In The Eye Of The Selector: Ancient-Style Prose Anthologies In Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) China

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Abstract
The rapid growth of woodblock printing in sixteenth-century China not only transformed wenzhang ("literature") as a category of knowledge, it also transformed the communities in which knowledge of wenzhang circulated. Twentieth-century scholarship described this event as an expansion of the non-elite reading public coinciding with the ascent of vernacular fiction and performance literature over stagnant classical forms. Because this narrative was designed to serve as a native genealogy for the New Literature Movement, it overlooked the crucial role of guwen ("ancient-style prose," a term which denoted the everyday style of classical prose used in both preparing for the civil service examinations as well as the social exchange of letters, gravestone inscriptions, and other occasional prose forms among the literati) in early modern literary culture. This dissertation revises that narrative by showing how a diverse range of social actors used anthologies of ancient-style prose to build new forms of literary knowledge and shape new literary publics. In this dissertation, I focus on a corpus of roughly 100 anthologies dating from the early sixteenth century to the fall of the Ming in 1644. I begin with an overview of what a prose anthology was, how and where they were produced, and what kinds of selection strategies their editors employed. I first argue that government schools served as sites for reconstructing a more or less uniform canon of classical prose across the empire, and demonstrate how the figure of the anthologist enabled printers to codify seemingly universal "rules" (fa) of prose for an empire-wide student reading public. Having delineated this process, I then turn to a group of xiaopin ("minor appraisal") anthologies produced by commercial printers in the Jiangnan region, and argue for reading their contents as a feminized ancient-style prose counter-canon embodying the values of an urban counterculture which valorized women writers. Thus, what twentieth-century scholarship viewed as an encounter between the individual writer and a monolithic tradition is better understood, I argue, as the emergence of an empire-wide student reading public followed by the creation of a print counterculture, in which male anthologists used female prose to signify alterity.

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Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Porcelain. A short introduction. The early Ming dynasty was a period of cultural restoration and expansion. The reestablishment of an indigenous Chinese ruling house led to the imposition of court-dictated styles in the arts. Painters recruited by the Ming court were instructed to return to the styles of the earlier Southern Song (1127–1279) Imperial Painting Academy. Large-scale landscapes, flower-and-bird compositions, and figural narratives were favored as images that would glorify the new dynasty. Hongwu period (1368-98).

The Jingdezhen kilns suffered a temporary setback during this time. The Ming dynasty ruled China from 1368 to 1644 CE, replacing the Mongol Yuan dynasty which had been in place since the 13th century CE. Despite challenges... Historical Overview. The Ming dynasty was established following the collapse of the Mongol rule of China, known as the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 CE). The Yuan had been beset by famines, plagues, floods, widespread banditry, and peasant uprisings. The Mongol rulers also squabbled amongst themselves for power and failed to quash numerous rebellions, including that perpetrated by a group known as the Red Turban Movement led by a peasant called Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398 CE). The Ming dynasty (/mɪŋ/), officially the Great Ming, was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644 following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty. The Ming dynasty was the last imperial dynasty of China ruled by Han Chinese. Although the primary capital of Beijing fell in 1644 to a rebellion led by Li Zicheng (who established the Shun dynasty, soon replaced by the Manchu-led Qing dynasty), numerous rump regimes ruled by remnants of the Ming imperial family—collectively called the Southern