# An Introductory Study of the *Tang yulin* (*Forest of Conversations on the Tang*): Textual History, Source Material, and the Influences It Received[*]

**Amelia Ying Qin**[**]
Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies
Harvard University

## ABSTRACT

The *Tang yulin* 唐語林, a Song dynasty collection of anecdotes about the Tang, remains an understudied text. This article offers an introductory discussion of three issues fundamental to the study of the collection. It first analyzes the textual history and various editions of the *Tang yulin*; it then presents significant aspects of the collection's selective use of source material; and finally it discusses possible influences on the structural framework of the text. The article shows that the *Guoshi bu* 國史補, as the main source text of the *Tang yulin*, presents a way of constructing an anecdotal image of the Tang that is similar to the *Tang yulin*. In terms of structure and the construction of an anecdotal cultural image of the Tang, the *Tang yulin* represents a return to the original categorization scheme of the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語. In expanding on that original structure by adding new categories, the *Tang yulin* was simultaneously influenced by the *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語, the *Xu shishuo* 續世說, and the Northern Song intellectual tradition of encyclopedic compilations.

**Key words:** *Tang yulin* 唐語林, *Guoshi bu* 國史補, *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語, *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, anecdotes, *biji* 筆記

# 1. Introduction

Scholars of Chinese history, literature, and culture have, in recent years, been increasingly drawn to anecdotal material from pre-modern times.[1] This article presents

---

[1]  For recent studies on anecdotes, see Anna Shields, "The 'Supplementary' Historian? Li Zhao's *Guo shi bu* as Mid-Tang Political and Social Critique," *T'oung Pao*, 103. 4-5 (2017), pp. 407-447; Glen Dudbridge, "How Verses on Walls Found a Universal Voice in Notebook Literature," *East Asian Publishing and Society*, 6.1 (2016), pp. 5-21; Hilde De Weerdt, "Continuities between Scribal and Print Publishing in Twelfth-Century Song China – The Case of Wang Mingqing's Serialized Notebooks," *East Asian Publishing and Society*, 6.1 (2016), pp. 54-83; Cong Ellen Zhang, "Things Heard in the Past, Material for Future Use: A Study of Song (960-1279) *biji* Prefaces," *East Asian Publishing and Society*, 6.1 (2016), pp. 22-53; Luo Manling, *Literati Storytelling in Late Medieval China* (Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 2015); Sarah Allen, *Shifting Stories: History, Gossip, and Lore in Narratives from Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center and Harvard University Press, 2014); multiple papers in Jack W. Chen and David Schaberg (eds.), *Idle Talk: Gossip and Anecdote in Traditional China* (Berkeley, CA: Global, Area and International Archive, University of California Press, 2014); Glen Dudbridge, *A Portrait of Five Dynasties China: From the Memoirs of Wang Renyu (880-956)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Cong Ellen Zhang, "To Be 'Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge': A Study of Song (960-1279) *Biji* Writing," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 25.2 (2012), pp. 43-77; Sun Chengjuan, "The Hidden Blessing of Being a Last Ruler: Anecdotes and the Song Dynasty Interpretation of Li Yu's (937-978) Lyrics," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 34 (2012), pp. 105-129; Luo Manling, "What One Has Heard and Seen: Intellectual Discourse in a Late Eighth-Century Miscellany," *Tang Studies*, 30 (2012), pp. 23-44; Luo Manling, "Remembering Kaiyuan and Tianbao: The Construction of Mosaic Memory in Medieval Historical Miscellanies," *T'oung Pao*, 97.4-5 (2011), pp. 263-300; Robert Hymes, "Gossip as History: Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* and the Place of Oral Anecdotes in Song Historical Knowledge," *Chūgoku shikagu* 中國史學, 21 (2011), pp. 1-28; Kai Vogelsang, "From Anecdote to History: Observations on the Composition of the *Zuozhuan*," *Oriens Extremus*, 50 (2011), pp. 99-124; Sarah Schneewind, "Reduce, Re-use, Recycle: Imperial Autocracy and Scholar-Official Autonomy in the Background to the Ming History Biography of Early Ming Scholar-Official Fang Keqin (1326-1376)," *Oriens Extremus*, 48 (2009), pp. 103-152; Fu Daiwie, "A Flourishing of *Biji* or Pen-notes Texts and its Relations to History of Knowledge in Song China (960-1279)," *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident*, 1 (2007), pp. 103-130; Alister David Inglis, *Hong Mai's Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Rania Huntington, "Chaos, Memory, and Genre: Anecdotal Recollections of the Taiping Rebellion," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 27 (2005), pp. 59-91; Peter Bol, "A Literary Miscellany and Sung Intellectual History: The Case of Chang Lei's *Ming-tao tsa-chih*," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies*, 25 (1995), pp. 121-151; Leo Tak-Hung Chan, "Narrative as Argument: *The Yuewei caotang biji* and the Late Eighteenth-Century Elite Discouse on the Supernatural," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 53.1 (1993), pp. 25-62; as well as two major works on the *Zuozhuan* 左傳: Li Wai-yee, *The Readability of the Past in*

an introductory study of the *Tang yulin* 唐語林 (*Forest of Conversations on the Tang*), a collection of about eleven hundred anecdotes concerning the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907) compiled during the Northern Song 北宋 (960-1127). These accounts of the Tang's historical figures, events, and customs were selected from fifty earlier miscellanies and organized into fifty-two categories based on personality types as well as social, political, and cultural norms, following a structure derived from the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*A New Account of Tales of the World*). The *Siku quanshu*'s 四庫全書 (*The Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature*, 1778) introduction to the *Tang yulin* reads:

> Although this text emulates the *Shishuo* [*xinyu*], the decrees and regulations, notable stories and old facts, *bon mots* and exemplary deeds recorded therein and [those recorded in] the official histories often elaborate and illuminate one another. It differs from what one finds in Liu Yiqing's valorization of Pure Conversations.[2] Moreover, among the various texts it has taken from, those that are extant are already few in number. [Therefore] its merit in gathering and assembling [material] cannot be allowed to perish.
> 是書雖倣世說，而所紀典章故實，嘉言懿行，多與正史相發明，視劉義慶之專尚清談者不同。且所采諸書，存者已少，其裒集之功，尤不可沒。[3]

Similar comments can be found in traditional bibliographic introductions to the *Tang yulin* and in prefaces to various editions of the text from the Song dynasty onwards.[4] Because of such traditional assessments of the collection, the *Tang yulin* has often been

---

*Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007); David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), and works by many others.

[2]  "Pure Conversation" (*qingtan* 清談) was a form of casual discussion among social and cultural elites of the Wei 魏 and Jin 晉, which often included debates on intellectual and philosophical topics, witty comments on character appraisal, and humorous responses in leisurely conversations.

[3]  Ji Yun 紀昀 et al., "*Siku quanshu Tang yulin* tiyao 四庫全書唐語林提要," in Wang Dang 王讜, *Tang yulin jiaozheng* 唐語林校證, ed. Zhou Xunchu 周勛初 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 813-814.

[4]  See the collection of bibliographical records, and prefaces to various editions of the text. Ibid., pp. 810-822.

regarded as a primary source for the study of Tang history and literature, and indeed many anecdotes in the *Tang yulin* are now the only extant records of the particular historical events they record. However, due to the miscellaneous nature of the material and problems in its transmission, the *Tang yulin* has not been widely studied. Existing studies, mainly by Chinese and Taiwanese scholars, largely focus on two aspects of the *Tang yulin*. First, the collection's accounts are used to study Tang social and cultural history.[5] Second, the *Tang yulin* is used as a primary source from this period for the study of historical linguistics.[6] Otherwise, the *Tang yulin* has not yet attracted much scholarly attention, and I have been unable to find any English translations or Western studies of the work.

As an anecdote collection about the Tang compiled during the Song period, the *Tang yulin* presents an interesting but complicated case. It stands out among contemporary texts in the genre of "brush jottings" (*biji* 筆記) due to the following characteristics: first, its clear and focused attention on the Tang; second, its exclusive interest in material recycled from previous anecdotal collections; third, its decision to organize material from a wide range of sources under a new framework of categories; fourth, the dissociation of some of its contents from this initial structure, caused by a hectic textual history during which it suffered many losses and restorations. Because of this last point, understanding the textual history and various editions of this collection is critical to its study. At the same time, the first three points suggest the need to examine closely the principles and criteria Wang Dang (ca. 1046-ca. 1106), the compiler of the *Tang yulin*, tried to follow when he selectively recycled and reorganized anecdotal material from the vast cultural archives of the Tang to form his text. Unfortunately, in his brief preface to the collection,

---

5 See Ho Tzu-hui 何姿慧, "*Tang yulin* suojian Tangdai shehui shenghuo shiliao kaoshu 唐語林所見唐代社會生活史料考述," Master Thesis (Taichung: Guoli zhongxing daxue, 1998); Kuang Mingyue 鄺明月, "*Tang yulin* yanjiu 唐語林研究," Master Thesis (Wuhan: Huazhong shifan daxue, 2003).

6 See Yu Zhixin 余志新, "*Tang yulin* ciyu zhaji 唐語林詞語札記," *Chuzhou xueyuan xuebao* 滁州學院學報, 9.5 (2007), pp. 31-32, 73; Zhong Xiaoyong 鐘小勇, "Luelun *Tang yulin* zai jindai hanyu cihui yanjiu zhong de jiazhi 略論唐語林在近代漢語詞彙研究中的價值," *Suihua xueyuan xuebao* 綏化學院學報, 25.1 (2005), pp. 113-117; Zhao Yanli 趙艷麗, "*Tang yulin* cihui yanjiu 唐語林詞彙研究," Master Thesis (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue, 2007); Zheng Liping 鄭麗萍, "*Tang yulin* fuyinci yanjiu 唐語林複音詞研究," Master Thesis (Hefei: Anhui daxue, 2007); Zeng Lamei 曾臘梅, "*Tang yulin* ciyu yu *Hanyu dacidian* dingbu 唐語林詞語與漢語大辭典訂補," Master Thesis (Nanchang: Jiangxi shifan daxue, 2009).

Wang Dang does not provide any specific explanation of the compilation's purpose. We can only observe that, as Wang Dang compiled anecdotes about the Tang, certain topics and themes were evidently preferred to others, that existing categories from other collections, especially the *Shishuo xinyu*, were reused, and that new categories were created to impose order and structure on his selected material. In doing so, he constructed his own anecdotal image of the Tang dynasty, restructuring the textual memory of the past. A thorough analysis of how Wang Dang used all his source texts, or even one of his source texts, would quickly grow beyond the length of a single article. Therefore, this paper will offer an introductory discussion of three issues foundational for further study: it will first analyze the textual history and various editions of the *Tang yulin*; it will then present the most significant characteristics of Wang Dang's use of source material (including the *Tang yulin*'s main source text), as well as his preferred and avoided topics; and finally it will discuss the possible influences that both his source texts and the contemporary intellectual context exerted on the structure of the collection.

## 2. Author and Textual History

The compiler of the *Tang yulin*, Wang Dang, style name Zhengfu 正甫,[7] was a minor court official of the Northern Song dynasty.[8] Born into a branch of the Wang clan hailing from Taiyuan 太原, he was the fifth-generation grandson of Wang Quanbin 王全斌 (908-976), one of the founding generals of the Song Empire. Both his grandfather Wang Kai 王凱 and his father Wang Peng 王彭 served as military officials at the Northern Song court.[9] There is no official biography of Wang Dang in the standard histories, nor any record of him passing the *jinshi* 進士 examination even though he was appointed to a series of minor positions during the reign of Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1085-1100). However, advisors at court criticized his appointments as resulting from the

---

[7]   Sometimes also written as Zhengfu 正夫.

[8]   For a detailed study on Wang Dang's dates and life, see Yan Zhongqi 顏中其, "Guanyu *Tang yulin* zuozhe Wang Dang 關於唐語林作者王讜," *Zhongguo lishi wenxian yanjiu jikan* 中國歷史文獻研究集刊, 1 (1980), pp. 219-224.

[9]   See the biographies of Wang Quanbin and Wang Kai in Tuotuo 脫脫 et al., *Song shi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, rpt. 1997), *juan* 255, pp. 8919-8926.

political power of his father-in-law Lü Dafang 呂大防 (1027-1097), the Grand Councilor during the Yuanyou 元祐 reign (1086-1094).[10] Wang Dang lived in the capital throughout the Yuanyou years, and the sporadic records of his career illustrate, in their fragmentary way, the struggles among political factions of the period.[11] In terms of court politics, he belonged to the faction led by Lü Dafang[12] and was protected by his father-in-law, sometimes functioning as a channel for court officials seeking Lü's political favors.[13] Because Wang Dang was an insignificant figure attracting little historiographical attention of his own, most of the information on his political career is found in records on Lü Dafang from the Yuanyou years when he was in power.

Wang Dang's leisurely pursuits appear to be more interesting than his political career. Though not as famous as his cousin Wang Shen 王詵 (ca. 1048-ca. 1104),[14] Wang Dang was also regarded as a talented calligrapher and painter in his time. Both cousins were friends of Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), and they associated with many literati in Su's literary circle who shared their artistic inclinations.[15] Su Shi's acquaintance with

---

[10]  See Li Tao 李燾, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編, eds. Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 et al. (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1961), *juan* 413, p. 12a; *juan* 430, pp. 14b-15a.

[11]  Yan Zhongqi, "Guanyu *Tang yulin* zuozhe Wang Dang," pp. 221-222.

[12]  A short 1073 inscription on Mount Hua 華山 by Wang Dang, the only extant piece of Wang's writing other than the brief preface to the *Tang yulin*, lists several figures within Lü's social and political circle. The text is collected in Wang Chang's 王昶 (1724-1806) *Jinshi cuibian* 金石萃編 and quoted by Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 (1884-1955), see Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, p. 819.

[13]  For an example of the power struggle between Lü Dafang and Liu Zhi 劉摯 (1030-1098), which involved Yang Wei 楊畏 (1044-1112), who obtained Lü's favor through Wang Dang and eventually joined Lü's faction, see Li Tao, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian*, *juan* 457, pp. 11a-11b; Yu Jiaxi, "*Siku quanshu Tang yulin* tiyao bianzheng 四庫全書唐語林提要辨證," in Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp. 818-819.

[14]  For details on Wang Shen's life, see Weng T'ung-wen 翁同文, "Wang Shen shengping kaolue 王詵生平考略," in *Yilin congkao* 藝林叢考 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban, 1977), pp. 71-104.

[15]  The following anecdote illustrates both Su Shi's high status among literati, and Wang Dang's friendship with him:

> Of all the ancients, Dongpo would only render the poems of Tao Yuanming, Du Zimei, Li Taibai, Han Tuizhi, and Liu Zihou into calligraphy. For the Nanhua [Temple] he rendered in calligraphy Liu Zihou's 'For the Tombstone of the Chan Master Dajian, the Sixth Patriarch [of Chan Buddhism].' The Nanhua [Temple] also wanted him to render in calligraphy the inscription on the tombstone of Liu Mengde (i.e., Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫), [Dongpo] then refused to do it. Lü Weizhong (i.e., Lü Dafang), the Grand Councilor, composed a passage for the tombstone of the monk Fa Yunxiu. The Grand Councilor desired to have Dongpo render it in calligraphy for the tombstone inscription, but he did not dare to tell [Dongpo] himself, instead asking his nephew, Wang Dang, to

the Wang family started with Wang Dang's father Wang Peng. In a eulogy to Wang Peng, Su Shi recounted their friendship and praised the literary talents of both father and son. He wrote, "Your son [Wang] Dang is known to the world for his literary talent and scholarship, as well as his critiques and discourses. He also socializes in my circle. While I lament for your unrecognized [talent], I nonetheless am glad that you have a [worthy] son" 其子讜，以文學議論有聞於世，亦從予游。予既悲君之不遇，而喜其有子.[16] It is possible that Wang Dang did enjoy a certain amount of literary fame during his lifetime, but none of his literary works besides the *Tang yulin* have come down to us, nor are they mentioned in the extant writings of his contemporaries. There is slightly more evidence of Wang Dang's artistic achievements, mostly found in writings by and about Su Shi. Among the prefaces and postscripts Su Shi wrote for friends' works of art is one on Wang Dang's calligraphy[17] and another on a painting of his entitled "Zui daoshi tu" 醉道士圖 (Painting of a Drunken Daoist Master).[18] Based on a series of inscriptions on the painting, the "Zui daoshi tu" was indeed appreciated by many well-known figures of the time, including at least Su Shi, Zhang Dun 章惇 (1035-1105), Li Qingchen 李清臣 (1032-1102), Su Che 蘇轍 (1039-1112), and Fan Chunren 范純仁 (1027-1101).[19]

The circle around Su Shi was interested not only in art but also in collecting anecdotes and writing *biji*. Su Shi himself left behind two collections, the *Chouchi biji* 仇池筆記 (*Jottings by the Chou Pond*) and the *Dongpo zhilin* 東坡志林 (*Forest of Records by Dongpo*). They contain anecdotes about Su Shi and his friends, as well as stories he had heard. Zhao Lingzhi 趙令畤 (1051-?) put together the *Hou qing lu* 侯鯖錄 (*Records of the Marquis' Mackerel*), penning a good number of the anecdotes himself.

---

tell him. Dongpo first asked for his draft, read it closely, and then said, '[Su] Shi (i.e., Su Dongpo) shall render it in calligraphy.' Probably it was because [Lü] Weizhong's writing was indeed good. 東坡于古人但寫陶淵明、杜子美、李太白、韓退之、柳子厚之詩，為南華寫柳子厚六祖大鑒禪師碑，南華又欲寫劉夢得碑，則辭之。呂微仲丞相作法雲秀和尚碑，丞相意欲得東坡書石，不敢自言，委甥王讜言之。東坡先索其薰，諦觀之，則曰軾當書，盖微仲之文自佳也。 See Shao Bo 邵博, *Shaoshi wenjian houlu* 邵氏聞見後錄, eds. Li Jianxiong 李劍雄 and Liu Dequan 劉德權, vol. 15 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 115-116.

[16] See Su Shi, "Wang Danian aici 王大年哀辭," in Li Zhiliang 李之亮 (ed.), *Su Shi wenji biannian jianzhu* 蘇軾文集編年箋註, vol. 8 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2011), *juan* 63, pp. 506-510.

[17] See Su Shi, "Shu Wang Shi caoshu 書王石草書," in ibid., *juan* 66, p. 127.

[18] Ibid., vol. 9, *juan* 70, pp. 636-637.

[19] Ibid.

Kong Pingzhong 孔平仲 (*jinshi* 1065) compiled the *Xu shishuo* 續世說 (*A Sequel to the Tales of the World*), with a structure also based on that of the *Shishuo xinyu*. Unlike the work of Kong Pingzhong, which largely focuses on material from official histories and covers a much longer period, Wang Dang's collection explicitly focuses on the Tang and only uses material from collections of miscellaneous records, or *biji*. Wang Dang was very much aware of the *biji* projects of his friends, and his *Tang yulin* was not conceived in isolation but rather is the product of a literary circle's shared interests and their complementary efforts to commemorate the past using anecdotal material.

The collection is thought to have been compiled after the Shaosheng 紹聖 (1094-1098) reign period of Emperor Zhezong, when Wang Dang had entered old age, and the completion and circulation of the collection was unlikely to have come later than Huizong's 徽宗 (1082-1135, r. 1101-1126) reign.[20] The text contains a large number of anecdotes, totaling over eleven hundred in the most recent modern edition (collated and annotated by Zhou Xunchu). These anecdotes are mostly about the historical figures, events, traditions, and customs of the Tang. Wang Dang's original preface to the collection provides a list of fifty source texts, which will be adumbrated below. Most of the these source texts were compiled during the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods, with only a few from the early Song. After presenting his sources, Wang Dang succinctly adds:

> The above are fifty schools of minor discourses; I, [Wang] Zhengfu, took the most important [accounts] from these and compiled them [in this collection], dividing them into fifty-two categories, and listing the complete index [of the categories] as follows.
> 右小說五十家，正甫取其尤要者編之，分為五十二門，具目錄於後。[21]

Though the genre of "minor discourses" was largely dismissed and marginalized in the Chinese textual tradition, and left out of official historiography and serious scholarship, Wang Dang's brief comment still suggests that there were things deemed "important"

---

[20]   Yan Zhongqi, "Guanyu *Tang yulin* zuozhe Wang Dang," p. 224.

[21]   Wang Dang, "*Tang yulin* yuan xumu 唐語林原序目," in *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp. 1-2.

(*yao* 要) to be gleaned from these cultural archives. While most compilers of the *Tang yulin*'s source texts did not provide their works with a defined, carefully thought out structure, Wang Dang took care to organize his depiction of "important" anecdotal memories concerning the Tang and, in so doing, offered a certain degree of guidance to interpreting these selected representations of the past.[22] After giving a complete list of his categories, he explains:

> To the right, I, Zhengfu, gathered the [minor] discourses of fifty schools and grouped them into fifty-two categories. The first thirty-five categories are from the *Shishuo* [*xinyu*]; the remaining seventeen categories were added by Zhengfu [myself]. As a whole, [the collection] is titled *Tang yulin*.
> 右正甫集五十家之說，分為五十二門，其上三十五門出世說，下十七門正甫所續，總號唐語林云。[23]

---

[22]   In her discussion of anecdotal collections, Tian Xiaofei notes that categories form "a set of interpretive frameworks," and that editorial arrangement is a way of "managing the unruly force of anecdotes." See Tian Xiaofei, "Tales from Borderland: Anecdotes in Early Medieval China," in Jack W. Chen and David Schaberg (eds.), *Idle Talk: Gossip and Anecdote in Traditional China* (Berkeley: Global, Area and International Archive, University of California Press, 2014), pp. 41-42.

[23]   See Wang Dang, "*Tang yulin* yuan xumu," in *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp. 1-2. The thirty-five categories from the *Shishuo xinyu* are: "Dexing" 德行 (Virtuous Conduct), "Yanyu" 言語 (Speech and Conversation), "Zhengshi" 政事 (Administrative Affairs), "Wenxue" 文學 (Literature and Scholarship), "Fangzheng" 方正 (The Upright and the Proper), "Yaliang" 雅量 (Cultivated Tolerance), "Shijian" 識鑒 (Insight and Judgment), "Shangyu" 賞譽 (Appreciation and Praise), "Pinzao" 品藻 (Grading Excellence), "Guizhen" 規箴 (Admonitions and Warnings), "Suhui" 夙慧 (Precocious Intelligence), "Haoshuang" 豪爽 (Virility and Boldness), "Rongzhi" 容止 (Appearance and Manner), "Zixin" 自新 (Self-renewal), "Qixian" 企羨 (Admiration and Emulation), "Shangshi" 傷逝 (Grieving for the Departed), "Xiyi" 栖逸 (Solitude and Disengagement), "Xianyuan" 賢媛 (Worthy Beauties), "Shujie" 術解 (Technical Understanding), "Qiaoyi" 巧藝 (Skill and Art), "Chongli" 寵禮 (Favor and Veneration), "Rendan" 任誕 (The Free and the Eccentric), "Jian'ao" 簡傲 (Rudeness and Arrogance), "Paitiao" 排調 (Taunting and Teasing), "Qingdi" 輕詆 (Contempt and Insults), "Jiajue" 假譎 (Guile and Chicanery), "Chumian" 黜免 (Dismissal from Office), "Jianse" 儉嗇 (Stinginess and Meanness), "Taichi" 汰侈 (Extravagance and Ostentation), "Fenjuan" 忿狷 (Anger and Irascibility), "Chanxian" 讒險 (Slander and Treachery), "Youhui" 尤悔 (Blameworthiness and Remorse), "Pilou" 紕漏 (Crudities and Blunders), "Huoni" 惑溺 (Delusion and Infatuation), "Chouxi" 仇隙 (Hostility and Alienation).

The seventeen new categories added by Wang Dang are: "Shihao" 嗜好 (Hobbies and Indulgences), "Lisu" 俚俗 (Slang and Customs), "Jishi" 記事 (Records of Affairs), "Rencha" 任察 (Entrustment and

Early bibliographic records indicate there were at least two complete editions and one incomplete edition of the *Tang yulin* circulating in the Song period. Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (ca. 1105-1180), in his *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志 (*Record of Reading Books at the Prefectural Study*, 1151), recorded an edition of the *Tang yulin* in ten *juan*, and Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162) documented an edition in eight *juan* in his *Tong zhi* 通志 (*Comprehensive Records*, 1161).[24] The *Zhongxing shumu* 中興書目 (*Book Catalogue of the Restoration* [*Era*]) notes an eleven-*juan* edition with the fifteen categories after "Jishi" missing.[25] These records are dated roughly fifty to seventy years after Wang Dang's death and reflect the state of the collection in the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century, Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (1183-ca. 1262) documented an eight-*juan* edition, with all fifty-two categories and their entries complete, in his *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 ([*Chen*] *Zhizhai's Annotated Book Catalog*), and Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296) recorded in his *Yu hai* 玉海 (*Ocean of Jade*) an eleven-*juan* edition of fifty-two categories with the contents of the last five categories missing.[26] The *Song shi* (*History of the Song*, 1345) bibliography contains the last record of the eleven-*juan* edition after the Song.[27]

Although no explicit records of the printing of the collection during the Song can be found today,[28] these early editions of the *Tang yulin* documented in private catalogs

---

Observation), "Yuning" 諛佞 (Cajolery and Hypocrisy), "Weiwang" 威望 (Authority and Reputation), "Zhongyi" 忠義 (Loyalty and Righteousness), "Weiyue" 慰悅 (Comfort and Delight), "Jiyin" 汲引 (Recommendation and Promotion), "Weishu" 委屬 (Entrustment and Bestowal), "Biantan" 砭談 (Counsel and Discussion), "Jianluan" 僭亂 (Overstepping and Upheaving), "Dongzhi" 動植 (Animals and Plants), "Shuhua" 書畫 (Calligraphy and Painting), "Zawu" 雜物 (Miscellaneous Objects), "Canren" 殘忍(Cruelty and Hardheartedness), "Jice" 計策 (Strategies and Intrigues).

The translations of the first thirty-five categories in the *Tang yulin* are based on Richard Mather's and Qian Nanxiu's translations of the categories in the *Shishuo xinyu* with modifications. See Richard B. Mather, *Shih-shuo hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies and University of Michigan Press, 2002); Qian Nanxiu, *Spirit and Self in Medieval China: The Shih-shuo hsin-yü and Its Legacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 4-5.

24   Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, p. 810.

25   Ibid. See also the entry on the eleven-*juan Tang yulin* in the *Zhongxing guange shumu* 中興館閣書目, in Tuotuo 脫脫 et al., *Songshi Yiwenzhi guangbian* 宋史藝文志廣編, vol. 2 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963), p. 525.

26   Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, p. 810.

27   Ibid., pp. 810-812.

28   The *Tang yulin* is not included in the list of printed titles during the Song dynasty found in the appendix of

probably included both manuscript and print editions. Zhou Xunchu takes the multiple editions, with different numbers of *juan* and different degrees of completeness, as evidence that Wang Dang never himself produced a finished edition in either manuscript or print form.[29] However, the variety of editions might instead mean that sections of the collection started circulating in manuscript form while the compilation of later sections was still underway, resulting in multiple incomplete editions before the collection arrived at its final state. In addition, listings in private Song catalogs likely referred to print editions, even if they were not explicitly identified as such. Based on quantitative studies of the private catalog listings of extant and non-extant Song printed works in selected genres such as anthologies, state documents, and private histories, De Weerdt points out that printed editions of such materials were common enough that "print was thus in and of itself not noteworthy in late twelfth- and thirteenth-century catalogs."[30] This was likely the case for titles in the genre of "minor discourses" as well. For example, both manuscript copies and a printed edition of the *Xu shishuo*, the work compiled by Kong Pingzhong, were circulated during the twelfth century, but in the *Zhizhai shulu jieti* catalog, Chen Zhensun does not explicitly write whether the text was printed or not. Furthermore, in the preface to his printed edition (1158) of the *Xu shishuo,* Qin Guo 秦 果 (?-?) notes, "When the book was completed, it was passed around and copied by one after another before it could be printed and circulated" 其書成未及刊行，轉相傳寫, and such hand-copied circulation resulted in many textual errors and variations.[31] In the case of the *Tang yulin*, editions exhibiting various degrees of incompleteness could also suggest that parts of the collection were hand-copied, or reproduced by printers, and

---

Poon Ming-sun, "Books and Printing in Sung China," Ph.D. Dissertation (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979).

[29] Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp. 16-17. However, Yan Zhongqi estimated the *Tang yulin* was published in printed editions no later than the end of Emperor Huizong's reign. Yan Zhongqi, "Guanyu *Tang yulin* zuozhe Wang Dang," p. 224.

[30] This is contrasted with the attitude of eleventh-century writers and politicians who "were more likely to take note of, and exaggerate, the impact of print than their counterparts in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries." See Hilde De Weerdt, "Byways in the Imperial Chinese Information Order: The Dissemination and Commercial Publication of State Documents," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 66.1 (2006), pp. 180-184.

[31] See Kong Pingzhong, *Wanwei biecang chuanxie Song keben Xu shishuo* 宛委別藏傳寫宋刻本續世說 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935), p. 1a.

circulated before the compilation was completed. Around the mid-twelfth century, the ten-*juan* edition recorded by Chao Gongwu and the eight-*juan* edition noted by Zheng Qiao were likely to be complete, printed editions in different formats, as neither bibliographer commented on any incompleteness in the editions they saw. In the mid-thirteenth century, Chen Zhensun explicitly noted that the eight-*juan* edition circulating during his time included all fifty-two categories.[32] As this was likely a printed edition as well, it would suggest that the *Tang yulin*, compiled around the turn of the twelfth century, did indeed circulate in complete printed editions as well as manuscript copies in the Song. The possibility of hand-copied editions of variant lengths circulating before the completion of the text, and of the later concurrent circulation of hand-copied and printed editions, reflects the popularity of anecdotal collections, and of writing *biji*, in the Song period.

The *Tang yulin* was documented in a series of bibliographical records and book catalogs after the Song, often in the form of ten or eight *juan*, before the collection was lost during the Ming 明 (1368-1644).[33] The *Siku quanshu*'s introduction to the *Tang yulin* notes that "it is possible that the complete text was still extant in the beginning years of the Ming" 蓋明初全書猶存也.[34] Fortunately, the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 (*The Yongle Encyclopedia*, 1408) incorporated a large amount of the *Tang yulin*'s contents into its various sections and contributed greatly to the later restoration of the text. One partial edition of the *Tang yulin*, in two *juan*, printed by a certain Qi Zhiluan 齊之鸞 of Tongcheng 桐城 in the second year (1523) of the Jiajing 嘉靖 (1522-1566) reign, also survived, becoming the earliest extant edition of the text. The Qing 清 (1644-1911) dynasty editors of the *Siku quanshu* took this incomplete edition as their base text, compared and collated it with what was preserved in the *Yongle dadian*, and restored more than four hundred entries to the text. The incomplete Qi Zhiluan edition only contained the complete contents of the first eighteen categories from Wang Dang's original list, from "Virtuous Conduct" to "Worthy Beauties." Rather than restoring the

---

[32] Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, p. 810.

[33] Zhou Xunchu offers a complete list of traditional bibliographical records of the *Tang yulin* in chronological order, ending with the record found in Qian Qianyi's 錢謙益 (1582-1664) *Jiangyunlou shumu* 絳雲樓書目. Ibid., pp. 811-814.

[34] Ibid., pp. 813-814.

recovered entries to the remaining categories listed in Wang Dang's preface, the collators arranged them in a roughly chronological order at the end of the collated Qi Zhiluan edition. The combined collection was then divided into eight *juan* by the Qing editors and was later printed to produce the *Juzhen* 聚珍 edition. This became the base text for most of the Qing dynasty editions produced afterwards.[35] Due to the possible circulation of the text before its completion, and the subsequent textual history of loss and restoration, the *Tang yulin* we have today is likely rather different from the original compilation completed by Wang Dang. The text circulated in multiple editions, and experienced loss and restoration, which to some extent shows how the transmission of anecdotal memories of the past could, in the long run, work against the concept of an original or stable textual form that the author or compiler strove to construct. Therefore, rather than speculating on the original state of the text, this introductory study will consider the content and structure of the text as we have received it in our own age, based on the work of previous scholars, especially Zhou Xunchu. The main source texts analyzed in this paper, the *Guoshi bu* 國史補 and the *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語, are both based on their *Siku quanshu* editions for the sake of greater textual and contextual consistency.

## 3. The Selective Use of Source Material

In categorizing the *Tang yulin*, the *Siku quanshu* editors placed it in the "philosophers" (*zibu* 子部) section, in the "category" (*lei* 類) of "schools of minor discourses" (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家), and in the "group" (*shu* 屬) of "miscellaneous matters" (*zashi* 雜事). These are also the categories where most of the *Tang yulin*'s listed source texts may be found. The titles of the fifty works from which Wang Dang selected the material for his own collection are listed in his preface:[36]

---

[35] It served as the base text for the *Xiyinxuan congshu* 惜陰軒叢書 edition printed by Li Xiling 李錫齡 (1794-1844), the *Mohai jinhu* 墨海金壺 edition collated and printed by Zhang Ruoyun 張若雲 (fl. ca. 1805), the *Shoushange congshu* 守山閣叢書 edition, and an edition printed in Min 閩. Several old manuscript copies of incomplete editions were also described in Qing book collectors' records. For detailed descriptions of various printed and manuscript editions in prefaces and post-scripts by Qing dynasty book collectors, see ibid., pp. 813-822.

[36] Zhou Xunchu identifies the sources for each anecdote in the *Tang yulin*, and comes up with a list of fifty-

*Guoshi bu* 國史補 (*Supplement to State History*)

*Bu guoshi* 補國史 (*Supplementing State History*)

*Yinhua lu* 因話錄 (*Notes Based on Remarks*)

*Tanbin lu* 譚[談]賓錄 (*Notes from Discussions with Guests*)

*Zhai ji* 齋集 (i.e., *Lanzhai ji* [嵐]齋集, *Collection from the Lan Study*)[37]

*Youxian guchui* 幽閒鼓吹 (*Drums and Trumpets of the Secluded Leisure Time*)

*Shangshu gushi* 尚書故實 (*Past Facts from the Minister*)

*Song chuang lu* 松窗錄 (*Notes [Taken] under the Pine Window*)

*Luling guanxia ji* 廬陵官下記 (*Records during the Official Post at Luling*)[38]

*Ci Liushi jiuwen* 次柳氏舊聞 (*Jottings of old Things Heard from the Lius*)

*Guiyuan tancong* 桂苑談叢 (*Series of Discussions at the Osmanthus Garden*)

*Jiwen tan* 紀聞談 (*Records of Discussions on Things Heard*)

*Dongguan zouji* 東觀奏記 (*Memorials from the Eastern Observance Palace*)

*Zhenling yishi* 貞陵遺事 (*Accounts Left Behind from the Zhen Royal*

---

eight source titles. There are five titles Wang Dang listed as his sources but Zhou Xunchu did not identify any anecdotes from them. They are: *Da Tang shuozuan* 大唐說纂 (*Collection of Talks from the Great Tang*), *Wei Zhenggong gushi* 魏鄭公故事 (*Old Affairs of the Wei* [*Zheng*], *the Duke of Zheng*), *Huichang jieyi* 會昌解頤 (*Jokes from the Huichang Reign, 841-846*), *Luozhong jiyi* 洛中記異 (*Strange Things Recorded in Luoyang*), *Wenqi lu* 聞奇錄 (*Notes on Hearing Marvelous* [*Things*]). Zhou Xunchu also identifies twelve additional titles that were not included in Wang Dang's list, but which had their anecdotes recorded in the *Tang yulin.* They are: *Qianding lu* 前定錄 (*Notes on Predestined Fate*), *Que shi* 闕史 (*Neglected History*), *Tang zhiyan* 唐摭言 (*Picked-up Words from the Tang*), *Jiaofang ji* 教坊記 (*Records of the Music Office*), *Ye hou jiazhuan* 鄴侯家傳 (*Family History of the Marquis of Ye*), *Beili zhi* 北里志 (*Anecdotes from the Northern Quarter*), *Minchuan mingshi zhuan* 閩川名士傳 (*Biographies of Famous Scholars from the Min River*), *Yushitai ji* 御史臺記 (*Records of the Censorate*), *Wang Guifei zhuan* 王貴妃傳 (*Biography of the Honored Consort Wang*), *Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆 (*Casual Jottings at the Rong* (*i.e., Tolerance*) *Study*), *Fanchuan wenji* 樊川文集 (*Anthology of* [*the Scholar in Retirement at*] *Fanchuan* (*i.e., the Fan river*), i.e., Du Mu 杜牧, 803-ca. 852), and *Yan Zhenqing ji* 顏真卿集 (*Collection of Yan Zhenqing*). See Zhou Xunchu, "*Tang yulin* yuanju yuanshu tiyao 唐語林援據原書提要" (Introductions to the Original Books the *Tang yulin* Quoted from) and "*Tang yulin* yuanju yuanshu suoyin 唐語林援據原書索引" (Index [of Entries from] the Original Books the *Tang yulin* Quoted from), in ibid., pp. 763, 839.

37 The term *zhai* 齋 is translated as "study" here to differentiate it from the term *guan* 館 "studio."

38 This text is no longer extant, however, parts of it can be found in Duan Chengshi's 段成式 (ca. 803-863) *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (*Miscellanea of the Youyang Mountains*).

*Mausoleum*)

*Xu Zhenling yishi* 續貞陵遺事 (*Sequel to Accounts Left Behind from the Zhen Royal Mausoleum*)

*Changshi yanzhi* 常侍言旨 (*Essence of Words from the Attendant-in-Ordinary*)

*Zhuanzai* 傳載 (*Accounts Recorded*)

*Yunxi youyi* 雲溪友議 (*Colloquy with Friends at the* [*Wu*]*yun xi, Creek of* [*Five*] *Clouds*)

*Kaitian chuanxin ji* 開天傳信記 (*Records of Circulated Trustworthy* [*Accounts*] *during the Kaiyuan and Tianbao Reigns*)

*Rongmu xiantan* 戎幕閒談 (*Leisurely Discussions in the Military Office*)

*Minghuang zalu* 明皇雜錄 (*Miscellaneous Notes of the Luminous Emperor*)

*Yiwen ji* 異聞集 (*Collection of Strange Things Heard*)

*Da Tang shuozuan* 大唐說纂 (*Collection of Talks from the Great Tang*)

*Kanwu* 刊誤 (*Correcting Errors*)

*Lushi zashuo* 盧氏雜說 (*Miscellaneous Talks* [*Recorded by*] *Mr. Lu*)

*Jutan lu* 劇談錄 (*Notes from Jesting Discussions*)

*Yuquan biduan* 玉泉筆端 ([*Things at the*] *Tip of the Writing Brush by* [*Master*] *Yuquan, i.e.,* Master Jade-Spring)

*Jinhua zi zabian* 金華子雜編 (*The Miscellaneous Collection of Master Jinhua*)

*Pishi jianwen* 皮氏見聞 (*Things Seen and Heard by Mr. Pi*)

*Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語 (*New Conversations from the Great Tang*)

*Liugong jiahua* 劉公嘉話 (*Fine Remarks from the Revered Gentleman Liu* [*Yuxi*])

*Jiegu lu* 羯鼓錄 (*Notes on the Drum of the Jie Tribe*)

*Zhitian lu* 芝田錄 (*Notes from the Field of Ganoderma, i.e.,* the Plant of Immortality)

*Zixia ji* 資暇集 (*A Collection to Aid Leisurely* [*Times*])

*Duyang zabian* 杜陽雜編 (*Miscellaneous Collection at Duyang*)

*Benshi shi* 本事詩 (*Poetry on Events*)

*Yutang xianhua* 玉堂閒話 (*Leisurely Remarks at the Jade Hall*)

*Zhongchao gushi* 中朝故事 (*Old Affairs from the Central Court*, i.e., Chang'an 長安)

*Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (*Trivial Words from Northern* [*Yun*]*meng*, i.e., Lake of the Dream of Clouds)

*Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (*Collected Essentials of the Tang*)

*Liushi xuxun* 柳氏敍訓 (*Instructions Narrated by Mr. Liu*)

*Wei Zhenggong gushi* 魏鄭公故事 (*Old Affairs of Wei* [*Zheng*]*, the Duke of Zheng*)

*Guochao zhuanji* 國朝傳記 (*Biographies and Records of the State Court*)[39]

*Huichang jieyi* 會昌解頤 (*Jokes in the Huichang Reign, 841-846*)

*Luo zhong jiyi* 洛中記異 (*Strange Things Recorded in Luoyang*)

*Ganzhuanzi* 乾饌子 (*Dried Fruits*)

*Wenqi lu* 聞奇錄 (*Notes on Hearing the Marvelous* [*Things*])

*Jiashi tanlu* 賈氏談錄 (*Notes on Discussions with Mr. Jia*)

*Qiuranke zhuan* 虬髯客傳 (*Biography of the Guest with the Curly Beard*)

*Fengshi wenjian ji* 封氏聞見記 (*Records of Things Seen and Heard by Mr. Feng*)

Among the fifty source texts of the *Tang yulin*, around twenty have been lost, while thirty or so are still extant. As mentioned above, it would require a much longer work of scholarship to present a thorough analysis of the *Tang yulin*'s use of the material from all its source texts. Thus, for the purpose of this introductory study, I present a more global view, or a "distant reading," to reveal larger patterns in Wang Dang's selective use of source material, offering representative cases to illustrate the most significant characteristics of his compilation principles. This is done by first estimating the extent to which the *Tang yulin* uses different extant source texts. For example, according to the collated and annotated edition by Zhou Xunchu, the *Tang yulin* includes 158 anecdotes from the *Guoshi bu*. The *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Guoshi bu* contains a total of 308 anecdotes, so a simple calculation shows that the *Tang yulin* includes 51% of the *Guoshi*

---

[39] Also called *Sui Tang jiahua* 隋唐嘉話 (*Fine Remarks on the Sui and Tang*).

*bu*'s content. However, it should be noted here that the original condition of these primary sources, including both the *Tang yulin* and the earlier texts it draws on, remain unclear to present-day researchers, complicating any attempts at statistical analysis. Some texts were lost during their transmission, and those extant today were in fact restored by scholars of later dynasties. Thus, the editions of the *Tang yulin*'s source texts available today are likely different from those Wang Dang saw and used while compiling the *Tang yulin.* (To maintain consistency in this analysis, references to the total numbers of anecdotes in most of the source texts will be based on their *Siku quanshu* editions.) Percentages showing the extent to which the *Tang yulin* reused anecdotes from each source text should therefore only be taken as estimates presenting a preliminary picture, or a "distant reading," of Wang Dang's use of his sources. Hopefully, further details will be added to this picture in the future by studies taking a more fine-grained approach. That said, conclusions about larger patterns in the compilation should be more reliable, on average, than those drawn from Wang Dang's use of a single, textually unstable, source.

In order to discern patterns in Wang Dang's use of source texts, a cluster view of the *Tang yulin*'s coverage of different source texts is presented in Figure 1. The chart plots the percentage of each source text used by the *Tang yulin* against the size of the source text itself, revealing four rough clusters. The clusters on the right side of the chart indicate source texts that are big compilations containing, on average, around three hundred anecdotes, while the clusters on the left list smaller texts, most of which have less than one hundred anecdotes. Similarly, the two clusters at the top of the chart include source texts from which large percentages of their total contents were utilized within the *Tang yulin*, while clusters at the bottom contain source texts from which only small percentages of anecdotes were selected. Though the exact sizes that some source texts had in Wang Dang's time cannot be determined with complete certainty, as noted above, this visualization does show gaps between the clusters that are wide enough, at least in three of the four cases, to allow conclusions about larger patterns in the compilation process to be drawn with some degree of confidence.
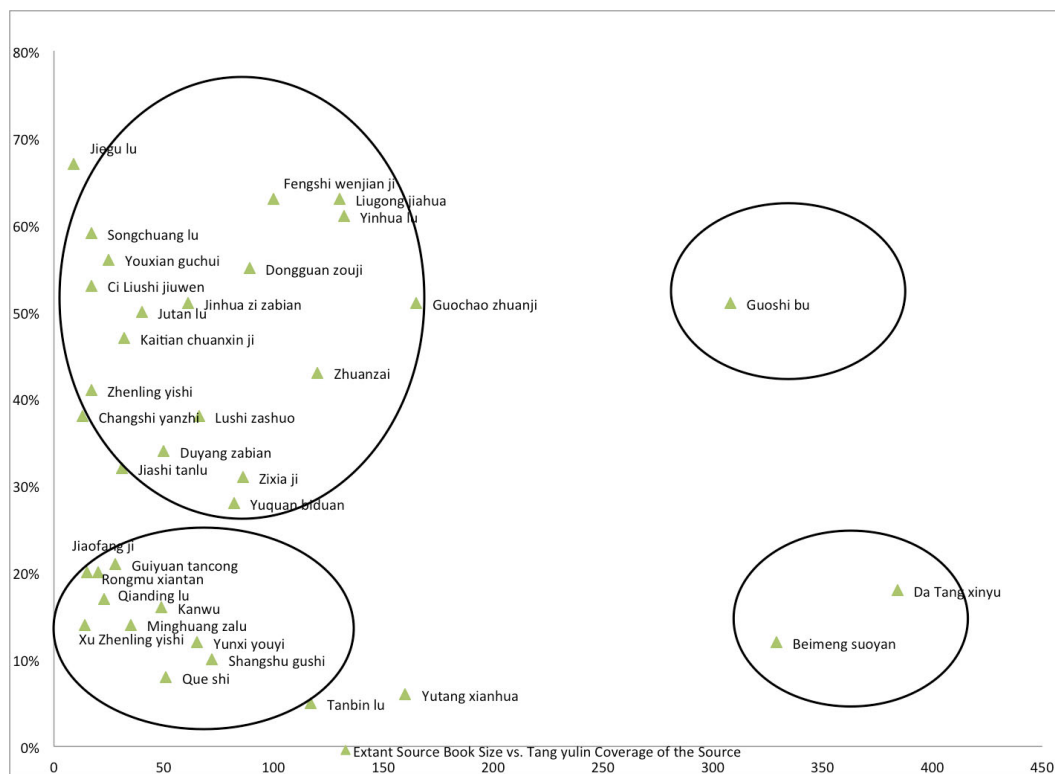
Figure 1. Cluster View of the *Tang yulin*'s Coverage of Its Source Texts

Based on the cluster view shown in Figure 1, I below select representative texts from the clusters to shed light on the *Tang yulin*'s recycling of source material. With the aid of these examples, I discuss the most significant characteristics of the relationship between the *Tang yulin* and its source texts in terms of their content and structure.

## 3.1 Content

### 3.1.1 Supplementing History: The *Guoshi bu* as *Tang yulin*'s Main Source

In the upper-right quadrant of the chart in Figure 1, the *Guoshi bu* maintains a significant distance from all other titles and so represents the only example of its type – a large compilation that had a large percentage of its contents included in the *Tang yulin*. Thus it can be argued that the *Guoshi bu* is clearly Wang Dang's most important source of material, and for this reason, its content must align very closely with his conception of

a proper anecdotal representation of the Tang. The *Guoshi bu*, also called the *Tang guoshi bu*, is a collection of anecdotes compiled by Li Zhao 李肇 (fl. ca. 812-?, d. before 836) during the years of the Changqing 長慶 (821-824) reign.[40] It contains a total of 308 anecdotes in 3 *juan*, covering a time period of more than a century, from the Kaiyuan 開元 (713-741) to the Changqing years of the Tang. The accounts in the *Guoshi bu* have been generally regarded as historically reliable, and they were widely quoted in encyclopedias, miscellaneous collections, and the scholarly works of later dynasties. Some of the text's anecdotes made their way into official histories such as the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, the *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, as well as the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑. In addition to historical anecdotes, the *Guoshi bu* also includes entries on literary composition, philosophical discussions, social customs, government policies, and court regulations. The textual history of the *Guoshi bu* is relatively free of transmission difficulties, and Li Zhao's preface clearly states the principles he followed in selecting material for the collection:

> I completely exclude those [anecdotes] that speak of retribution, relate [tales of] ghosts and spirits, authenticate [the content of] dreams and divinations, and describe matters concerning women; I include, however, those that record events and facts, investigate the principles of things, discriminate the dubious and the unclear, give admonitions and caution, collect customs and folklore, and furnish material for discussion and entertainment. [41]
>
> 言報應，敍鬼神，徵夢卜，近帷箔，悉去之；紀事實，探物理，辯疑惑，示勸戒，采風俗，助談笑，則書之。[42]

Since the *Tang yulin* includes 158 anecdotes from the *Guoshi bu*, equaling half of the *Guoshi bu*'s total contents and comprising more than the number of anecdotes taken from any other single source text, the criteria Wang Dang followed in choosing material for the *Tang yulin* may be assumed not to differ greatly from those employed by Li Zhao.

---

[40] Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, p. 764.

[41] Translation by Sheldon Lu. See Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, *From Historicity to Fictionality: The Chinese Poetics of Narrative* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 106-107.

[42] Li Zhao, *Tang guoshi bu*, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), p. 1.

A general review of the *Tang yulin*'s use of sources reveals the same tendency to leave out accounts with supernatural and fantastic elements, while including accounts that refute the efficacy of Buddhist, Daoist, and popular practices. Wang Dang's employment of these principles in the process of compiling his collection may possibly have been influenced by the Neo-Confucian objection to Buddhist and Daoist teachings and practices during Northern Song times. The content of the *Tang yulin*, even beyond the anecdotes taken from the *Guoshi bu*, indeed includes a wide range of accounts that record historical events, miscellaneous facts, clarify the principles of things, give admonitions and caution, represent the customs and traditional practices of Tang times, and offer material for casual conversations and discussions.

### 3.1.2 Preferred and Avoided Topics

Looking back at Figure 1, the cluster in the upper-left quadrant of the chart presents source texts that are small collections, but from which a fairly high percentage of anecdotes were included in the *Tang yulin*. Some representative titles are the *Guochao zhuanji*, the *Song chuang lu*, the *Dongguan zouji*, the *Liugong jiahua*, the *Fengshi wenjian ji*, the *Yinhua lu*, and the *Ci Liushi jiuwen*. These collections generally focus on topics similar to those in which the *Tang yulin* shows interest, such as literati culture and daily life, court affairs and unofficial accounts of historical events, conversations concerned with literary composition and the appreciation of literature and writing, as well as miscellaneous information about court regulations and the social customs of the Tang period. Such topics would naturally be preferred for the purpose of supplementing the content of official, court-sponsored dynastic histories. They also provided interesting material that could be used in leisurely conversation and gossip that occurred among literati. One collection, the *Jiegu lu*, stands out as having the highest percentage of anecdotes recycled in the *Tang yulin*, suggesting that the topic of music and entertainment was an aspect of the Tang dynasty that particularly interested Wang Dang as he constructed his own anecdotal image of the period.

The cluster in the lower-left quadrant of the chart contains a group of small collections that contributed a rather small proportion of their contents to the *Tang yulin*. Many of these texts are also on specific subjects. The texts in this cluster are of two types:

one includes texts from the original list of sources given by Wang Dang, such as the *Guiyuan tancong*, the *Yunxi youyi*, the *Kanwu*, and the *Xu Zhenling yishi*, while the other type includes titles not listed by Wang Dang but that are nonetheless identified by Zhou Xunchu as source texts for the *Tang yulin*, such as the *Que shi*, the *Qianding lu*, and the *Jiaofang ji*. These texts present topics touched on by the *Tang yulin* but they were clearly less preferred for Wang Dang's construction of Tang cultural memory. In addition to the examples shown in the cluster, the only entry Zhou Xunchu identified as possibly being from the *Yiwen ji* is anecdote #783,[43] a story usually referred to as the "Shangqing zhuan" 上清傳 (Biography of Shangqing). The *Yiwen ji* is a collection of Tang dynasty *chuanqi* 傳奇 (transmitting the marvelous) stories in ten *juan,* compiled by Chen Han 陳翰 (fl. ca. 875) toward the end of the Tang.[44] The text is no longer extant, but a short note in the *Junzhai dushu zhi* describes it as a work "compiled by Chen Han of the late Tang, who took the type of strange and marvelous affairs of the Tang included in records and biographies and made a book" 右唐陳翰編，以傳記所載唐朝奇怪事類為一書.[45] According to Zhou Xunchu, around forty extant *chuanqi* stories are from this collection, such as the "Zhenzhong ji" 枕中記, the "Li Wa zhuan" 李娃傳, the "Huo Xiaoyu zhuan" 霍小玉傳, the "Nanke Taishou zhuan" 南柯太守傳, the "Liu Yi zhuan" 柳毅傳, and the "Shangqing zhuan" included in the *Tang yulin*, and possibly the "Qiuranke zhuan" found in the *Tang yulin* as well.[46] Among these stories, the "Shangqing zhuan" appears to be the one most closely related to political life at court. It is also a story free of overtly sensational or supernatural elements, and its plot has nothing to do with feminine allurements or love affairs. The inclusion of this anecdote again demonstrates Wang Dang's tendency to avoid accounts of the marvelous, the sensational, and the supernatural. In general, the titles appearing in this last group of the *Tang yulin*'s source texts seem to confirm selection criteria aligned with the *Guoshi bu*'s decision to "exclude those that speak of retribution, relate ghosts and spirits, authenticate dreams and divinations, and describe matters concerning women."

---

[43]  Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng, juan* 6, pp. 542-543.

[44]  Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修  and Song Qi 宋祁, *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 59, p. 1542.

[45]  Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, p. 781.

[46]  Ibid.

## 3.2 Structure

The *Tang yulin* was organized quite differently from most of its source texts. As mentioned above, Wang Dang grouped the *Tang yulin* anecdotes into fifty-two categories, while over 80 percent of his source texts did not apply any kind of organizational structure to their contents. Some, such as the *Guochao zhuanji*, the *Duyang zabian*, and the *Song chuang lu,* simply lump the anecdotes together in no particular order, without categories or titles. A small number of Wang Dang's source texts do give titles to their anecdotes but do not categorize them. Examples include personal anecdotal collections like the *Beimeng suoyan* and the *Guiyuan tancong*, as well as anecdotal records of the emperor's activities like the *Minghuang zalu* and the *Dongguan zouji*. Only a few of Wang Dang's source texts organize their anecdotes within categories, and among these works the *Da Tang xinyu* stands out distinctly for its organizing framework of thirty categories based mainly on moral characteristics and the abilities and responsibilities of court officials. The title of the work was originally the *Da Tang shishuo xinyu* 大唐世說 新語 (*A New Account of the Tales of the World from the Great Tang*), a fact which suggests that, in its own anecdotal representation of the Tang, the collection was intended to follow the tradition begun by the *Shishuo xinyu*, whose organizational structure Wang Dang acknowledges as the basis for the *Tang yulin*.

The *Da Tang xinyu* can be found in the cluster of titles in the lower-right quadrant of Figure 1 above. This cluster includes two compilations of fairly large size, only small percentages of which are included in the *Tang yulin*. The *Beimeng suoyan* appears to consist in large part of trivial and vulgar anecdotes and jokes. As discussed above, these are clearly not the preferred topics of the *Tang yulin*. The *Da Tang xinyu* presents an interesting contrast to the *Beimeng suoyan*, with its structural focus on the moral characteristics and responsibilities of court officials. For example, categories such as "Qinglian" 清廉 (The Clean and the Incorrupt) and "Zhonglie" 忠烈 (Loyalty and Martyrdom) offer anecdotes illustrating these desirable characteristics, and categories such as "Guijian" 規諫 (Admonitions and Remonstrations), "Chifa" 持法 (Enforcing the Law), and "Zhengneng" 政能 (Administrative Abilities) give examples that emphasize official duties, abilities, and reputations. However, these categories are quite different from the thirty-six categories in the earlier *Shishuo xinyu*. By constructing his

own anecdotal image of the Tang using a structure based on all the categories of the *Shishuo xinyu* except the "Jiewu" 捷悟 (Quick Perception), and by keeping them in their original order while steering clear of the structural framework of the *Da Tang xinyu*, Wang Dang appears to be reviving the structure of the *Shishuo xinyu* as a more authentic framework for the anecdotal representation of Tang cultural memory.

A collection of 13 *juan,* the *Da Tang xinyu* was compiled by Liu Su 劉肅 (fl. 806-820), with the author's preface dated 807.[47] The extant text consists of 380 anecdotes on Tang political and intellectual life from the beginning of the Tang to the Dali 大歷 (766-779) reign.[48] Liu Su's preface gives the collection the title *Da Tang shishuo xinyu*, positioning the collection squarely in the tradition of the *Shishuo xinyu*.[49] According to Qian Nanxiu, during the Tang and Song period the *Shishuo xinyu* tradition was viewed as one branch of historiography, rather than as belonging to the unflattering *xiaoshuo* category (at least in the eyes of its devotees).[50] Liu Su, in his preface to the *Da Tang xinyu*, specifically appropriates the lineage of canonical historical works such as the *Shangshu* 尚書 and the *Chunqiu* 春秋, as well as the historiographical tradition of Confucius 孔子 (551 B.C.-479 B.C.), Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (fl. ca. 500 B.C.), Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145 B.C.-ca. 86 B.C.), and Ban Gu 班固 (32-92). He states that his own work includes "affairs relevant to administration and education, speeches touching upon literature and diction, principles worth emulating and establishing as examples, and ambitions bound to preserve antiquity" 事關政教，言涉文詞，道可師模，志將存古.[51] Chen Yinque 陳寅恪 (1890-1969) commends the *Da Tang xinyu* because, "though regarded as miscellaneous history, except for the chapter 'Jesting and Joking' that is slightly trivial and miscellaneous, most of its contents have their origins in state history" 雖號為雜史， 然其中除諧謔一篇，稍嫌蕪雜外，大都出自國史.[52] Thus, the inclusion of the "Xienue" 諧謔 (Jesting and Joking) category seems to be the main

---

[47] Ibid., p. 787.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Qian Nanxiu, *Spirit and Self in Medieval China*, p. 201.

[51] Liu Su, "Yuan xumu 原序目," in *Da Tang xinyu*, eds. Xu Denan 許德楠 and Li Dingxia 李鼎霞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 1.

[52] Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp. 787-788.

reason the collection was placed in the unflattering *xiaoshuo* category by the editors of the *Siku quanshu*.[53]

The *Tang yulin* includes 73 of the 380 anecdotes in the *Da Tang xinyu*,[54] and the following table lists each of them according to the *Tang yulin* category in which they are included, along with the total number of anecdotes in that category and the number from the *Da Tang xinyu* in that category.[55]

Table 1. Anecdotes Selected from the *Da Tang xinyu*, Listed by the Categories of the *Tang yulin*

| *TYL* Categories | Total Number of Anecdotes | Number of Anecdotes from *DTXY* | List of Anecdotes Selected from *DTXY* (by Zhou Xunchu's # for *TYL* accounts) |
|---|---|---|---|
| "Dexing" 德行 (Virtuous Conduct) | 43 | 3 | 3*, 39, 40 |
| "Yanyu" 言語 (Speech and Conversation) | 41 | 18 | 48, 53*, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 75* |
| "Zhengshi" 政事 (Administrative Affairs) | 92 | 5 | 87, 88, 163, 167, 168 |
| "Wenxue" 文學 (Literature and Scholarship) | 108 | 4 | 178**, 260, 261, 264 |
| "Fangzheng" 方正 (The Upright and the Proper) | 65 | 12 | 330*, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341 |
| "Yaliang" 雅量 (Cultivated Tolerance) | 22 | 4 | 350***, 361, 362, 364 |
| "Shijian" 識鑒 (Insight and Judgment) | 37 | 4 | 395, 396, 402, 405 |
| "Shangyu" 賞譽 (Appreciation and Praise) | 24 | 1 | 409* |
| "Pinzao" 品藻 (Grading Excellence) | 13 | 3 | 434*, 435*, 439 |

---

[53]  Ji Yun et al., "*Siku quanshu* zongmu tiyao" in Liu Su, *Da Tang xinyu*, p. 207.

[54]  See Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, pp. 840-842. The list missed two anecdotes.

[55]  *: Zhou Xunchu identified another text as the original source of the anecdote, but it is also found in the *Da Tang xinyu*.

**: Zhou Xunchu identified the *Da Tang xinyu* as the possible source for this anecdote.

***: not on Zhou Xunchu's list of anecdotes found in the *Da Tang xinyu*, but the collator's note to this anecdote mentions that other texts quoted it from the *Da Tang xinyu*.

Table 1. (Continued)

| *TYL* Categories | Total Number of Anecdotes | Number of Anecdotes from *DTXY* | List of Anecdotes Selected from *DTXY* (by Zhou Xunchu's # for *TYL* accounts) |
|---|---|---|---|
| "Guizhen" 規箴 (Admonitions and Warnings) | 9 | 0 | |
| "Suhui" 夙慧 (Precocious Intelligence) | 21 | 1 | 473 |
| "Haoshuang" 豪爽 (Virility and Boldness) | 23 | 0 | |
| "Rongzhi" 容止 (Appearance and Manner) | 11 | 0 | |
| "Zixin" 自新 (Self-renewal) | 6 | 1 | 515* |
| "Qixian" 企羨 (Admiration and Emulation) | 51 | 1 | 566 |
| "Shangshi" 傷逝 (Grieving for the Departed) | 10 | 0 | |
| "Qiyi" 栖逸 (Solitude and Disengagement) | 13 | 0 | |
| "Xianyuan" 賢媛 (Worthy Beauties) | 21 | 2 | 604, 607 |
| "Shujie" 術解 (Technical Understanding) to "Jice" 計策 (Strategies and Intrigues) | 489 | 14 | 617*, 628, 634, 635*, 636, 644, 647**, 651***, 653, 661, 663*, 664, 665, 939** |

Most of the anecdotes from the *Da Tang xinyu* are included in the first nine categories of the *Tang yulin*, and, most significantly, they make up half of the "Yanyu" category, almost one-fifth of the "Fangzheng" category, and almost one-fifth of the "Yaliang" category. But in "Wenxue," the *Tang yulin*'s largest category with 108 anecdotes, only 4 are from the *Da Tang xinyu*.

When selecting material, Wang Dang focused on the categories at the beginning of the *Da Tang xinyu* and seemed less interested in the contents of later categories, only occasionally picking a couple of accounts from them. Except for three anecdotes selected from the much-criticized "Xienue" category, the contents of the last nine categories of the *Da Tang xinyu* were completely ignored. Of course, this may be because Wang Dang's work was in fact not completed, or because the text we have today is different from the

original due to the circulation of partial editions and losses and restorations occurring during the text's transmission. For a clear view of how the *Tang yulin* used the *Da Tang xinyu* as a source text, Table 2 shows the list of *Da Tang xinyu* categories, the total number of anecdotes in them, the number selected from them by Wang Dang, and the location of the selected anecdotes in the *Tang yulin*.

Table 2. Anecdotes in the *Tang yulin* Selected from Each of the *Da Tang xinyu* Categories

| | *DTXY* Categories | Total Number | Number Selected by *TYL* | *TYL* Categories Where Selected Accounts Are Located |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "Kuangzan" 匡贊 (Commendation and Praise) | 15 | 9 | "Yanyu" 言語 (54, 55, 56, 57), "Zhengshi" 政事 (88, 167, 168), "Shijian" 識鑒 (405), "Qixian" 企羡 (566) |
| 2 | "Guijian" 規諫 (Admonitions and Remonstrations) | 7 | 7 | "Yanyu" 言語 (58, 59, 60, 61, 62), "Xianyuan" 賢媛 (604), Unknown (664) |
| 3 | "Jijian" 極諫 (Extreme Remonstrations) | 20 | 18 | "Yanyu" 言語 (63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68), "Fangzheng" 方正 (331, 332, 333, 334, 341), "Yaliang" 雅量 (364), "Xianyuan" 賢媛 (607), Unknown (634, 636, 644, 653, 665) |
| 4 | "Gangzheng" 剛正 (The Unyielding and the Upright) | 14 | 6 | "Fangzheng" 方正 (335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340) |
| 5 | "Gongzhi" 公直 (The Just and the Straightforward) | 21 | 1 | "Yanyu" 言語 (53*) |
| 6 | "Qinglian" 清廉 (The Clean and the Incorrupt) | 9 | 0 | |
| 7 | "Chifa" 持法 (Enforcing the Law) | 19 | 2 | "Zhengshi" 政事 (163), "Fangzheng" 方正 (330*) |
| 8 | "Zhengneng" 政能 (Administrative Abilities) | 14 | 0 | |
| 9 | "Zhonglie" 忠烈 (Loyalty and Martyrdom) | 13 | 1 | Unknown (617*) |
| 10 | "Jieyi" 節義 (Integrity and Righteousness) | 5 | 0 | |

Table 2. (Continued)

|  | *DTXY* Categories | Total Number | Number Selected by *TYL* | *TYL* Categories Where Selected Accounts Are Located |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | "Xiaoxing" 孝行 (Filial Conduct) | 9 | 0 | |
| 12 | "Youti" 友悌 (Fraternal Love) | 5 | 1 | "Dexing" 德行 (39) |
| 13 | "Juxian" 舉賢 (Recommending the Worthy) | 27 | 2 | "Shijian" 識鑒 (402), Unknown (663*) |
| 14 | "Shiliang" 識量 (Insight and Tolerance) | 13 | 0 | |
| 15 | "Rongshu" 容恕 (Pardon and Forgiveness) | 12 | 4 | "Dexing" 德行 (3*, 40), "Yaliang" 雅量 (350***, 362) |
| 16 | "Zhiwei" 知微 (Understanding the Subtle) | 16 | 6 | "Zhengshi" 政事 (87), "Shijian" 識鑒 (395, 396), "Shangyu" 賞譽 (409*), "Pinzao" 品藻 (439), "Zixin" 自新 (515*) |
| 17 | "Congmin" 聰敏 (The Smart and the Sharp) | 14 | 5 | "Wenxue" 文學 (260, 261), "Pinzao" 品藻 (434*, 435*), "Suhui" 夙慧 (473) |
| 18 | "Wenzhang" 文章 (Literature and Essays) | 19 | 2 | "Wenxue" 文學 (178**), Unknown (651***) |
| 19 | "Zhushu" 著述 (Compilations and Compositions) | 12 | 1 | "Wenxue" 文學 (264) |
| 20 | "Congshan" 從善 (Following the Good Word) | 5 | 1 | "Yaliang" 雅量 (361) |
| 21 | "Yuning" 諛佞 (Flattery and Smarminess) | 12 | 2 | "Yanyu" 言語 (48), Unknown (635*) |
| 22 | "Lige" 釐革 (Reform and Change) | 17 | 0 | |
| 23 | "Yinyi" 隱逸 (Seclusion and Disengagement) | 9 | 0 | |
| 24 | "Baoxi" 褒錫 (Honors and Awards) | 12 | 0 | |
| 25 | "Chengjie" 懲戒 (Punishment and Warning) | 15 | 0 | |
| 26 | "Quanli" 勸勵 (Persuasion and Encouragement) | 9 | 0 | |
| 27 | "Kuren" 酷忍 (Brutality and Hardheartedness) | 10 | 0 | |

Table 2. (Continued)

| | *DTXY* Categories | Total Number | Number Selected by *TYL* | *TYL* Categories Where Selected Accounts Are Located |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | "Xienue" 諧謔 (Jesting and Joking) | 14 | 3 | Unknown (628, 647**, 661) |
| 29 | "Jiyi" 記異 (Recording the Strange) | 5 | 0 | |
| 30 | "Jiaochan" 郊禪 (Sacrifice to Heaven and Earth) | 6 | 0 | |
| | Unidentified/With Discrepancies | | 2 | "Yanyu" 言語 (75*), Unknown (939**) |

The four *Da Tang xinyu* categories quoted in greatest proportion in the *Tang yulin* were "Guijian" (all seven anecdotes), "Jijian" (eighteen out of twenty anecdotes), "Kuangzan" (nine out of fifteen anecdotes), and "Gangzheng" (six out of fourteen anecdotes). Additionally, almost a third of the "Zhiwei" and the "Congmin" categories were recycled by Wang Dang. As mentioned earlier, these selected anecdotes are mostly found in the first nine categories of the *Tang yulin*. Also worthy of note are the eighteen anecdotes that make up half of the *Tang yulin*'s "Yanyu" category, which consist of four from the *Da Tang xinyu*'s "Kuangzan" category, five from "Guijian," six from "Jijian," one from "Gongzhi," one from "Yuning," and one of unknown origin. Finally, twelve anecdotes that make up one-third of the *Tang yulin*'s "Fangzheng" category include five from the *Da Tang xinyu*'s "Jijian," six from "Gangzheng," and one from "Chifa."

In addition to selectively appropriating the *Da Tang xinyu*'s contents, the *Tang yulin* appears to have borrowed from the *Da Tang xinyu* when it expanded the structure of the *Shishuo xinyu*. The *Da Tang xinyu* adapted several categories from the *Shishuo xinyu*, with its "Gangzheng" category resembling the *Shishuo xinyu*'s "Fangzheng," its "Xienue" resembling "Paitiao," its "Yinyi" resembling "Qiyi," its "Congmin" resembling "Suhui," its "Wenzhang" and "Zhushu" resembling "Wenxue," and its "Zhengneng" resembling "Zhengshi." Though Wang based his own collection's organization firmly on the *Shishuo xinyu*'s original categories, many of the *Tang yulin*'s additional categories appear to have been influenced by the *Da Tang xinyu*'s structure. For example, Wang Dang took the "Yuning" category directly from the *Da Tang xinyu* and adapted the titles of three

additional categories from it: the *Da Tang xinyu*'s "Zhonglie" category became "Zhongyi," "Kuren" became "Canren," and "Jiyi" became "Jishi." Here again, Wang Dang seems unable to tolerate the idea of bringing anything "strange" (*yi* 異), such as the supernatural, into his collection.

# 4. Northern Song Influences

## 4.1 The *Xu shishuo*

As mentioned earlier, the *Xu shishuo*, a collection compiled by Kong Pingzhong before Wang Dang's work, may also have influenced the compilation of the *Tang yulin*. Both Wang Dang and Kong Pingzhong had close intellectual associations with Su Shi and his literary circle and they shared an interest in collecting anecdotes. Since the *Xu shishuo* was available to Wang Dang when he compiled the *Tang yulin*, Wang Dang's work could be viewed as a complement or response to Kong Pingzhong's compilation based on their shared intellectual interests.

The *Tang yulin* and the *Xu shishuo* both inherited the structure of the *Shishuo xinyu*, but they differed significantly in their selection of earlier material. The thirty-eight categories in the *Xu shishuo* include thirty-five inherited from the transmitted edition of the *Shishuo xinyu*, with only "Haoshuang" left out. The three additional categories, "Zhijian" 直諫 (Straightforward Remonstrations), "Xiechan" 邪諂 (Heresy and Flattery), and "Jianning" 奸佞 (Treachery and Hypocrisy), were taken from variant editions of the *Shishuo xinyu* possessing either thirty-eight or thirty-nine categories that were available during the Northern Song. Wang Zao 汪藻 (1079-1154) further commented that the contents of these latter three categories were "all matters from official histories and devoid of annotations" 皆正史中事而無注.[56] This suggests that these three categories were in fact later, possibly Song, additions to the original *Shishuo xinyu*. They were likely added in an effort to incorporate into the original structural

---

[56] As documented by Chao Gongwu in the *Junzhai dushu zhi* and Wang Zao in his *Shishuo xulu* 世說敘錄 (*Descriptive Records of the Shishuo*). See Wang Nengxian 王能憲, *Shishuo xinyu yanjiu* 世說新語研究 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 35-36.

framework of the text political and moral concepts such as "treachery" and "heresy," which figured prominently in Song political and historiographical discourse. Thus, it appears that the *Xu shishuo* represented a perspective in line with that of official historiographical practice, whereas the *Tang yulin* chose to offer an image of the Tang gathered from cultural archives outside of the official histories. While the *Xu shishuo* mainly contained excerpts taken from the dynastic histories, the *Tang yulin* consisted only of accounts selectively recycled from earlier anecdotal collections. It is worth noting that Wang Dang had indeed seen the *Xu shishuo*, since he refers to that text in the *Tang yulin*.[57] Therefore, it is possible that Wang Dang chose to cover a different type of material because he intended his compilation to complement the work of his contemporary.

## 4.2 The Encyclopedic Tradition

The structure and content of the *Tang yulin* was also influenced by the tendency to preserve knowledge and information that was characteristic of many Northern Song encyclopedic (*leishu* 類書) projects. Shortly after the founding of the Song dynasty, the court sponsored several large encyclopedic works, constructing its own comprehensive knowledge system, in an effort to legitimize its succession to the imperial authority and cultural heritage of the Tang.[58] The "Four Great Books of the Song" include the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records from the Era of Great Peace*), the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (*Imperial Overview from the Era of Great Peace*), the *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (*Finest Flowers from the Garden of Belles-Lettres*) compiled under the order of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997), and the *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (*Grand Tortoise of the Treasury of Books*) commissioned by Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997-1022). A large number of encyclopedias on special topics such as medicine, religious scriptures,

---

[57] See Wang Dang's original note inserted in anecdote #729 quoting a passage from the *Xu shishuo* about the luxury of An Lushan's 安祿山 (703-757) residence in Chang'an. Wang Dang, *Tang yulin jiaozheng*, *juan* 5, p. 499.

[58] Kurz argues that these compilation projects also served the political function of integrating the south, including its textual material, scholarship, and officials, into the political and cultural system of the Song. See Johannes L. Kurz, "The Politics of Collecting Knowledge: Song Taizong's Compilations Project," *T'oung Pao*, 87.4 (2001), pp. 289-316.

geographical knowledge, history, and the classics were also compiled during the early Northern Song.[59] These encyclopedic projects brought into Song culture a sense of control over knowledge, cultural heritage, and the memory of the past.

Song "brush jottings" appear to have been influenced by such a perspective in their treatment of materials; indeed, many seem to form their own miniature encyclopedic systems of categorization. For example, Ronald Egan points out that the Five Dynasties or early Northern Song work called *Qingyi lu* 清異錄 (*Records of the Pure and Unusual*), "basically mimics the standard categories of comprehensive *leishu*."[60] Other examples include the *Shengshui yantan lu* 澠水燕談錄 (*Record of Banquet Chats by the Sheng River*) compiled by Wang Pizhi 王闢之 (1032-?) shortly before Wang Dang's *Tang yulin*,[61] and Shen Kuo's 沈括 (1031-1095) *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (*Chatting with My Writing Brush at Dream Creek*).[62] Notably, Wang Dechen's 王得臣 (1036-1116) *Zhu shi* 麈史 (*The Sambar-tail Duster History*), another compilation from roughly the same time as the *Tang yulin*, sorted its contents into forty-four categories on state administration, rituals and regulations, personality types, the classics, the arts, music, poetry, animals and plants, as well as miscellaneous topics, in the manner typical of encyclopedic compilations.[63]

In expanding the *Shishuo xinyu* structure, the *Tang yulin* appears to have been influenced by the encyclopedic tradition as well. This method of organization can in fact be traced to one of the source texts of the *Tang yulin*, the *Fengshi wenjian ji*. While the last two *juan* of the *Fengshi wenjian ji* imitated the organizational system of the *Shishuo*

---

[59] For specific examples, see ibid., pp. 313-315.

[60] Often attributed to Tao Gu 陶穀 (903-970). Translations of titles by Ronald Egan. For a discussion on the encyclopedic style categories in the *Qingyi lu*, see Ronald Egan, "Shen Kuo Chats with Ink Stone and Writing Brush," in Jack W. Chen and David Schaberg (eds.), *Idle Talk: Gossip and Anecdote in Traditional China*, p. 133.

[61] Wang Pizhi, *Shengshui yantan lu*, ed. Lü Youren 呂友仁, in *Tang Song shiliao biji congkan* 唐宋史料筆記叢刊 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997). Translation of the title from Ronald Egan, "Shen Kuo Chats with Ink Stone and Writing Brush," p. 134.

[62] Shen Kuo, *Xin jiaozheng Mengxi bitan, Mengxi bitan buzheng gao* 新校正夢溪筆談·夢溪筆談補證稿, ed. Hu Daojing 胡道靜 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2011). Translation of the title and category names from Ronald Egan, "Shen Kuo Chats with Ink Stone and Writing Brush," pp. 132-153.

[63] Wang Dechen, *Zhu shi*, ed. Yu Zongxian 俞宗憲, in *Song Yuan biji congshu* 宋元筆記叢書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986).

*xinyu*, entries in the first eight *juan* of the work were categorized by subject in an encyclopedic style.[64] The *Tang yulin* took the *Shishuo xinyu* categories as the core of its structural framework, and expanded on them with seventeen categories influenced by two different types of encyclopedic schemes: one modeled the *Cefu yuangui*'s focus on the administration of the government and the character and responsibilities of ministers, and the other centered on the "trivial" knowledge recorded in many comprehensive encyclopedias, which included social customs, manmade objects, and the natural world. Several of the seventeen additional categories in the *Tang yulin*, such as "Zhongyi," "Weiwang," "Yuning," "Canren," and "Jice," can be traced to identical or similar subcategories in the *Cefu yuangui*, such as "Authority and Reputation," "Cannue" 殘虐 (Cruelty and Brutality), "Jianning," and "Moulüe." The second encyclopedic scheme, found in comprehensive encyclopedias that sought to encompass the "trivial" knowledge under heaven, brought to the structure of the *Tang yulin* additional categories such as "Records of Affairs," "Calligraphy and Painting," "Lisu," "Dongzhi," and "Zawu." These became almost conventional subjects that were frequently found in encyclopedic works as well as "brush jottings" on trivial knowledge during the Song. To take "Calligraphy and Painting" as an example, the encyclopedic *Taiping guangji* contains four *juan* on calligraphy and five *juan* on painting. This significantly contributed to the establishment of "Calligraphy and Painting" as a conventional category in many Song "brush jottings," including the *Mengxi bitan*, the *Shengshui yantan lu*, Wang Dechen's *Zhu shi,* and the *Tang yulin.* Another example would be the "Animals and Plants" category in the *Tang yulin*, the motivation for which goes beyond preserving memories of the past to show significant interest in understanding the natural world. Taxonomies of animals and plants developed very early in Chinese culture;[65] for example, various botanical and zoological categories can be found in the very first dictionary, the *Er ya* 爾雅. The *Taiping guangji* contains twelve *juan* just on "Caomu" 草木 (Grasses and Trees), plus multiple *juan* on

---

[64] For a detailed study on the *Fengshi wenjian ji*, see Luo Manling, "What One Has Heard and Seen: Intellectual Discourse in a Late Eighth-Century Miscellany," pp. 23-44.

[65] Zou Shuwen 鄒樹文, "Zhongguo gudai de dongwu fenleixue 中國古代的動物分類學," in Li Guohao 李國豪 et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo kejishi tansuo* 中國科技史探索 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), pp. 511-524; Joseph Needham, "The Development of Botanical Taxonomy in Chinese Culture," *Actes du Douzième Congrés International d'Histoire des Sciences*, 8 (1968), pp. 127-133.

"Qinniao" 禽鳥 (Fowl and Birds), "Chushou" 畜獸 (Livestock and Beasts), and "Kunchong" 昆蟲 (Insects and Worms), offering a rich basis for the generalized category "Animals and Plants" in "brush jottings." These examples suggest the *Tang yulin* was indeed influenced by the Northern Song tradition of encyclopedic compilation, and that Wang Dang likely intended to adjust the traditional structural framework of the *Shishuo xinyu* to address broader intellectual and cultural interests, such as the preservation of the fragmented cultural memory of the past and the organization of miscellaneous knowledge about human society and the natural world.

# 5. Conclusion

The *Tang yulin*, a Song dynasty collection of anecdotes about the Tang, is an interesting text not only for the information it contains about Tang history and culture, but also as a Song-era perspective on how the Tang should be remembered. In this sense, it presents a carefully formed anecdotal representation of the past. However, it remains an understudied text to this day. This is largely due to the miscellaneous nature of its content and its troublesome textual history. To prepare the way for further analysis of Song perspectives on the anecdotal representation of the Tang, this article has offered an introductory discussion of three issues foundational to further study of the text.

First, analysis of the textual history and various editions of the *Tang yulin* reveals that sections of the text may have been in circulation before the collection was completely finished, resulting in multiple editions, possibly in both manuscript and print form, during the early stages of its transmission.

Second, the *Tang yulin*'s selective use of its source material demonstrates its compiler's intention of supplementing the official histories and adapting earlier anecdotal representations of the Tang. As the main source text of the *Tang yulin*, the *Guoshi bu* represents a way of constructing an anecdotal image of the Tang which seems to be similar to that of the *Tang yulin*. This image of the Tang was constructed with material largely left out of the official historical discourse, material harvested from the mixed archives of cultural memory (though still filtering out stories of the vulgar, the fantastic, and the supernatural).

Finally, in terms of structure, the *Tang yulin*'s categorization system was based on that of the *Shishuo xinyu,* and also influenced by the organization of source texts such as the *Da Tang xinyu*, the *Xu shishuo*, and the encyclopedic compilations of Northern Song times.


(Proofreaders: Liu Si-yu, Liao An-ting)

# References

## 1. Classic Works

*Zhongxing guange shumu* 中興館閣書目, in Tuotuo 脫脫 et al., *Songshi Yiwenzhi guangbian* 宋史藝文志廣編, vol. 2. Taipei 臺北: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1963.

Kong Pingzhong 孔平仲. *Wanwei biecang chuanxie Song keben Xu shishuo* 宛委別藏傳寫宋刻本續世說. Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1935.

Li Tao 李燾. *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編, eds. Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 et al. Taipei 臺北: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1961.

Li Zhao 李肇. *Tang guoshi bu* 唐國史補. Shanghai 上海: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1979.

Li Zhiliang 李之亮 (ed.). *Su Shi wenji biannian jianzhu* 蘇軾文集編年箋註. Chengdu 成都: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2011.

Liu Su 劉肅. *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語, eds. Xu Denan 許德楠 and Li Dingxia 李鼎霞. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1984.

Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 and Song Qi 宋祁. *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1975.

Shao Bo 邵博. *Shaoshi wenjian houlu* 邵氏聞見後錄, eds. Li Jianxiong 李劍雄 and Liu Dequan 劉德權. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1983.

Shen Kuo 沈括. *Xin jiaozheng Mengxi bitan, Mengxi bitan buzheng gao* 新校正夢溪筆談‧夢溪筆談補證稿, ed. Hu Daojing 胡道靜. Shanghai 上海: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 2011.

Tuotuo 脫脫 et al. *Song shi* 宋史. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1977, rpt. 1997.

Wang Dang 王讜. *Tang yulin jiaozheng* 唐語林校證, ed. Zhou Xunchu 周勛初. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1987.

Wang Dechen 王得臣. *Zhu shi* 麈史, ed. Yu Zongxian 俞宗憲, in *Song Yuan biji congshu* 宋元筆記叢書. Shanghai 上海: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1986.

Wang Pizhi 王闢之. *Shengshui yantan lu* 澠水燕談錄, ed. Lü Youren 呂友仁, in *Tang Song shiliao biji congkan* 唐宋史料筆記叢刊. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1997.

## 2. Modern Works

De Weerdt, Hilde. "Byways in the Imperial Chinese Information Order: The Dissemination and Commercial Publication of State Documents," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 66.1, 2006, pp. 145-188. doi: 10.2307/25066802

Egan, Ronald. "Shen Kuo Chats with Ink Stone and Writing Brush," in Jack W. Chen and David Schaberg (eds.), *Idle Talk: Gossip and Anecdote in Traditional China*. Berkeley: Global, Area and International Archive, University of California Press, 2014, pp. 132-153.

Ho Tzu-hui 何姿慧. "*Tang yulin* suojian Tangdai shehui shenghuo shiliao kaoshu 唐語林所見唐代社會生活史料考述," Master Thesis, Taichung 臺中: Guoli zhongxing daxue 國立中興大學, 1998.

Kuang Mingyue 鄺明月. "*Tang yulin* yanjiu 唐語林研究," Master Thesis, Wuhan 武漢: Huazhong shifan daxue 華中師範大學, 2003.

Kurz, Johannes L. "The Politics of Collecting Knowledge: Song Taizong's Compilations Project," *T'oung Pao*, 87.4, 2001, pp. 289-316. doi: 10.1163/156853201804638

Lu, Sheldon Hsiao-peng. *From Historicity to Fictionality: The Chinese Poetics of Narrative*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Luo Manling. "What One Has Heard and Seen: Intellectual Discourse in a Late Eighth-Century Miscellany," *Tang Studies*, 30, 2012, pp. 23-44. doi: 10.1179/0737503412Z.0000000002

Mather, Richard B. *Shih-shuo hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies and University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Needham, Joseph. "The Development of Botanical Taxonomy in Chinese Culture," *Actes du Douzième Congrés International d'Histoire des Sciences*, 8, 1968, pp. 127-133.

Poon Ming-sun. "Books and Printing in Sung China," Ph.D. Dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979.

Qian Nanxiu. *Spirit and Self in Medieval China: The Shih-shuo hsin-yu and Its Legacy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Tian Xiaofei. "Tales from Borderland: Anecdotes in Early Medieval China," in Jack W. Chen and David Schaberg (eds.), *Idle Talk: Gossip and Anecdote in Traditional China*. Berkeley: Global, Area and International Archive, University of California Press, 2014, pp. 38-54.

Wang Nengxian 王能憲. *Shishuo xinyu yanjiu* 世說新語研究. Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, 2000.

Weng T'ung-wen 翁同文. "Wang Shen shengping kaolue 王詵生平考略," in *Yilin congkao* 藝林叢考. Taipei 臺北: Lianjing chuban 聯經出版, 1977, pp. 71-104.

Yan Zhongqi 顏中其. "Guanyu *Tang yulin* zuozhe Wang Dang 關於唐語林作者王讜," *Zhongguo lishi wenxian yanjiu jikan* 中國歷史文獻研究集刊, 1, 1980, pp. 219-224.

Yu Zhixin 余志新. "*Tang yulin* ciyu zhaji 唐語林詞語札記," *Chuzhou xueyuan xuebao* 滁州學院學報, 9.5, 2007, pp. 31-32, 73.

Zeng Lamei 曾臘梅. "*Tang yulin* ciyu yu *Hanyu dacidian* dingbu 唐語林詞語與漢語大辭典訂補," Master Thesis, Nanchang 南昌: Jiangxi shifan daxue 江西師範大學, 2009.

Zhao Yanli 趙艷麗. "*Tang yulin* cihui yanjiu 唐語林詞彙研究," Master Thesis, Chengdu 成都: Sichuan daxue 四川大學, 2007.

Zheng Liping 鄭麗萍. "*Tang yulin* fuyinci yanjiu 唐語林複音詞研究," Master Thesis, Hefei 合肥: Anhui daxue 安徽大學, 2007.

Zhong Xiaoyong 鐘小勇. "Luelun *Tang yulin* zai jindai hanyu cihui yanjiu zhong de jiazhi 略論唐語林在近代漢語詞匯研究中的價值," *Suihua xueyuan xuebao* 綏化學院學報, 25.1, 2005, pp. 113-117.

Zou Shuwen 鄒樹文. "Zhongguo gudai de dongwu fenleixue 中國古代的動物分類學," in Li Guohao 李國豪 et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo kejishi tansuo* 中國科技史探索. Hong Kong 香港: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1986, pp. 511-524.

# 《唐語林》介紹：

# 文本歷史，材料來源，及所受影響

秦　穎

哈佛大學費正清中國研究中心

ying_qin@fas.harvard.edu

## 摘　　要

　　《唐語林》是一部關於唐代軼事的宋代筆記。到目前為止，學界對它的研究還不很充分。本文就研究《唐語林》的三個基本問題進行了初步的探討：首先，分析了它的文本歷史和版本；然後，指陳了這部筆記選材的重要面向；最後，討論了《唐語林》的結構框架可能受到哪些影響。本文指出，《唐語林》通過軼事來構造唐代形象的做法，和它的最主要材料來源《國史補》有類似之處。就文本結構以及構建唐代軼事式的文化形象而言，《唐語林》則體現了回歸《世說新語》框架的傾向。在擴展《世說新語》的結構框架時，《唐語林》又同時受到《大唐新語》、《續世說》，和北宋類書編撰傳統的影響。

**關鍵詞：**《唐語林》，《國史補》，《大唐新語》，《世說新語》，軼事，筆記