燕, *Wenxue shi de quanli* 文學史的權力 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2001); Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova, "Literary Historiography in Early Twentieth-Century (1904–1928) China," in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital China's May Fourth Project*, edited by Oldrich Kral et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 123–66.

Peking 京師大學堂, late-Ming prose was completely excluded.[59] Zeng Yi's 曾毅 *History of Chinese Literature* (1915) is one of the earliest textbooks to insert the Gongan and Jingling literati into the genealogy of prose writers. Zeng located these literati between two generations of writers who advocated the archaistic approach in prose writing—the Seven Masters, represented by Wang Shizhen from the mid-fifteenth century, and members of the Restoration society, such as Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608–1647), in the early seventeenth century.[60] But Zeng's *History* only introduces the biographies of the Yuan brothers, Zhong Xing, and Tan Yuanchun and does not elaborate on the stylistic features of their writings.

The comprehensive "rediscovery" of Jingling literature began in the Republican era. Intellectuals mounted an attack on the imperial ideology of the Qing court and carried on the task of modernizing the tradition-bound cultural landscape. Within these contexts, Zhou Zuoren and his colleagues Shen Qiwu 沈啟無 (1902–1969), Shi Zhecun 施蟄存 (1903–2003), and A Ying 阿英 (Qian Defu 錢德富, 1900–1977) carried on the movement to reexamine late-Ming literature. Consequently, in the third decade of the twentieth century, a revival of late-Ming sensibility took place, which seems to be controversial within the mainstream discourses of nationalism and revolution.

The Origin of New Literature in China (Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu, 中國新文學的源流) is a compilation of a lecture series that Zhou Zuoren conducted in Furen Academy in

[59] Dai Yan, *Wenxue shi de quanli*, 171–79; Dolezelova-Velingerova, "Literary Historiography in Early Twentieth-Century (1904-1928) China," 129–34. Lin Chuanjia, Zhu Xizu 朱希祖, and Wu Mei 吳梅, *Zaoqi Beida wenxueshi jiangyi sanzhong* 早期北大文學史講義三種, edited by Chen Pingyuan 陳平原 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005).

[60] Zeng Yi, "Chapter 31, the Gong'an school and Jingling school" (第三十一章 公安派與竟陵派), in Zeng Yi, *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (Shanghai: Daxin shuju, 1935), vol. 2, 171–73.

the spring of 1932.[61] One key argument in the collection is that literature should bring people pleasure (*yuyue*, 愉悅); "to convey moral teachings" (*zaidao*, 載道), as the primary function of classical literature, had for too long curbed the expression of individual feelings and thus hindered the development of Chinese literature.[62] To use Zhou's own words, the arguments proposed in this "casual talk" (*xianhua*, 閒話) was not based on any "academic articles from the West," nor did they follow any "treatises from Japan." Rather, the principles (*zhuyi*, 主義) and attitudes (*taidu*, 態度) came from his meticulous observation of the late-Ming prose.[63] And in this context, *A Sketch* was proposed as the exemplary work that might inspire current writers to invent a new paradigm of modern literature in China. Zhou comments on Jingling literature and *A Sketch*:

> The leading figures of the Jingling school are Zhong Xing and Tan Yuanchun. Their writing is truly eccentric, and the reader finds many sentences strange and unfamiliar. But in such strangeness and unfamiliarity, their works definitely do not imitate *The Commentary of Zuo* and *Records of the Grand Historian*. Following their own ideas, they simply wrote in a messy style. Some of their works are very playful, yet some are too difficult to be understood. Other figures [of the Jingling school] include Ni Yuanlu and Liu Tong. Today, Ni's work cannot be easily found. Coauthored by Liu Tong and Yu Yizheng, *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* can be considered the only masterpiece of the Jingling school from which we can observe the fine points of Jingling literature.
>
> 竟陵派的主要人物是鐘惺、譚元春，他們的文章很怪，裡面有很多奇僻之句，但其奇僻絕不是在模仿左、馬，而只是任著他們自己的意思亂做的。其中有的很好玩，有的則很難看得懂。另外的人物是倪元璐、劉侗諸人，倪的文章現在較不易看到，劉侗和于奕正合作的《帝京景物略》在現在可算是竟陵派唯一代表作品，從中可看出竟陵派文學的好處。[64]

[61] Zhou Zuoren, "Introduction," *Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu*, 1. For an introduction to Zhou Zuoren's discourse of late-Ming prose, see Laughlin, *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity*, 46–76.

[62] Zhou Zuoren, *Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu*, 3; 17–19.

[63] Zhou Zuoren, "Introduction," *Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu*, 2–3.

[64] Zhou Zuoren, *Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu*, 27–28.

As Zhou relates, when creating a literary work, an author must be faithful to his own mind, even though the method and principle may be messy (*luan,* 亂) and the final outlook eccentric. In the case of the Jingling school, its "strange and unfamiliar" (*qipi*, 奇僻) sentences are not a unique phenomenon exclusively from seventeenth-century China. Rather, it can be observed in world literature, such as the lyrical verses from an unnamed French poet[65] and in contemporary Chinese works, such as the vignettes of Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1900–1990) and Feiming 廢名 (Feng Wenbing 馮文炳, 1901–1967).[66] In Zhou's account, the obscure language makes *A Sketch* the antecedent of modern essays. He also suggests that the challenge of comprehension constructs a demanding reading process, which, by asking the reader to spend more effort and to digest the text sympathetically, generates unusual and prolonged pleasure, thereby permitting the text to carry out its primary function: cheering people up.[67]

Zhou Zuoren's interpretation of late-Ming prose immediately opened the debate among modern critics, and many of them contributed new definitions for and theoretical reflections on critical terms, such as *shuqing* 抒情 ("lyricism"), *biaoda* 表達 ("expression"), and *yuyan fengge*, 語言風格 ("language and style").[68] From 1932 onward, new magazines were founded to promote the study of early modern *xiaopin* literature and the publication of modern essays written in casual and witty styles.[69] Zhou Zuoren and his friends also edited and published a

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[65] Ibid., 3–4. Zhou did not name the French poet.

[66] Ibid., 28.

[67] Ibid., 3–4.

[68] For instance, Lu Xun 魯迅 "Zatan xiaopin wen" (雜談小品文, Dec. 1935); Chen Zizhan 陈子展, "Gong'an Jingling yu xiaopin wen" (公安竟陵与小品文, March 1935), collected in Wu Chengxue 吳承學 and Li Guangmo 李光摩 ed. *Wanming wenxue sichao yanjiu* 晚明文學思潮研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002).

[69] For instance, Lin Yutang's *The Analects* 論語. See Laughlin, *The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity*, 103–38.

large number of prose anthologies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many works were officially banned during the *Siku* project, and copies of these anthologies had long been unavailable. This scarcity, combined with heightened academic interest, ultimately assured the commercial viability of the modern reprinting.

In 1932, Shen Qiwu compiled an anthology titled *Early Modern Essays Transcribed* (Jindai sanwen chao, 近代散文抄).[70] This title indicates that the editor regarded the early modern essays as the counterparts of modern prose (*xiandai sanwen*, 現代散文). The book includes 160 essays written by seventeen writers from the Ming and Qing, including Wang Siren, Ni Yuanlu, Qi Biaojia, and Zhang Dai.[71] Eleven essays from *A Sketch* constitute the sixth chapter, titled "Essays by Liu Tongren" 刘同人文鈔.[72] Shen Qiwu also published two short articles to introduce the content of *A Sketch*, the first in 1932 in the *Yenching University Library Bulletin* and the other in 1934 in the magazine *Human World* (Renjian shi,人間世). To better appreciate the strange and unfamiliar style of the text, he suggests readers emancipate themselves from "conventional" reading habits and forget the restrictions of classical prose.[73]

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[70] Shen Qiwu, *Jindai sanwenchao* (Hong Kong: Tianhong chubanshe, 1957).

[71] The complete table of contents was also transcribed by Zhou Zuoren in his *Origin*. Zhou Zuoren, *Zhongguo xin wenxue de yuanliu*,72–80.

[72] Ibid., 74–75. Essays selected from *A Sketch* are "Water Gate" (Shuiguan, 水關), "The Garden of Duke Dingguo," "Shrine of Three Sages" (Sansheng an, 三聖庵) , "Brimming Well" (Manjing, 滿井), "Sorghum Bridge" (Gaoliang qiao, 高粱橋), "Jile Temple" (Jile si, 極樂寺), "White Stone Villa" (Baishi zhuang, 白石莊) , "Hot Springs" (Wenquan, 溫泉), "End of the Waterway" (Shui jintou, 水盡頭), "Sparrow Temple" (Que'er an, 雀兒庵), and "West Dyke" (Xidi, 西堤).

[73] Shen Qiwu, "Du *Dijing jingwulüe,*" *Yenching University Library Bulletin* 燕京大學圖報 no. 24 (1932): 1–2; "*Dijing jingwulüe*" in *Renjianshi* 人間世 no. 6 (1934): 29–33.

In 1935, Shi Zhecun published another collection of essays called *Casual Essays of Twenty Masters from the Late Ming* (Wanming shierjia xiaopin, 晚明二十家小品).[74] In the editorial remarks, Shi Zhecun candidly admits his respect for these late-Ming writers, because they all dared to rebel against the "orthodox" culture of their days, followed a rustic lifestyle as hermits, and were filled with a passion for nature. Shi also stresses that their casual writings are by no means frivolous; indeed, they not only speak for the writers' unbridled temperament (*shixing renxing*, 適性任性), that is, their "chivalrous and charming" (*fengliu diedang*, 風流跌宕) natures, but also demonstrate their moral integrity, especially their refusal to surrender to authority (*gangzheng bue*, 剛正不阿).[75] This anthology is based on the late-Ming anthology *Casual Essays of Twelve Masters in the Imperial Ming* (Huangming shiliujia xiaopin, 皇明十六家小品), edited by Lu Yunlong 陸雲龍 and published in the early 1630s.[76] Shi added eight more authors, including Liu Tong, Zhong Xing, and Tan Yuanchun, and selected sixteen essays from *A Sketch*.[77]

A few months later, Shi Zhecun conducted another project that significantly promoted the circulation of early modern essays. In September 1935, Shi and his colleagues edited a book

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[74] Shi Zhecun, *Wanming shierjia xiaopin* (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1984).

[75] Shi Zhecun, "Preface," *Wanming shierjia xiaopin*, 1–3.

[76] Lu Yunlong, *Huang Ming shiliujia xiaopin* (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1997).

[77] Shi Zhecun, *Wanming shierjia xiaopin*, 3. "The Garden of Duke Dingguo," "White Stone Villa," "Temple of Three Sages," "Nunnery of Mahākāśyapa" (Mohe an, 摩訶庵), "Ancient Wisteria in the Ministry of Personnel" (Libu guteng, 吏部古藤), "Fayun Temple" (Fayun si, 法雲寺), "New Garden of the Imperial Relative Li" (Li huangqin xinyuan, 李皇親新園), "End of the Waterway," "Baoguo Temple" (Baoguo si, 報國寺), "Zhongfeng Nunnery" (Zhongfeng an,中峰庵), "Grass Bridge" (Caoqiao, 草橋), "West Dyke," "Pagoda of the Old Master Wansong" (Wanson laoren ta, 萬松老人塔), "Mount Red Conch" (Hongluo xian, 紅螺崄), "Jile Temple," "Tomb of Jia Dao" (Jia Dao mu, 賈島墓).

series named *Treasures of Chinese Literature* (Zhongguo wenxue zhenben congshu, 中國文學珍本叢書) with the support of (and perhaps by the invitation of) the Shanghai Magazine Corporation 上海雜誌公司.[78] They edited over forty books from the Ming and Qing dynasties.[79] From August to October, the advertisement of this book series was posted in the *Shenbao* newspaper, which introduced the members of the editorial board, presented the abstract of each book, and instructed readers how to preorder via mail (Figure 5.1). The names of the editors, who were university professors and well-known scholars, also became part of the advertisement. Next to the introduction to the book series was a special column posting the names of "every gentlemen who helped with editing and supported the publication" (本叢書校閱及贊助諸君),[80] which includes many familiar names of the finest prose stylists in modern China, such as Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896–1945) and Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895–1976).

[78] See *Shenbao*, No. 22420, 2/24 (September 24, 1935), in "Database of *Shenbao*" 申報數據庫, *Jindai baokanku (Dabao bian)* 近代報刊庫 (大報編) (Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2017).

[79] These works are very well known today, including Xu Wei's 徐渭 *Remnant Works of Xu Wenchang* (Xu Wenchang yiga, 徐文長逸稿), Zhang Dafu's 張大復 *Notes from the Plum Blossom Studio* (*Meihua caotang bitan*, 梅花草堂筆談), Chen Jiru's 陳繼儒 *Informal Essays from the Nocturnal Fragrance Studio* (Wanxiangtang xiaopin, 晚香堂小品), and Zhou Lianggong's 周亮工 *New Collection of Transcribed Letters* (Chidu xinchao, 尺牘新抄).

[80] *Shenbao*, No. 22420, 2/24 (September 24, 1935). The editorial board included Zhou Zuoren 周作人, Hu Shizhi 胡適之, Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, Shen Qiwu 沈啟無, Lin Yutang 林語堂, Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶, Yu Dafu 郁達夫, Wu Qu'an 吳瞿安, Yu Pingbo 俞平伯, Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, Long Yusheng 龍榆生, Cao Liwu 曹禮吾, Qian Nanyang 錢南揚, Liu Dajie 劉大杰, Feng Zikai 豐子愷, and Fei Ming 廢名.

Figure 5.1 An advertisement on *A Sketch* in *Shenbao*, September 24, 1934. Source: "Database of *Shenbao*" 申報數據庫, in *Jindai baokanku (Dabao bian)* 近代報刊庫 (大報編). Beijing Erudition Digital Research Center 北京愛如生數字化技術研究中心, 2017.

The advertisement states the following:

A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital has eight chapters and was written by Liu Tongren and Yu Yizheng of the Ming dynasty. This book is derived from *Commentary on the Waterways Treatise* and *A New Account of the Tales of the World*. It records local customs and famous sites of Beiping during the Ming dynasty. It includes 130 essays, with poems appended to the corresponding essays. This is a work of the Jingling and Gongan schools. The style is detached and coarse yet still maintains a particular charm. It is a unique piece among the works depicting scenery and recording events. The book was first printed in the Chongzhen reign (1627–1644). In the early Qing, Ji Xiaolan (Ji Yun) edited an abbreviated edition, the content of which significantly differed from the original. Our book series has chosen the first edition that was published in the eighth year of the Chongzhen reign (1635). The proofreading, typesetting, and printing have been executed carefully. Qian Qianyi's preface at the beginning of the book has not been deleted. So, this is considered to be the most exceptional edition [available].

帝京景物略八卷。明劉同人于奕正著。其書蓋脫胎于《水經注》《世說新語》。記述明時北平風土勝蹟。為文百三十餘篇。文末各附詩歌。其文出於公安竟陵。冷澀而有殊致。在寫景記事文中，獨闢蹊徑之作也。此書初刻於崇禎時，至清初則有紀

曉嵐刪削覆刻本。內容已與原本大異。本叢書用崇禎八年初刻本，精校排印。卷首有錢謙益序未刪去，堪稱善本。[81]

First, we should note the chronological problem in this statement. As far as I know, Qian Qianyi never wrote a preface to *A Sketch*.[82] The selling point of this advertisement is that this modern book perfectly represents the original version (*yuanben*, 原本) published in 1635. The abridged edition compiled by Ji Yun became the target of critique, the content of which, from the modern editor's view, differs significantly (*dayi*, 大異) from the original. The alleged inclusion of Qian Qianyi's preface—material written by a famous scholar from an earlier period—demonstrates such a strategy (although in fact, Qian himself was rather hostile to the Jingling writers). Furthermore, because Qian's writings had been censored during the Qing, the modern editors are in effect announcing their defiance of Qing censorship in service to the restoration of the authentic Ming edition.[83] The desire to restore a "true" version reveals the Republican scholars' disapproval of Ji Yun.

But reading this advertisement closely, we can see how similar it is to Ji Yun's preface. First, this passage highlights the function of *xiejing jishi* (depicting scenery and recording events, 寫景記事) and the content of *fengtu shengji* (local customs and famous sites, 風土勝跡) and ignores any reference to social and historical concerns. Thus, the silence about late-Ming politics is shared by both Qing and Republican editors. Second, it addresses the same group of canonical works—*Commentary on the Waterways Treatise* and *A New Account of the Tales of the World*—

[81] *Shenbao* 申報, No. 22420, 2/24 (September 24, 1935).

[82] I cannot find this modern edition of *A Sketch*, so it is hard to verify this saying in Qian's preface. But as far as I know, Qian Qianyi never wrote any preface to Liu Tong's work.

[83] For an introduction to Qian's reputation in the Qing dynasty, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "Qian Qianyi and His Place in History," in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, edited by Wilt Idema, Wai-yee Li, and Ellen Widmer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 199–218.

from which *A Sketch* is learned the techniques of narrative and description, so as to position the book in the genealogy of traditional prose. Last, it employs similar terms to describe Liu Tong's literary style; the advertisement uses the word *lengse* ("detached and coarse," 冷澀), which is close to Ji Yun's word, *lengjun* ("detached and unusual," 冷隽). Although the Republican editor presented their version as the antithesis of its Qing predecessor, the three points suggest the deep connection between them. The Republican writers comprehended neither the motivation for Ji Yun's adjustment nor the political reasons that shaped his sophisticated attitude toward *A Sketch*. But they carried on Ji's project of clarifying its generic identity and securing for the book its rightful place in the long tradition of prose literature. And they, too, deeply appreciated the extraordinary style of the text.

Conclusion

The act of reading is a process in constant motion. The changing ways of reading mirror the varying concerns of the reader. This chapter examined three reading modes—commemorative, literary, and modern—that were observed from multiple editions of *A Sketch*. From the concluding years of the Ming to the Republican period, this urban miscellany fulfilled several functions. It was a comprehensive record of scenic sites and local customs of the capital, a guide of sightseeing to both physical and armchair travels, and a collection of essays demonstrating the literary skills of the Jingling school. It also experienced rounds of modifications in content and format; the essays were always well preserved, but the poems were often deleted. In this process, a "competition" between literary creation and historical writing—which, from Liu Tong's perspective, had always collaborated with each other—gradually developed. After the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, as a result of the change in the political

climate, the connection between the text and Ming history became more tenuous; meanwhile, the literary side attracted increasingly greater attention. And thus, the literary quality of Liu Tong's essays took a prominent place in criticism. In this context, iterations of *A Sketch* continued to evolve, and until in the early twentieth century, it was finally established as a canonic piece of *xiaopin* literature from late imperial China.

CODA

In January 1912, the Qing dynasty ended its imperial governance, and the Republic of China was founded. On April 18, 1927, the Nationalist government was inaugurated in Nanjing; on July 28, 1928, Beijing was renamed Beiping and downgraded from the capital to a provincial city.[1] In the following decade until the Japanese occupation of China in 1937, Beiping continued to experience extraordinary changes, specifically in the material life of its residents and the transformation of its urban space.[2] In 1934, the Beiping government, with support of the mayor, Yuan Liang 袁良 (1882–1953), launched a Plan for the Beiping Tourist District to transform the city into "a modernized metropolis of the world." This plan distinguished itself from previous reconstructions of the city. Instead of erasing imperial sites or adapting them for new uses, it aimed to preserve the old structures as "emblems of Beiping and Chinese culture."[3] In 1935, the government published a book titled *A Sketch of Cultural Relics in the Old Capital* (Jiudu wenwulüe 舊都文物略, hereafter referred to as *A Sketch of Cultural Relics*) as one of the achievements of the plan, which comprehensively introduced hundreds of sites for sightseeing, including imperial architecture, famous scenic spots, and natural landmarks.[4]

A Sketch of Cultural Relics borrowed the title of *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* and presented itself as a modern incarnation of this late-Ming urban miscellany. In addition to using similar titles, the two projects shared several common features, including

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[1] For an introduction to the general history of Republican Beijing, see Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and its Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[2] Shi Mingzheng, "Rebuilding the Chinese Capital: Beijing in the Early Twentieth Century," *Urban History* 25, no. 1 (May 1998): 60–81.

[3] Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 90. For more on the tourist plan, see Marjorie Dryburch, "National City, Human City: The Reimagining and Revitalization of Beiping, 1928–37," *Urban History* 32, no. 3 (December 2005): 500–24.

[4] Tang Yongbin, *Jiudu wenwulüe* (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 2000).

their principles of composition, the methods used in their archival and field research, and most significantly, their motivation to preserve the cultural memory of the capital in a period of social turmoil. This coda first introduces the compilation and publication of *A Sketch of Cultural Relics* and then summarizes the significance of writing the capital that was reflected in the two *Sketches*.

In January 1935, the government established the Committee of Cultural Relics in the Old Capital (Jiudu wenwu zhenglihui, 舊都文物整理會). Archaeologists, architects, and historians from various universities and academic institutes collaborated in surveying cultural heritage sites in the city.[5] The Palace Museum and the Institute for the Display of Ancient Objects (Guwu chenlie suo, 古物陈列所) assisted in inventorying portable relics, and scholars and students from Tsinghua University and the Society for the Study of Chinese Architecture (Zhongguo yingzao xueshe, 中國營造學社) engaged in onsite field mapping and photographic documentation.[6] In December 1935, under the instruction of the committee and the government, scholar Tang Yongbin 湯用彬 finished *A Sketch of Cultural Relics* and sent the manuscript to be published by the Palace Museum.[7]

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[5] Liu Shourou 劉守柔, "Qingmo Minguo wenhua yichan baohu de xingqi yu yanjin yanjiu" 清末民國文化遺產保護的興起與演進研究 (PhD diss., Fudan University, 2015).

[6] Liang Sicheng 梁思成, "Beiping wenwu bixu zhengli yu baocun" 北平文物必須整理與保存, in *Shizheng pinglun* 時政評論 no. 8, vol. 10 (1948): 4–6.

[7] The 1935 edition of the book was printed in collotype 珂羅版, which is the most exquisite and expensive printing method of the day. Zhu Saihong 朱塞虹, "Gugong bowuyuan chuban shiye de shoudu huihuang: Minguo shiqi chuban zonglun" 故宮博物院出版事業的首度輝煌——民國時期出版總論, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 no. 1 (2011): 124–61. Zhang Xiaoli 張小李, "Gugong yinshuasuo gouchen" 故宮印刷所鉤沉, *Zhongguo chubanshi yanjiu* 中國出版史研究 no. 4 (2016): 122–32.

A Sketch of Cultural Relics comprises eleven chapters. Its hundreds of short essays and nearly four hundred photographs record city walls and gate towers, imperial palaces, imperial temples and shrines, gardens and parks, alleys, mausoleums, famous scenic sites, waterways and passes, stone and metal inscriptions, crafts, and miscellaneous cultural artifacts such as theatre and temple festivals. To compose this book, Tang Yongbin and his colleagues "verified [the events] in history, organized [the content] in a literary way, supplemented [the main text] with poetry, and illustrated [the content] by pictures" (徵之於史，組之以文，輔之以詩歌，象之以圖).[8] The text frequently quoted late-imperial urban miscellanies on Beijing (including Liu Tong's *A Sketch*) as well as other historical materials, such as the "veritable records" (shilu, 實錄) of emperors.[9] Moreover, the entries were composed in classical Chinese, differing from most of the current travelogues and guidebooks that used vernacular language to describe scenery and objects. Tang explained that in order to avoid "redundancy and vulgarity" (*rongsu*, 冗俗), he followed a highly refined style to make sure that the book was "clean and well-disciplined" (*zhengchi*, 整飭).[10]

Most notably, this was the first time that photography was systematically used in an urban guide to Beijing composed by Chinese writers (Figure 6.1). As Tang Yongbin related, whenever they visited a scenic site, they "put the camera on the ground, and slowly took photos" (置機地上，徐徐攝取). Photography provides first-hand information and preserves the "true

[8] *Jiudu wenwulüe*, 266.

[9] The referential materials used in *A Sketch of Cultural Relics* include *Mingji beilüe* 明季北略 (by Ji Liuqi 计六奇 [1622–?], 1671), *Xiaoting zalu* 啸亭杂录 (by Zhaolian 昭槤 [1776–1830]), *Tianzhi ouwen* 天咫偶聞 (by Zhenjun 震钧 [1857–1920], 1903), veritable records of emperors 帝王實錄, and poetry written by the Qing official scholars, such as Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634–1711), Xu Qianxue 徐乾學 (1632–1694).

[10] *Jiudu wenwulüe*, 1.

image" (*shixiang*, 實相) of each place.[11] From the late nineteenth century on, Beijing was exposed to international audiences, and foreign visitors photographed its architecture and its people.[12] Displaying a tidy image of newly restored urban structures, *A Sketch of Cultural Relics* aimed not only to "make the magnificence of Chinese civilization known to foreign tourists," but also to "defeat 'false propaganda' that represented China as a disorderly country where other people dare not come."[13] These photos were widely circulated and were reprinted in several magazines in Shanghai, such as the weekly periodical *New People* (Xinren 新人).[14]

[11] *Jiudu wenwulüe*, 266.

[12] For instance, Itō Chūta 伊藤忠太 (1867–1954), *The Imperial City of Peking, China* (Shinkoku Pekin kōjō shashinjō 清國北京皇城寫真帖), 1901; Donald Mennie, *The Pageant of Peking*, 1920. For an introduction to photography of Beijing in the late Qing and Republican periods, see Andrew F. Jones, "Portable Monuments: Architectural Photography and the 'Forms' of Empire in Modern China," *Positions: East Asian Cultures Critiques* 18, no. 3 (2010): 599–631.

[13] Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 92.

[14] The magazine established a special column titled "Cultural Relics of the Old Capital" (jiudu wenwu 舊都文物). It continues to post photos in the last monochromic page in 1936. See for instance, *Xinren zhoukan* 新人周刊 vol. 43 (1936): 23.

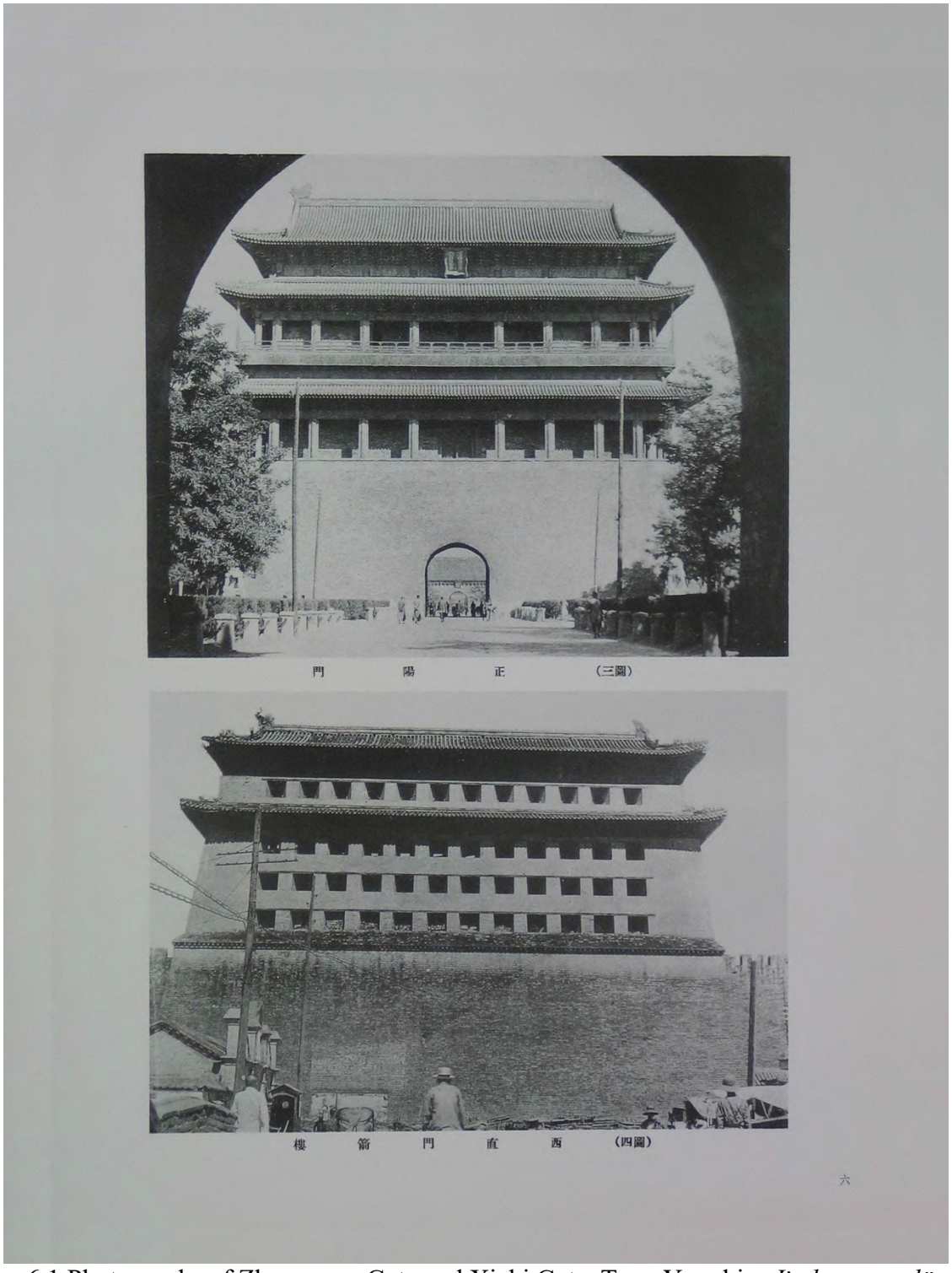

Figure 6.1 Photographs of Zhengyang Gate and Xizhi Gate. Tang Yongbin, *Jiudu wenwulüe* (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 2000), 6.

In addition to reinvigorating the economy of Beiping through the development of tourism, the preservation of cultural relics also served a political purpose. In September 1931, the Japanese army occupied Manchuria; in January 1933, they invaded Rehe (today, Chengde in Hebei province) and forced the Chinese army to retreat south of the Great Wall. In the following month, Nationalist military units were forced to leave the demilitarized zone between Beiping and Tianjin as the Japanese army established a military encampment in Miyun county, eighty kilometers from Beiping.[15] With the loss of the northern territories, the city, once enclosed by vast steppe lands and secured by the heartland of the previous Qing empire, became isolated on the frontier.

With the security of North China threatened by imperialist Japan, Chinese intellectuals debated whether the government should continue spending precious resources on the preservation of cultural relics. Some suggested that the ceasefire between China and Japan called for by the Tanggu Truce (May 31, 1933) be signed to secure the old capital and proposed that in order to deflect Japanese power away from North China, the government should surrender or destroy Beiping. Jiang Tingfu 蒋廷黻 (1895–1965), a professor of history from Tsinghua University, harshly criticized this radical opinion in an article titled "On the Future of Beiping and the Preservation of Ancient Objects."[16] To his public readership, Jiang explained Beiping's critical geopolitical status and pointed out the importance of maintaining the operation of the city:

> Unexpectedly, today Beiping turned out to be the guardian of the frontier, and her status becomes even more crucial. From now on, we should spare no effort on maintaining [the

[15] For an introduction to the Japanese occupation of North China before 1937, see John K. Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker, eds., *The Cambridge History of China,* Vol. 13*, Republican China 1912–1949, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 499–504, 509–19.

[16] Jiang Tingfu, "Beiping de qiantu ji guwu de baocun" 北平的前途及古物的保存, in *Duli pinglun* 獨立評論, no. 57 (1935): 3–5.

> order of] Beiping. The promotion of cultural undertakings is one way to maintain [its operation]. All kinds of architectural restoration and infrastructural development are good methods too.
>
> 北平現在竟變為邊疆的守禦者。她的地位比以前更加要緊。以後我們應該更加努力於北平的維持。文化事業的推進是維持的方法之一，一切建築的修理和市政的改良也是維持的好方法。[17]

To "maintain" (*weichi*, 維持) the city was an urgent task for the Chinese people, an effort that could be partly realized through such cultural projects as the tourist plan and the restoration and renovation of urban infrastructure. In this context, *A Sketch of Cultural Relics* undertook several objectives. It projected a beautiful and orderly image of the old capital that encouraged tourists to sightsee during their visits to imperial landmarks; it showcased historical writing, relating important events in the city through the recording of the transformation of urban sites; and, by promoting the international reputation of the city as a manifestation of East Asian civilization and as the common heritage of mankind, it aimed to pressure imperialist Japan, which was scheming to conquer North China, to preserve rather than annihilate the city during the coming conflict.[18]

Exactly three hundred years separate the publication of *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* in 1635 and *A Sketch of Cultural Relics in the Old Capital* in 1935. Although historical, technological, and intellectual contexts changed significantly from the late Ming to the Republican era, the two *Sketches* reveal a kind of urban writing that was continuously practiced by Chinese scholars. In periods of social crises, the systematic and comprehensive account of place and people, specifically those related to the capital, was a

[17] Jiang Tingfu, "Beiping de qiantu ji guwu de baocun," 4.
[18] Liu Shourou, "Qingmo Minguo wenhua yichan baohu de xingqi yu yanjin yanjiu," 45.

critical way to preserve cultural memory. As seen in the two *Sketches*, scholars strove to present the city in the most refined form possible, and in doing so, they were committed to expending whatever efforts and resources they could afford to bring to the successful completion of their project. The late-Ming book was composed with extreme care, after years of research, and the essays were saturated with the authors' astute observations, deep emotion, and idealistic hopes for the future. The Republican book, a governmental project executed prior to the Sino-Japanese war, took advantage of new visual technologies to capture and preserve for posterity the beauty of the city. These books provide us with more than mere historical records. They also tell us how people of distinctly different times, viewed their city and how they lived within it. Through writing, the authors inhabited literary Beijing on the eve of national emergencies. Through reading, we are invited to visit their literary Beijing.

APPENDIX 1
EXTANT MISCELLANIES ON BEIJING

1.1. Miscellaneous Books published before *A Sketch of Sites and Objects in the Imperial Capital* (1635)

Book Title	Author	Year of Publication
Xijin zhi 析津志	Xiong Mengxiang 熊夢祥	Mid-14th c. Reconstituted from entries in *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典
Gugong yilu 故宮遺錄	Xiao Xun 蕭洵	Early 15th c. Reconstituted from *Rixia jiuwen* 日下舊聞 (by Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, 1688)
Jingshi wucheng fangxiang hutong ji 京師五城坊巷衚衕集	Zhang Jue (1485–1566) 張爵	1560
Chang'an liyu 長安里語	Xu Changzuo 徐昌祚	1602
Yan shi 燕史	Guo Zaoqing (1532–1593) 郭造卿	Mid-16th c.
Wanshu zaji 宛署雜記	Shen Bang 沈榜	1593
Chang'an kehua 長安客話	Jiang Yikui (*juren* 1594) 蔣一葵	a.1615
Chang'an keyou ji 長安可遊記	Song Qiming 宋啟明	Reconstituted from *Rixia jiuwen*
Zhuozhong zhi 酌中志	Liu Ruoyu (b.1584) 劉若愚	a.1628
Beijing suihua ji 北京歲華記	Lu Qihong 陸啟浤	Reconstituted from *Rixia jiuwen*
Yandu youlanzhi 燕都遊覽志	Sun Guomi (1582–1648) 孫國敉	Partly preserved in *Rixia jiuwen*

Reference:
Wang Canchi 王燦熾, *Yandu gujikao* 燕都古籍考 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 1995).

1.2. Major Miscellaneous Books on Beijing in the Qing dynasty

Book Title	Author	Year of Publication
Changping shanshuiji 昌平山水記	Gu Yanwu (1613–1682) 顧炎武	Written a.1660
Jingdong kaogulu 京東考古錄	Gu Yanwu	Written a.1660
Chunming mengyu lu 春明夢余錄	Sun Chengze (1593–1676) 孫承澤	18th c.
Tianfu guangji 天府廣記	Sun Chengze	Manuscript, with preface in 1892
Jin'ao tuishi biji 金鰲退食筆記	Gao Shiqi (1645–1704) 高士奇	1684
Rixia jiuwen 日下舊聞	Zhu Yizun (1629–1709) 朱彝尊	1688
Qinding rixia jiuwenkao 欽定日下舊聞考	Yu Minzhong et al. 于敏中 等	1787
Dijing suishi jisheng 帝京歲時紀勝	Lu Rongbi (active 1731–1746) 陸榮陛	1758
Chenyuan shilüe 宸垣識略	Wu Changyuan 吳長元	1788
Tengyin zaji 藤陰雜記	Dai Lu (1739–1806) 戴璐	1796
Yantai zaiyoulu 燕臺再遊錄	Ryu Deuk-gong (174–1808) 柳得恭	a.1801
Yanjing zaji 燕京雜記	Anonymous 佚名	Late-19th c.
Yanjing suishiji 燕京歲時記	Fucha Dunchong 富察敦崇	1906
Tianzhi ouwen 天咫偶聞	Zhenjun (1857–1920) 震鈞	1903

Reference:
Wang Canchi 王燦熾, *Yandu gujikao* 燕都古籍考 (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 1995).

APPENDIX 2
TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTED ESSAYS

2.1a. Liu Tong "Monastery of Ultimate Bliss"
Liu Tong, "Jile si" 極樂寺, *Dijing jingwulüe*, 196.

The river of the Sorghum Bridge comes from the canyons in the West Mountains. It merges into the Jade [Spring] River. Departing from the mountain, the river flows gently; before arriving at the city, the water becomes clear. Teased by the breeze, [the water] takes on the texture of cyan sieve-patterned paper. Two water surfaces approach one embankment; arrayed in four lines, willow trees guard the water. When aged, [the canopy] of the pine becomes bald. When aged, [the canopy] of the plum tree becomes bald. But [aged] willow twigs become slenderer and longer. The height of willows on the Sorghum Embankment is over one hundred feet. Their twigs have grown to be five or six feet long, to caress the water below. Several miles north of the riverside are villas and monasteries. [Roofs are built] up and down, [halls are arranged] in varied density. Forests stretch far in mist, where the green color extends all over. Paddy fields are scattered among [the trees]. In each of the square fields, white clouds descend from heaven and flow under one's feet. One mile away from the bridge is the Monastery of Ultimate Bliss. The monastery was not yet ruined in the early years of the Tianqi reign (1620–1627). There were old willows outside the gate, aged pines in front of the main hall, and peonies in the Hall of National Flowers to the east of the temple. The West Mountains could be appreciated from one's seat. A mountain spring flowed into the kitchen. During the forty-year reign of Emperor Wanli, scholar officials had plenty of leisure. They visited this temple very often. Every day this place was frequented by an endless procession of carriages; every single building was crowded with people. Yuan Zhonglang (Yuan Hongdao) and Huang Sili (Huang Dajie) said, "This place looks like the West Lake of Qiantang."

高梁橋水，來西山澗中，去此入玉河。辭山而平，未到城而淨，輕風感之，作青羅紋紙痕。兩水夾一堤，柳四行夾水。松之老也禿，梅之老也禿，柳之老也，逾細葉而長絲。高梁堤上柳，高十丈，拂堤下水，尚可餘四五尺。岸北數十里，大抵皆別業、僧寺，低昂疏簇，綠樹漸遠，青青漠漠，間以水田，界界如雲腳下空。距橋可三里，為極樂寺址。寺，天啟初年猶未毀也，門外古柳，殿前古松，寺左國花堂牡丹。西山入座，澗水入廚。神廟四十年間，士大夫多暇，數遊寺，輪蹄無虛日，堂軒無虛處。袁中郎、黃思立云："小似錢塘西湖然。"

2.1b. Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道, "A Trip to the Monastery of Ultimate Bliss"
Yuan Zongdao, "Jilesi jiyou" 極樂寺紀遊, *Baisuzhai leiji* 白蘇齋類集 (Shanghai: Zazhi gongsi, 1935), 169.

The river of the Sorghum Bridge comes from the canyons in the West Mountains. It converges with the Jade [Spring] River here. When a breeze strolls across the water, [the water surface is like] a thousand rolls of white silk or sieve-patterned paper. The embankment is in the water, approached by two arrays of waves. In four lines willows grow old with luxuriant foliage. The shade of a single tree can cover several seats. The weeping twigs are over ten feet long. On the

north bank are many Buddhist and Taoist monasteries. Vermillion gates and violet roofs are scattered along for ten miles. Forests stretch afar, [with] clustered trees, among which one finds paddy fields. The West Mountains, in the shape of a spiral shell, rise amidst forests and waters. The Monastery of Ultimate Bliss is located one mile away from the Bridge. The path is very pleasant. Horses walk in the shade of greenery, which looks like an opened canopy. Several *kuozi* pines are in front of the main hall. Their foliage is fresh emerald and tender yellow, and their bark scraggy like large fish scales. Their circumference is around twenty feet. During holidays from the office, I went sightseeing here with Huang Sili (Huang Dajie) and other friends. My brother Zhonglang said, "This place looks like the Su Embarkment in Hangzhou." Sili agreed. I drew a long sigh: "The beautiful scenery of the West Lake has lingered in my dreams for a long time. When can I hang up the Hat of Imperial Ceremony, visit the Six Bridges, and remove this hindrance to my affection for landscape?" On that day, each of us wrote one poem with different rhyme words. And then we left.

高粱橋水，從西山深澗中來。道此入玉河。白練千疋，微風行水上。若羅紋紙。堤在水中，兩波相夾。綠楊四行。樹古葉繁，一樹之蔭，可覆數席。垂線長丈余。岸北佛盧道院甚眾，朱門紺殿，亙數十里。對面遠樹，高下攢簇。間以水田。西山如螺髻，出於林水之間。極樂寺，去橋可三里。路徑亦佳，馬行綠陰中，若張蓋。殿前剔牙松數株。松身鮮翠嫩黃，班剝若大魚鱗。大可七八圍許。暇日曾與黃思立（黃大節）諸公遊此。予弟中郎云：“此地小似錢塘蘇堤。”思立亦以為然。予因嘆西湖勝境入夢已久，何日掛進賢冠，作六橋下客子，了此山水一段情障乎？是日分韻各賦一詩而別。

2.2. Liu Tong, "Monastery of Charitable Deeds and Merit"

Liu Tong, "Gongde si" 功德寺, *Dijing jingwulüe*, 291.

Mountains like to project their shadows down onto lakes, making the tranquil scenery delightful; lakes like to reflect light upward into paddy fields, so the spacious view is appealing. Taking the way along the West Embankment, we strolled in the glistening light of lake waves. Near Green Dragon Bridge, we reached the edge of the lake. We walked through the paddy fields and arrived at Mount Jade Spring. The mountain came to us. The Monastery of Charitable Deeds and Merit resides between the lake and the mountain.

山好下影於湖，靜相好也。湖好上光于水田，曠相好也。道西堤，行湖光中，至青龍橋，湖則窮已。行左右水田，至玉泉山，山則出已。際湖山而刹者，功德寺。

A single gate survives whereas the rest of the buildings have been destroyed. Swallows nest among the tiles, while storks [nest] on the roof ridge. "Coo—— Coo——," the mournful cry makes one feel sad. In the past, birds worked like a bell clock to announce the correct time every morning and evening. There are several ancient trees outside the gate. The circumference of each is about thirty to fourty *wei*. Roots pop up through the ground. People who suffer sunstroke can sit here, [using the roots] as a small table, a stool, or a chair. From the frequent caresses of people, the upper surface of the roots has become smooth. The undersides are equally smooth, because insects and rats are [actively digging] holes underneath. Small anthills stand like giant mountains. We can never know how many ant kingdoms are accommodated here. Ancient trunks

scaffold the sun; old foliage rattles in the wind. Dwarf junipers are planted next to the ancient trees. Although they cast no shade, they help to enlarge the sound [of the wind]. Several acres of paddy field are nearby. The monks [here] don't have a decent temple, so they farm to make a living. Every day, looking west, on the shadowy east side of the mountain, one can see people in bamboo hat, carrying shovels with straw baskets hanging from them on their shoulders, singing ditties as they return home. Frogs croak to join the concert, accompanied by the water flowing in the paddy field.

寺，今一搭間地也，存者門耳。瓦壟燕麥，屋脊鸛巢，聲假假，餘悲生恐，在當年昏定曉報鐘時也。門外二三古木，各三四十圍，根半肘土外。暍蔭者，坐差差，如幾，如凳，如養和，滑其上膚及骨，蟲鼠穴其下，亦滑，垤壤巒如，不知幾十國蟻。古干支日，老葉鼓風，兩側偃柏，不成蓋陰，亦助其響。傍地余水田，僧無寺，業農事。每日西睨，山東陰，肩鍤者，鍤掛畚者，仰笠者，野歌而歸。蛙語部傳，田水浩浩。

The monks live in a shabby hall. A wooden ball—decorated with vermilion clay and donated by patrons in the early years—is worshipped there. Li Dongyang writes, "This monastery was an old temple of the Jin dynasty, named 'Guarding the Sacred.' There were seven halls. Each hall was nine rooms in width. Golden [lacquer] was painted on the beams; colorful designs were painted [on the lacquer]." In the Xuande reign (1426–1435), a Chan master named Ban'an rebuilt this place. Ban'an mastered juggling the wooden ball. As large as a grain cup, the ball could run at high speed. It climbed up, rushed down, and turned around, as if having its own eyes and legs. When it encountered people, it jumped up and down, as if bowing to make an obeisance. If the ball's master ordered, "Go to that lord's household!" It went. "Go to that consort's residence!" It went. Then a lot of money was raised. Emperor Xuande invited Ban'an to the court, gave him the title "Master of the Wooden Ball," and bestowed gold and money upon him. A grand monastery was constructed and named the "Monastery of Charitable Deeds and Merit." His majesty sometimes visited this place. During the Chenghua reign (1465–1487), a monk named Jiejing proposed to move a pagoda from the Monastery of Paying the Debt of Gratitude at Nanjing to this monastery via the waterway, because Emperor Yongle used to hold ceremonies at that flanking pagoda. However, the Department of State Affairs impeached the memorial. Jiejing failed. Yet another pavilion was constructed. It had double roofs, delicately designed contours, special halls, and secluded rooms. Emperors of our dynasty all stopped here to rest during their trips. When Emperor Jiajing visited this place on his way to the Jing Mausoleum, he was irritated by the ferocious looks of the guardian statues. He ordered them to be destroyed.

僧歸破屋數楹，供一木球，施以丹堊，寺初興時募使者也。李西涯記云：寺故金護聖寺，寺七殿，殿九楹，楹以金地，彩其上。宣德中，板庵禪師重建也。師能役木球，大如斗，輪轉行馳，登下委折，如目脛具，逢人躍躍，如首稽叩。師曰："入某侯門。"則入，募金若干。曰："入某戚里。"則入，募金若干。宣宗召入，命為木球使者，賜金錢，遂建巨刹，曰"功德寺"，時臨幸焉。成化中，僧戒靜，以南都報恩寺，文皇曾瘞其副塔，疏請舟載置此寺，臺省劾之，不果。然猶建一閣，重簷疊角，虛堂曲房，為累朝駐蹕地。世宗幸景陵，經過此，怒金剛猙獰，命撤毀。

2.3. Liu Tong, "Mount Urn"
Liu Tong, "Wengshan" 甕山, *Dijing jingwulüe*, 307–08.

Ten kilometers away from Fucheng Gate lies Mount Urn. It looks like earth gushing out from the ground. There is no vegetation on its bare surface. On the south slope, there is a collapsed grotto called "the Small Terrace of the Cauldron." The hill was not originally named "Urn." An old man who lived there told people, "The base of the hill is voluminous and giant, and has many beautiful caves. It is like an urn." People chiseled the rock and discovered an urn made of stone. The intricate carvings of mythical creatures [on the urn] could not be identified. Several things were stored inside. The old man took them away and placed the urn in the south slope. He also left a prophecy. It reads, "When the stone urn moves, the imperial capital will be impoverished." In the early years of the Jiajing period (1522–1566), the urn was suddenly lost. Since then the economic condition [of the country] has deteriorated. It is said, that in the Hongzhi period (1488–1505), imperial officials were wealthy; in the Zhengde period (1506–1521), eunuchs were wealthy; in the Jiajing period, merchants were wealthy; in the Longqing (1567–1572) and Wanli (1573–1620) periods, knights-errant were wealthy. However, [nowadays] those who travel live in prosperity, while the local residents suffer from poverty. Passing the bridge in front of the mountain and walking southward, several households reside at the mountain's foot, facing the West Lake. Paddy fields are arrayed like a chessboard. Peasant families live here. Possessing their own farming tools, they live in the same way as [people in] the southeast. Their life is simple, yet prosperous, for they can take advantage of the lake. If in the capital and the surrounding districts we could transform every acre of arable riverside to farmland, fill all low-lying lands with water to create ponds, and construct earthen dams near swamps and pools, then [the local economy would be significantly improved and] resemble that of the southeast provinces. Farmers would be rich and respectable and local residents would live in prosperity.

甕山去阜成門二十餘里，土赤潰，童童無草木。山南若洞而圮者，小鬲臺也。山初未名甕也，居此一老父語人曰："山麓魁大而凹秀，甕之屬也。"鑿之得石甕一，華蟲雕龍，不可細識。中物數十，老父則攜去，留甕置山陽。又留讖曰："石甕徙，貧帝里。"嘉靖初，甕忽失，嗣是物力漸耗。傳者謂弘治時世臣富，正德時內臣富，嘉靖時商賈富，隆、萬時遊俠富，然流寓盛，土著貧矣。度山前小橋而南，人家傍山，臨西湖，水田棋布，人人農家,傢俱農器，年年農務，一如東南，而衣食朴豐，因利湖也。使畿輔他水次，可田也，皆田之；其他陸壤，可陂塘也，田而水之；其他窪下，可堤苑也，水而田之，一一如東南，本富則尊，土著其重。

There used to be a spring fountain in the backside of the mountain, but it has now disappeared. An old temple is located in the upper hill, with broken tiles, collapsed walls, and a few dusty statues. No human traces can be found. There is one tablet showing the name of the temple, "Yuanjing." It was constructed in the seventh year of Hongzhi era (1494) with patronage from Lady Luo, who was the wet nurse of the emperor. Walking a few steps in the mountain base, one can find the tomb of Yelü Chucai from the Yuan dynasty. The front shrine was [the first to fall] in ruins, but the statues lasted [for some time], because they were made of stone. The stone steles, stone horse, and stone tigers were lost [over time until] only a stone old man stood there. In a summer evening in the seventh year of the Tianqi reign (1627), hundreds of fireflies gathered around the head of the stone man. Local residents witnessed that scene, and they

clamored at night, “The stone man’s eyes are illuminated!” The next morning they pushed the statue onto the ground and hurried to smash it. Later at night, fireflies came again. Deprived of the statue, they gathered in the trees. People again witnessed that scene, and again they clamored at night. They carried hoes and harrows there and found fireflies resting on the tree. Now, there are no longer any objects in front of the tomb; just a single mound stands in the back.

山后一畝泉，今失去。山上一老寺，破瓦垝垣，塵像幾，無煙火，有額曰“圓靜”。弘治七年助聖夫人羅氏建也。山下數十武，元耶律楚材墓。墓前祠，祠廢像存，像以石存也。石表碣、石馬虎等已零落，一翁仲立未去。天啟七年夏夜，有螢十百集翁仲首，土人望見，夜嘩曰：石人眼光也。質明，共踣而爭碎之。後夜螢來，無所集，集他樹。人復望見，夜復嘩，鋤耰夜往，樹上乃螢也，而墓前無餘器矣，突然一丘。

2.4. Liu Tong, “Tomb of Little Immortal Peng”

Liu Tong, “Peng Xiaoxian mu” 彭小仙墓, *Dijing jingwulüe*, 364–65.

Eighteen *li* (nine kilometers) south of Gu’an County is Peng Village. In the early years of the Zhengde reign (1505–1521), one day a boy suddenly visited a senior of the village and said, “I am a boy with the surname Li. I beg you to allow me to change my surname to Peng and I would love to shepherd for you.” After that, the boy shepherded [in the village] for thirty years, but he still looked like a boy. He never grew old. Every day around noon, if he suddenly drove the cows back home, people would quickly remove crops from the threshing floor, because it would rain immediately. During the rain, if he suddenly opened the stockade, the sky would immediately turn sunny. Therefore, the villagers gradually began to consult the boy about the occurrence of flood and drought, the appropriate yearly plans for crop and pasture, and even omens of good and bad. He was called “Little Immortal Peng.”

固安縣南十八里之彭村，武廟初，忽一童子詣村長者言，童子李，請彭姓，為長者牧。自是牧三十年，尚童，不更長也。每日中，忽驅牛歸，霍霍收場曝，俄則雨。雨中，忽拔欄，放牛出，俄則晴。故村之人，漸問童子以旱溢，歲所宜畜植，已漸涉休咎徵，號之曰“彭小仙”。

People in the capital heard that he was practicing sorcery. The police arrived. The boy told his family that there was no need to fear. He voluntarily put on handcuffs; the police and the surrounding viewers could not predict what he planned to do. When he was about to leave, he made farewells to the villagers and said, “A hundred years from now, troops will arrive. Those who stay under the White Banner will survive.” He left. On the way, he picked up a blade of grass, wrapped it around his neck, and his head was severed from his body. The police reported the situation. Villagers collected [his corpse] and buried it in the north of the village. It is called “Tomb of Little Immortal Peng.” During festivals like Qingming and the fifteenth day of the tenth month, when people were sweeping tombs and worshipping, they could hear music being played inside the tomb.

有以妖聞於都，捕者至，童子謂其家無恐，自為具，給捕者，給眾觀者，莫測所從致。則就系，別其村人曰：“百年後兵來，白旗下者生矣。”去，中道拾莖草周于項，身首異

焉。捕者以狀報。人乃收瘞村北頭，曰“彭小仙墓”。歲清明，十月朔，祭掃節也。人輒聞鼓樂聲出是墓下。

Ten years later, a villager saw the Little Immortal on the way to Jinling (Nanjing). He asked how [Little Immortal] had returned to life, but [the Immortal] just laughed and did not answer. The villager returned to the village, opened the tomb, and only found one shoe left. He still concealed the tomb and erected [the Immortal's] statue for worship. Villagers would pray for rain and sunshine in that place. In the *jiyi* year of the Chongzheng reign (1629), enemies invaded Gu'an. Villagers recalled the words of Little Immortal and escaped towards the White Banner. The banner read, "Zhou Manji, the Third Army of the White Banner." Zhou was a native of Beijing who rebelled against the country and became a general for the enemy. Although he would sack and pillage, he did not usually kill his captives. When his army left, the villagers returned home safely.

十年後，村有人見小仙金陵道中，叩所繇生，笑不言，歸相與驗其藏，一履耳，仍封而像祀之，雨晴禱焉。崇禎己巳歲，敵掠犯固安，憶小仙言者，望白旗下竄。旗書“白旗都三周滿機”云。周，薊人叛而將敵也，其所掠，偶無馘殺，比去，則縱還之。

2.5. The Stele of an Imperial Edict from the Yuan dynasty at the Chongguo Monastery
Selected from "Chongguo si" 崇國寺, *Dijing jingwulüe*, 34.

Great Heavenly-father Tengri, we have received your protection and now announce the edict from the Emperor. Military officials, those who guard the city, the heads of local communities, and diplomatic envoys, here is the edict. Emperor Genghis, Emperor Ögedei, Emperor Kublai, Emperor Temür, Emperor Külüg, Emperor Buyantu, Emperor Gegeen, Emperor Khutughtu, Emperor Rinchinbal [all blessed us].
Buddhist monks, Christian monks, masters, no matter what you are doing, [listen!] He whose longevity will be blessed by heaven now speaks:
The person who praised to the heaven for longevity now speaks:
The rules of imperial edicts require your attention, no matter what you are doing, He whose longevity will be blessed by heaven now speaks:

長生天氣力裏，大福蔭護助裏皇帝聖旨。軍官每根底，軍人每根底，管城子達魯花赤官人每根底，往來使臣每根底，宣諭的聖旨。成吉思皇帝，窩闊臺皇帝，薛禪皇帝，完澤篤皇帝，曲律皇帝，普顏篤皇帝，格堅皇帝，忽都篤皇帝，亦憐真班皇帝聖旨裏，和尚、也裏可溫、先生每，不揀甚麼差發休當，告天祈福祝壽者說來。如今依在先聖旨體例，不揀甚麼差發休當，告天祈福祝壽者麼道。

In the Grand Capital [are located] the South and North Chongguo Monasteries, Tianshou Monastery, Long'an Monastery at Xianghe, Yanfu Monastery at Sanhe, Longyun Monastery at Shunzhou, and Bore Monastery at Zunhua. The leading monks of these places, the master Fori Puming Jinghui, the lecturer Gufeng Jixiang, and all leading monks, receive this imperial edict. Here, in every building belonging to these monasteries, diplomatic officials may rest, feed their horses and spend the night, and they will be exempt from grain tax and commercial tax. That

which the Monastery owns—the land, garden, grind roller, store, pawnshop, bathhouse, people and animals—no matter what, nobody may abuse their prestige to embezzle. Master Fori Puming Jinghui, the lecturer Gufeng Jixiang and all leading monks must follow the principles established by older directors. If any other monks violate the principle, just drive them out. And a word to monks like the lecturer Jixiang: even if you have the imperial edict, don't do things that violate principle. If you do, you too will not be exempt [from punishment].

大都裏有的南北兩崇國寺、天壽寺、香河隆安寺、三河延福寺、順州龍雲寺、遵化般若寺等寺院裏住持佛日普明淨慧大師孤峰講主學吉祥眾和尚每根底為頭執把的聖旨與了也。這的每寺院裏房舍，使臣休安下者。鋪馬祇應休著者。稅糧商稅休納者。但屬寺家的水土、園林、碾磨、店鋪、解典庫、浴堂、人口頭疋，不揀甚麼，不揀是誰，休倚氣力奪要者。這佛日普明淨慧大師，孤峰講主學吉祥，為頭和尚每，依著在先老講主體例裏行者。別了的和尚每，有呵，遣赶出寺者。更這學吉祥等和尚每，倚有聖旨麼道，無體例勾當休做者，若做呵，他每不恂那。

This is the Order from His Majesty. [Issued on] the fourteenth day of the seventh month, in the fourteenth year of Zhizheng. Written in the Grand Capital.

聖旨。至正十四年七月十四日，上都有時分寫來。

APPENDIX 3
SELECTED TRAVELOUGES OF BEIJING IN THE MING

Essays on the area of West Mountains (*Xishan* 西山) could be found in many individual anthologies. In addition to the essays written by Yuan Hongdao, Yuan Zongdao, and Yuan Zhongdao, there are:

Author	Title of the Essay	Book Title
Li Dongyang (1447–1516) 李東陽	"A Trip to the Mountains" 山行記; "A Trip to the West Mountains" 遊西山記	*Huailutang ji* 懷麓堂集
Qian Xili 錢習禮	"A Trip to the Spring Jade Mountain" 遊玉泉山記	Collected in He Tang 何鐣, *Gujin you mingshan ji* 古今游名山記 (1565)
Du Mu (1458–1525) 都穆	"A Trip to the West Mountains in the Capital" 游京師西山記	*Youmingshan ji* 游名山記
Qiao Yu (1464–1531) 喬宇	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 遊西山記	Collected in *Gujin you mingshan ji*
Chen Yi (1473–1532) 陳沂	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 游西山記	Collected in *Gujin you mingshan ji*
Zhou Chen (1380–1453) 周忱	"A Trip to the Mini Pure Land" 游小西天記	*Shuangya wenji* 雙崖文集
Tong Pei (16th c.) 童佩	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 游西山記	*Tong Ziming ji* 童子鳴集
Yang Shiqi (1364–1444) 楊士奇	"A Record of Excursions" 郊遊記	*Dongli ji* 東里集
Cheng Minzheng (1445–1499) 程敏政	"A Trip to the Nine Dragon Pond" 游九龍池記; "A Record of the Moon River Brahmā" 月河梵王記	*Huangdun ji* 篁墩集
Song Yan 宋彥	*Miscellaneous Accounts of the Mountain Trips* 山行雜記	*Shanxing zaji* (late 16th and early 17th c.) 山行雜記

Author	Title of the Essay	Book Title
Wang Qiao (1521–1599) 王樵	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 游西山記	*Fanglu ji* 方麓集
Ou Daren (1516–1595) 歐大任	"Records of Two Trips to the West Mountains" 兩游西山記	*Ou Yubu ji* 欧虞部集
Zhu Changchun 朱長春	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 西山遊記	*Zhu Taifu wenji* (late 16th c.) 朱太復文集
Cao Yubian (1558–1634) 曹于汴	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 游西山記	*Yangjietang ji* 仰节堂集
Cao Xuequan (1574–1645) 曹學佺	"A Trip to Mount Fang" 游房山記	*Shicang wengao* 石倉文稿
Dong Yingju (1557–1639) 董應舉	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 西山記游	*Chongxiang ji* 崇相集
Huang Ruheng (1558–1626) 黃汝亨	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 游西山記	*Yulin ji* 寓林集
Xiong Mingyu (1580–1650) 熊明遇	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 西山記遊	*Wenzhixingshu shiwen* 文直行書詩文
Chen Xun (1560–1617) 陳勳	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 西山遊記	*Chen Yuankai ji* 陳元凱集
Li Liufang (1575–1629) 李流芳	"A Brief Record of the Trip to the West Mountains" 游西山小記	*Tanyuan ji* 檀園記
Liu Xixuan 劉錫玄	"My Trip to the West Mountains in the Winter of *gengcheng*" 庚辰冬日游西山自記	*Saochu zhiyu* 掃馀之馀

Author	Title of the Essay	Book Title
Wang Heng (1562–1609) 王衡	"A Trip to Mount Fragrance" 香山遊記; "Another Trip to Mount Fragrance, Pingpo Temple, and Mount Lushi" 再游香山至平坡寺盧師山記; "A Trip to the Hot Spring" 游湯泉記; "Casual Jottings on Mount Fragrance" 香山云游记; "A Record of Mount Pan" 盤山記	*Goushan xiansheng ji* 緱山先生集
Wang Xinyi (1572–1645) 王心一	"Viewing Water in Jingye Temple" 淨業寺觀水記; "Another Trip to Jingye Temple" 重遊淨業寺	*Lanxuetang ji* 蘭雪堂集
Liu Rongsi 劉榮嗣	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 西山紀遊	*Jianzhai xiansheng ji* 簡齋先生集 (1662)
Chen Renxi (1581–1636) 陳仁錫	"A Trip to Tanzhe Temple" 游潭柘寺記	*Wumengyuan chuji* 無夢園初集
Hu Jingchen 胡敬辰	"A Trip to Mount Fragrance" 香山遊記	*Tanxuezhai ji* 檀雪齋集 (1627)
Li Suiqiu (1602–46) 黎遂球	"A Trip to the West Mountains" 西山遊記 (1634)	*Lianxuge ji* 蓮鬚閣集
Song Maocheng (1572–1622) 宋懋澄	"A Trip to the Water Dripping Cliff in the West Mountains" 游西山滴水崖記 (1607); "A Trip to the Hot Spring of Tangquan" 游湯泉記 (1603)	*Jiuyue ji* 九龠集
Wang Shixing (1547–1598) 王士性	*Wuyue youcao* 五嶽游草	*Wuyue youcao* 五嶽游草

Author	Title of the Essay	Book Title
Yin Yunxiao (1480–1516) 殷雲霄	“A Trip to Mount Guzhu” 游孤竹山記	Collected in *Gujin you mingshan ji*
Lu Yue (1495–1534) 陸鉞	“A Spring Excursion to the West Mountains” 春遊西山序	Collected in *Gujin you mingshan ji*
Gao Gu (1391–1460) 高穀	“A Trip to the West Mountains” 游西山記	Collected in *Gujin you mingshan ji*
Li Yuanyang (1497–1580) 李元陽	“Casual Talks on Silver Mountain and Iron Cliff” 游銀山鐵壁漫談	Collected in *Gujin you mingshan ji*

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