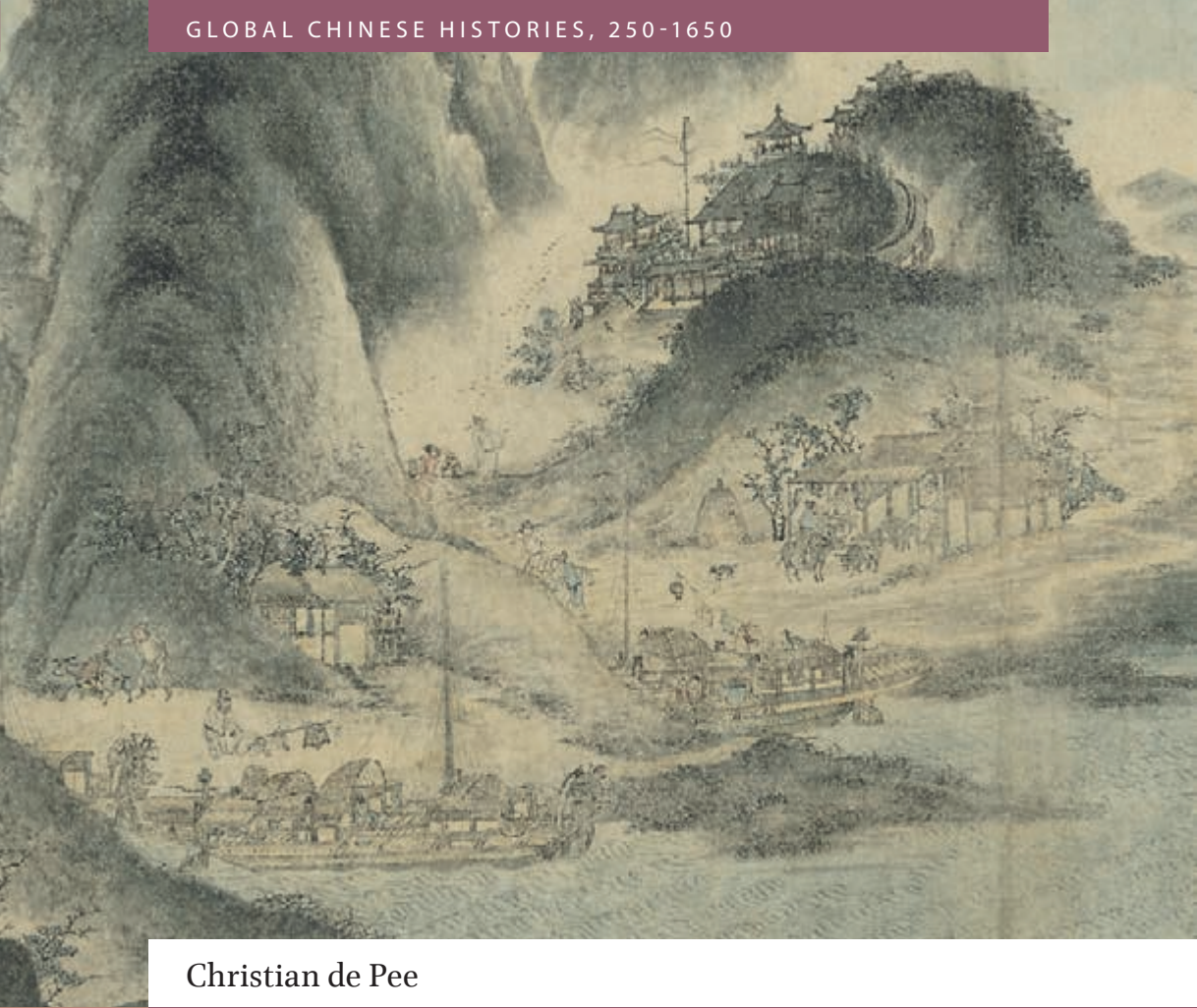


GLOBAL CHINESE HISTORIES, 250-1650



Christian de Pee

# Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in Middle-Period China, 800-1100

Amsterdam  
University  
Press

Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis in  
Middle-Period China, 800–1100 CE

# Global Chinese Histories, 250-1650

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*Christian de Pee*

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Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling. Street names must speak to the urban wanderer like the snapping of dry twigs, and little streets in the heart of the city must reflect the times of day, for him, as clearly as a mountain valley.

Walter Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (1938)

I walk among the enormous crowds of the capital, engulfed by the affairs of man. My former learning has been lost, and it has been a long time since I heard the language of humaneness and propriety.

Ouyang Xiu, "Reply to Song Xian" (1056)



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## Preface

The circumstances under which I wrote *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* differed sharply from the circumstances under which I wrote my first book, *The Writing of Weddings in Middle-Period China*. Most of that first book I wrote while I was unemployed, living in a tin-mining town in Southwest China. When I finished the manuscript and sent it to a press, only two other people had read any part of it.

This second book, by contrast, I conceived, researched, and wrote as a member of the Department of History at the University of Michigan, encouraged by kind, gifted colleagues and supported by internal funding as well as by outside institutions. I want to begin these acknowledgments by expressing my gratitude to the many dozens of my colleagues in the Department of History, current and former, who by their questions at talks and during workshops, by their writings, by their presentations, and by their conversation have increased the scope and depth of my research and writing. That their number is large is for once an inconvenience, because it prevents me from naming them all. I wish, however, to commemorate here with gratitude a number of colleagues whose friendship and insights gave me particular encouragement during the period in which I conceived and wrote this book: John Carson, Dario Gaggio, Will Glover, Webb Keane, Farina Mir, Rudolf Mrazek, Helmut Puff, and Mrinalini Sinha.

The research for *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* began during a semester of nurturance leave in the winter semester of 2008, in books purchased with the proceeds of a William T. Ludolph, Jr., Junior Faculty Development Award. Intending to write a book about representations of imperial power, I published two articles about eleventh-century capital cities—one about the Western Capital at Luoyang, the other about the Eastern Capital at Kaifeng. During the research for these two articles, I found that descriptions of urban streetscapes were few and wondered how and when the urban streetscape acquired a place in Middle-Period literature. I abandoned my plans for a book about imperial representations of power and decided instead to write a book about shifts in the geographic orientation of literary genres that allowed the emergence of the urban streetscape into writing. By reading through the collected works of individual authors, I hoped to discover in which genres literati first wrote the cityscape and thus to trace the antecedents of densely urban texts such as *A Dream of Splendor in the Eastern Capital* (*Dongjing meng Hua lu*, 1148).

During the 2010–2011 academic year, a Faculty Fellowship at the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan provided me with the time and the peace of mind to read through the collected works from the ninth and tenth centuries, from the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) through the early Song (960–1279). The collected works of the eleventh century I read in the 2013–2014 academic year, supported by a Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship for Recently Tenured Scholars from the American Council of Learned Societies, with residence at the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. The Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, Germany, where I was a Visiting Scholar during the 2016–2017 academic year, offered an ideal setting in which to think through the outline and arguments of the book and to write the first two chapters as well as two related articles. The third chapter, the introduction, and the conclusion I wrote in Paris and Leiden in the summer and fall of 2019, during a sabbatical leave, affiliated with the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden. My sojourns in Berlin and Paris were also supported in part by a grant from the Associate Professor Support Fund at the University of Michigan.

I am very grateful to all these institutions and organizations for their material support as well as for the trust they placed in my research and my abilities. I feel particularly privileged that this trust and this support, conjoined with the grant of tenure at the University of Michigan in 2011, gave me an opportunity to engage in long-term, open-ended inquiry. This allowed me to follow shifts in the geographic orientation of literary genres through 155 collected works and to postpone writing up my findings until the narrative had become clear. The narrative that emerged as I read through many thousands of poems and through hundreds of prefaces, commemorations, memorials, letters, epitaphs, colophons, and other compositions, was more complex and more interesting than the linear development of antecedents to the *Dream of Splendor* that I had predicted in my early proposals. I found that the urban streetscape began to emerge into writing when literati turned their backs on the Tang capital Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province), after its destruction in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, and that the cityscape became an acceptable topic of literary composition during a period of intellectual optimism, when literati endeavored to distinguish themselves from social competitors by their taste and connoisseurship, and tried to discern in the urban movement of people, goods, and money the enduring, immanent pattern of a moral cosmos. When the failure of economic reforms in the late eleventh century revealed their inability to penetrate this pattern, and the tautologies of factional debate

exposed fissures in the classicist foundation of political argument, literati lost interest in the city as a place for understanding themselves and the world. Although the *Dream of Splendor* and similar texts of subsequent centuries used some of the literary techniques developed by literati during the eleventh century, they belong to a separate ideological and literary tradition: their pseudonymous authors did not inquire into the moral self or a cosmic pattern, but delighted in imperial pomp and conspicuous display.

None of these grants and leaves would have been processed and much of this research could not have been undertaken without the dedicated assistance of the administrative staff and the librarians at the University of Michigan, the National Humanities Center, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden. It is not possible to acknowledge everyone on these sometimes numerous staffs, but I do want to express my gratitude to Shelley Anzalone, Nan Flood, Connie Hamlin, Sandra van der Horst, Karin Weninger, Lois Whittington, and Diane Wyatt for their patience and expedience with paperwork, and to Liangyu Fu for the speed and resourcefulness with which she purchased or borrowed materials I requested.

I am grateful also to the audiences that lent a critical ear at the talks and presentations I gave about this research as it developed, and to the readers who cast a critical eye on the papers I wrote for a number of workshops. Because the faculty and graduate students at the University of Michigan have been my most important intellectual community, it is fitting that about half of my talks and presentations have taken place on its campus, at the Critical Conversations in the Department of English Language and Literature, the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, the Institute for the Humanities, the Kemp Symposium on History and Geography, the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies, the Medieval Lunch Series (and its predecessor, the Monday Medieval Brownbag), the Premodern Colloquium, the Symposium on Anthropology and History, and the conferences Any Way, Shape, or Form, and When Shall West Lake Be Without Song or Dance?

Audience members, fellow panelists, and discussants raised important questions and suggested additional sources at the 14th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia, the 2009 Annual Meeting of the International Conference for Eastern Studies in Tokyo, the 2015 and 2016 Annual Meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, the 2017 Tang–Song Transition Workshop, and the workshop Mapping the Empire’s Watery Ways: The Chinese Grand Canal in History, Literature, and Art at Princeton University. I have vivid, grateful memories also of the discussions and

conversations with the faculty members and graduate students who kindly invited me to join their intellectual community for a day or two, at the China Humanities Seminar at Harvard University, the China Seminar Series at Leiden University, the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, the Department of Philosophy at Central European University, the East Asian Studies Program at Princeton University, the Institute for Chinese Studies at the University of Oxford, the Triangle China Forum at Duke University, and the Workshop on Visual and Material Perspectives on East Asia at the University of Chicago.

The first written iterations of this research, subsequently published as articles, I prepared for conferences and workshops: “Nature’s Capital” for *When Shall West Lake Be Without Song or Dance?* at the University of Michigan and for the 2014 Conference on Middle Period China, 800–1400, at Harvard University; “Urban Acupuncture” for *City and Society: The Care of the Self—A Comparative Examination of Eastern and Western Practices from Confucius to Foucault and Beyond*, at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden; and “Circulation and Flow” for the Department III Colloquium at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. Participants at other conferences and workshops read finished chapters of the book manuscript. The Global City Represented reading group, organized by Dana Sajdi at Boston College, read the introduction and Chapter 1. Reframed sections of Chapter 2 became papers for the conferences *Productivity of the Everyday: Drama, Ritual, and Food in Medieval and Early Modern Sinitic Culture*, at Arizona State University, and *Comparative Approaches to Chinese and Byzantine Imperial Systems: Literati, Courts, Cities, Soldiers*, at the University of Edinburgh. Chapter 3 received extended discussion at the Premodern Healthscaping research group at the University of Amsterdam and at the Economic and Social History Seminar Series at Utrecht University.

If one of the pleasures of giving talks and presentations is briefly to become part of a different intellectual community, it is a particular privilege to become a member of such communities for a longer period. It was a privilege and a pleasure to spend nine months in Department III of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG), and to think with Dagmar Schäfer and the many postdoctoral fellows and visitors about planning and predictions, hydraulics and monetary policy, and many other subjects, in the vibrant, creative, trusting intellectual environment that Dagmar Schäfer has created and encouraged. The environment of Department III shaped the structure, the argument, the substance, and the mood of this book. Following this stay at the MPIWG, through the exchange program

between the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and the University of Michigan, I spent a month at EHESS in Paris, where I gave four lectures about the chapters I had written and planned in Berlin. I feel fortunate and grateful that I was able to spend many hours with Christian Lamouroux, talking about literary genres, economic history, historiography, and many other matters, alone or in the company of his colleagues Alain Arrault, Stéphane Feuillas, and Pénélope Riboud. In Leiden, it was a joy to continue long-standing conversations with Wilt Idema, Maghiel van Crevel, and Harriet Zurndorfer, and to begin new ones with Jeroen Duindam and Claire Weeda.

After I completed the manuscript in December 2019, I sent it to a number of friends. Michael Nylan and Dana Sajdi responded with critical comments and kind encouragement. My graduate students Richard Reid and Jian Zhang added to this encouragement by finding the matter and the manner of the manuscript useful to their dissertations. Sarah Schneewind urged greater clarity in the exposition, in a series of characteristically curt, perceptive comments she sent me before I submitted the manuscript to Amsterdam University Press. I am grateful to Shannon Cunningham, Victoria Blud, and the editorial board of the series *Global Chinese Histories, 250–1650*, for their comments and for selecting Xiaolin Duan and Stephen H. West as reviewers of the manuscript, and to Xiaolin Duan and Steve West themselves for their insightful summaries and detailed comments. I also want to thank Steve West more generally for his support and companionship over the last two decades. His articles on the *Dream of Splendor* and other urban texts set an example by their broad erudition, subtle insight, and elegant prose, and his praise and encouragement of my work provided support and comfort during difficult years in my career. I am grateful to the Kenneth G. Lieberthal and Richard H. Rogel Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan and to the University of Michigan Office of Research for awarding me subvention grants toward the publication of this book in Open Access.

Although the circumstances under which I wrote this second book differed markedly from those under which I wrote the first, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* consciously and deliberately replicates many of the methods and themes of that earlier book. Like *The Writing of Weddings in Middle Period China*, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* inquires into literary genres as a form of mediation between writing and reading, between text and space, and between the present and the past. It uses the “balanced periods” and idioms of eighteenth-century English prose in order to approximate the expositions of the book to its translations and paraphrases, and thereby to give form to a dialectical, self-reflexive hermeneutics and to unrealized

“potentialities of the present.”<sup>1</sup> *The Writing of Weddings* demonstrated that this method and style allowed the recovery of discursive formations and historical meanings that universalist categories from the modern social sciences had distorted and overwritten, and thereby enabled the use of sources that earlier studies of Middle-Period weddings had not been able to accommodate, such as engagement letters and almanacs. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis*, similarly, makes new materials available for urban history and for economic history, notably poems and metaphors, and reveals direct connections between well-known developments of the eleventh century that are rarely discussed together in the scholarship on the period, such as Ancient Prose and civil engineering, or connoisseurship and economic reforms. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* coordinates these themes and brings them together, as once they were coordinated and brought together in the streets and offices of Middle-Period cities.

Like *The Writing of Weddings*, moreover, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* has a strong autobiographical element. When I wrote my dissertation at Columbia University, I discovered that the architecture of Manhattan helped me see the structure and proportions of my chapters, and that I wrote sentences while I walked along the streets, as my thought kept pace with my steps. *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* I conceived and wrote on walks through Berlin, Paris, and Leiden, where I also read the work of writers who were walkers, especially Honoré de Balzac, Walter Benjamin, Franz Hessel, and Siegfried Kracauer. The prominent quotations from these authors in the following pages not only announce the method of the book, but connect this book itself to urban pavements and commemorate my gratitude for the opportunities I have received to think, read, write, and walk in some of the great cities of the world: “for that is how you see yourself whenever you stop to think about who you are: a man who walks, a man who has spent his life walking through the streets of cities.”<sup>2</sup>

1 Ricoeur 1981, 295.

2 Auster, *Winter Journal*, 59.

# Introduction: The Emergence of the City into Writing

## Abstract

During the eleventh century, literati of the Song Empire changed the geographic orientation of literary genres to make a place for the city in writing. An approach to urban history through literary geography preserves historical connections between writing and walking and between text and the city, thereby resisting the tautologies of social science and the homologies of modernity. Based on an analysis of 155 collected works (*wenji*) from ca. 800 CE to ca. 1100 CE, *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* contributes to a non-linear comparative history of cities. The introduction illustrates this method by demonstrating that the “ward system” of the Tang Empire and its collapse during the Song dynasty, alleged by Katō Shigeshi, are figments of social-science theory.

**Keywords:** Song dynasty; cities; urban history; urban literature; literary geography; Katō Shigeshi

Half-way down the Rue Saint-Denis, almost at the corner of the Rue du Petit-Lion, there stood formerly one of those delightful houses which enable historians to reconstruct old Paris by analogy. The threatening walls of this tumbledown abode seemed to have been decorated with hieroglyphics. For what other name could the passer-by give to the Xs and Vs which the horizontal or diagonal timbers traced on the front, outlined by little parallel cracks in the plaster?

Honoré de Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket* (1829)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Balzac, *La Maison du chat-qui-pelote*, 34, as translated in Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket*, 16.



In the course of the eleventh century, the cities of the Song Empire (960–1279) emerged into writing. Literati in prior centuries had written about streets and markets only in the past tense, in poems about lost youth, in tales about indiscreet students, in memoirs about ruined capitals. Exiled officials in the ninth century gazed from afar toward the capital Chang'an (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province), longing to return among its towering palaces and erudite officials, but when they lived in the capital they wrote about visits to gardens and excursions into the countryside, about elegant gatherings in imperial parks and leisurely rides under blossoming trees. They represented Chang'an as a cosmic city, a city of perfectly created landscapes, where human civilization and seasonal prospects appeared in their true form. The traffic they sent rushing through the avenues blurred the contours of the capital in a cloud of dust and metaphor. After rebel armies destroyed Chang'an toward the end of the ninth century, however, literati turned their backs on the ravaged capital and paid attention to the provincial cities that became the capitals of a succession of kingdoms and empires. Grown by the increased commerce of the ninth century, these cities during the tenth century acquired political stature and cultural prestige, as ambitious rulers raised powerful armies, built irrigation networks, recruited experienced officials, and erected imposing temples. After the founders of the Song Empire had defeated these rival states, between 960 and 979, the former capitals retained their prestige and prosperity. Whereas the literati of the Tang Empire (618–907) had gazed toward Chang'an as the single center of power and learning, literati of the Song Empire looked outward from their capital, Kaifeng, to see cities large and small, active and wealthy, connected by an efficient network of roads and waterways. And as they looked outward from the capital, they also gazed down into the streets to see myriad rooftops, crowded markets, and the patterns of urban life.

It is not a given that cities must be represented in writing. Chang'an was a splendid metropolis of towering pagodas and seductive entertainments. Its markets attracted traders from Sogdia and Samarkand. Its roads and rivers delivered sufficient produce to feed a population of some 600,000.<sup>2</sup> Yet literati of the ninth century did not deem these markets or these shipments worthy of literary commemoration.<sup>3</sup> Literati in the eleventh century, in contrast, wrote hymns about transport canals and odes to watermills. They found beauty in a view "onto official residences and commoner houses, onto gardens with ponds and trees in temple grounds, onto loud

2 See Thilo 2006, 1.

3 Cf. Thilo 2006, 183.

gatherings in the market, onto oblique wards and crooked alleys,” and in the prospect of “Fujianese merchants and overseas traders, wind-blown sails and ocean-going ships coming and going on the endless waves of the rivers, amid dispersing clouds of smoke and fog.”<sup>4</sup> Although they closely identified with the poets of the ninth century, men of letters in the eleventh century nonetheless changed the geographic orientation of the literary genres they had inherited from the Tang in order to make a place for the city in writing. Poets of the Tang had looked away from urban traffic to the tangled shade of locust trees, and they climbed city walls in order to gaze onto the countryside. When poets of the Song stood on city walls, they looked into the city as well as onto the countryside, and when they rode through the streets they remarked on peddlers and markets as well as on willow catkins drifting on the wind. The emergence of urban streets into writing resulted, therefore, not from a change in the cities themselves, but from a deliberate decision by Song literati to treat the commercial streetscape as matter suitable for literature.<sup>5</sup>

Their purpose in writing the city was ideological. Song literati admitted the commercial streetscape into writing in order to contain it. On the one hand, as accomplished authors, they asserted on paper a distinction that eluded them in the avenues, assuring themselves that they stood apart as individuals in the anonymous crowd, and that their taste and their talent possessed an absolute value, safe from fluctuating prices and changing fashions. On the other hand, as imperial officials, they tried to reduce the confounding movement of people, goods, and money through their jurisdictions to an immanent cosmic pattern, analogous to the flow of water or the circulation of bodily essences, so that they might ensure the health of the body politic by a moral economy of perfect distribution. The literati of the eleventh century differed from the literati of the ninth century, in other words, not because they delighted in achievements of human artifice that their predecessors had disparaged, but because they recognized natural patterns in traffic as well as in gardens, in the daily cycle of commerce as well as in the annual cycle of the seasons.

By the end of the eleventh century, however, literati perceived that they had failed in their purpose. Instead of having set themselves apart

4 Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 23.737 (靜難軍靈峰寺新閣記); Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 40.585 (有美堂記).

5 On the geographic orientation of genres, see Bakhtin 1981, 84–85; Hanks 2000, 133, 161; Moretti 1998, 5, 35. On the historical significance of changes in genre, see Beebee 1994, 18–19; Dagognet 1973, 167–168; Hanks 2000, 161; Moretti 2005, 35–64; Newman 2007, 8, 11.

by the rarity of their talent and by the refinement of their taste, their taste had drawn them into the competitive consumption they had intended to avoid, and their talent, subject after all to erring judgment and passing fashion, resembled an ordinary commodity rather than priceless jade. The cosmic pattern they had sought in the flow of goods and money, although strongly intuited, proved impossible to know with certainty. This inability to discern an immanent moral pattern in the economy defeated their hopes of restoring the perfect governance of the ancient kings, as debates about economic reform divided officials into bitter factions. Toward the end of the eleventh century, literati withdrew from the streets and markets to search for absolute values within themselves, and to contemplate the moral pattern inherent in the landscape and in the actions of their family and community. The famous urban texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as *A Dream of Splendor in the Eastern Capital* (*Dongjing meng Hua lu*, 1148) and *The Splendid Scenery of the Capital* (*Ducheng jisheng*, 1235), were written by pseudonymous authors who, far from seeking a sustaining moral pattern, delighted in superficial displays of sumptuous wealth.

This central narrative of *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis*, a narrative of hopes raised and defeated in the city, derives in the main from a perusal of the collected works (*wenji* 文集) of 155 authors. The collected works that posterity has preserved from the late Tang and the early Song (from ca. 800 to ca. 1100 CE) are not representative of these two eras, but their selective transmission has paradoxically made these two bodies of collected works eminently comparable. The collected works of Tang authors survive because they were selected and printed (from various and sometimes partial manuscripts) by literati in the eleventh century.<sup>6</sup> Song literati largely neglected

6 See, for example, Bao Rong, *Bao Rong shiji*, preface, 1ab; Du Mu, *Du Mu ji*, preface, 11, II.1299; Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji*, preface, 19; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, preface, 14–17, 22–23; Li Shangyin, *Li Shangyin shiji*, preface, 13–14; Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 34.410; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 11.2a–3b; Meng Jiao, *Meng Jiao ji*, preface, 23; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 2.10a–11a, *fu*.1b–2a, *fu*.7a; Shen Yazhi, *Shen Xiaxian ji*, preface, 12; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 98.977–978; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.171–172; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.21.1407; Wang Anshi, *Wang Linchuan quanji*, 84.536; Zeng Gong, *Zeng Gong ji*, 12.193–194. On the invention of Tang literature by Song literati, see Nugent 2010, 1–4; Shields 2017b, and in progress. This not to say that Tang authors did not compile their own collected works or the collected works of others. See, for example, Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.16.349, I.21.454, I.70.1479, I.70.1499, II.2.1553; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, I.18.349, II.6.519; Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*, 7.426–427, 7.431; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 19.224–225, 19.226–240, 20.251; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 21.581–582; Lu Guimeng, *Fuli xiansheng wenji*, 16.1ab; Sikong Tu, *Sikong Biaosheng wenji*, 887 preface; Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji*, 35.405–406, 51.554–555. Cf. Nugent 2010, 236–284; Shields 2015, 10–11. On the preference for manuscript among the Tang elite, see Barrett 2008, 135–137; Chia and De Weerd 2011, 8–10; Drège 1991a, 266–267.

the dense, allusive compositions in parallel prose produced within the great families who dominated court politics during the Tang.<sup>7</sup> Instead, they printed the works of men like themselves, who had attained fame and office by competing in examinations of classical learning and literary skill, and who had endeavored to revive the simpler, irregular style of ancient texts, which they had called Ancient Prose (*guwen* 古文).<sup>8</sup> The generations that, from the twelfth century onward, transmitted the collected works of the eleventh century likewise gave preference to writers of Ancient Prose, not only because they admired their literary talent and respected their canonical learning, but also because they commended their opposition to the economic reforms of Wang Anshi (1021–1086), which reforms these later ages blamed for the decline of the Song and for its defeat in 1127 by the Jin Empire (1115–1234).<sup>9</sup>

Selective transmission has thus preserved for the present the works of writers of Ancient Prose from the ninth century as well as the works of eleventh-century literati who identified with them: some forty-five collected works from the ninth century, some twelve from the tenth century, and

7 The exception is Li Shangyin, *Fannan wenji*.

8 For examples of Song literati identifying with Tang literati, see Bi Zhongyou, *Xitai ji*, 6.34ab; Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.12; Guo Xiangzheng, *Guo Xiangzheng ji*, 2.34, 7.143–155; Han Qi, *Han Weigong ji*, 10.153; Han Wei, *Nanyang ji*, 5.11b–12a; Huang Chang, *Yanshan xiansheng wenji*, 21.10b; Huang Tingjian, *Huang Tingjian shiji zhu*, 12.443–446; Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi ji*, 1.2.29, 1.4.35, 1.11.78; Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, 16.15a; Li Zhi, *Ji'nan ji*, 2.18a; Liu Kai, *Hedong xiansheng ji*, 2.1b–8b; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 7.6b–8a, 17.11a–12a; Mei Yaochen, *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu*, 15.287, 1046 preface; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 5.86–87, *fu*.5.2756; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 1.7–10, 2.17; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong ji*, 13.14a, 65.9b–11a; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 84.951–952; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 38.2054; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, 17.508–510, 67.2101–2102, 67.2122; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.21.1399; Tian Xi, *Xianping ji*, 15.3b; Wang Ling, *Wang Ling ji*, 16.282–285; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, I.3.8a–9a, I.4.3b–6b, I.6.6b–7a, I.9.19b–20b, II.7.12a; Wen Tong, *Wen Tong quanji biannian jiaozhu*, 25.789; Wen Yanbo, *Lugong wenji*, 7.8b–9a, 7.19ab; Zhao Xiang, *Nanyang ji*, 4.29–30, 1065 colophon; Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 3.42–47; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 7.86–87, 8.105, 24.430–431; Zheng Xie, *Yunxi ji*, 14.2a–3b; Zu Wuzhe, *Longxue wenji*, 9.5a, 10.8b–9b. For narratives connecting the Ancient Prose of the Song to the Ancient Prose of the Tang, see Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Zhongyan quanji*, 8.183; Han Qi, *Anyang ji*, 47.1a–6b, 50.7b; Li Gou, *Li Gou ji*, 27.305–306; Liu Kai, *Hedong ji*, 1000 preface, 2.1b–8b; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 2.10a–11a, *fu*.5b–6a; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 73.1056–1057; Qisong, *Tanjin wenji*, 1075 preface, 8.1a; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 12.135–139; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 4.39–40, 13.165, 1051 preface, 250; Su Zhe, *Luancheng ji*, II.23.1432–1433; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, II. preface, 3ab; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 993 preface; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, preface, 1ab; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 3.7a.

9 On the politics of transmission after the eleventh century see, for example, Hua Zhen, *Yunxi jushi ji*, *Siku quanshu* preface, 2ab; Wang Anshi, *Wang Jing Wengong shi jianzhu*, 1214 preface, 1301 preface. See also Hartman 2021, 90–93, 248–273.

some ninety-eight from the eleventh century. How the extant works from the ninth century compare to their manuscript originals must remain largely a matter for speculation. The paltry number of collected works from the tenth century is due in large part to a palace fire in 1015 that destroyed many unique manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> Of the ninety-eight collected works from the eleventh century, more than half survive in an incomplete form, twenty-four having been lost and recompiled (mostly by descendants of the author, after the original works of their ancestor had perished in the wars of the 1120s) and twenty-six having been partly reconstituted during the eighteenth century by the editors of the *Complete Books of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu*, 1782), from entries in the *Yongle Encyclopedia* (*Yongle dadian*, 1408).<sup>11</sup> “Literati,” in this book, refers in the first instance to the authors of these collected works, all of whom were men, almost all of whom had passed the imperial examinations, almost all of whom served as imperial officials, and most of whom had committed themselves to the revival of Ancient Prose.

The collected works extant from the late Tang and the early Song do not offer a representative record of the period, let alone a comprehensive one. They transmit a selection—sometimes a very incomplete selection—of writings by men of exceptional talent and unconventional views.<sup>12</sup> The perceptions of cities and urban economies by these men of learning may or may not have been shared by their contemporaries. But the literati of the eleventh century wrote in the same genres as the literati of the ninth century whom they admired, imitated, and sometimes impersonated: poems and rhapsodies, prefaces and commemorations, letters and memorials, sacrificial prayers and epitaphs. This makes the collected works of the Song comparable to the collected works of the Tang, and it confirms that the innovations by eleventh-century authors were deliberate. Literati in the eleventh century resolved to raise the commercial streetscape to representation in order to think with it. They wrote the city in order to consider the individual

10 See Kurz 2003, 194. Cf. Yong Heng, *Soucai yiwen lu*, 5.2a.

11 On the loss of collected works from the eleventh century and their reconstitution from the *Yongle Encyclopedia*, see the prefaces by the editors of the *Siku quanshu* to, for example, Jiang Tang, *Chunqing yigao*; Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*.

12 For examples of rigorous selection, see Jin Junqing, *Jinshi wenji*, 1091 preface (selection of about 10 percent of the author’s writings); Zhang Fangping, *Zhang Fangping ji*, 34.565 (30–40 percent). The editors of the *Siku quanshu* remark repeatedly on famous compositions that are not included in the collected works of their authors. See, for example, the prefaces to Han Qi, *Anyang ji*; Kou Zhun, *Zhongmin gong shiji*; Shen Gou, *Xixi wenji*; Zhang Shunmin, *Huaman ji*. Some authors did not wish their work to be preserved at all. See Lin Bu, *Lin Hejing xiansheng wenji*, 1053 preface; Mu Xiu, *Henan Mu gong ji*, 1043 preface; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 48.619–620.

in relation to the crowd, the self in relation to commodities, the workings of money and trade in relation to hydraulics and the human body. Their collected works may not show what the average person in the eleventh century thought about cities, but they show what it was possible to think.<sup>13</sup>

*Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* is therefore an intellectual history of the city, a history of the city as a place for new ways of seeing and thinking. Because the sources of the period, in the words of Étienne Balazs, were written “by scholar-officials for scholar-officials,” and because these scholar-officials knew the major cities either by sight or by reputation, the sources of the late Tang and the early Song do not describe the urban environment in detail.<sup>14</sup> Instead, literati recorded their individual itineraries through these well-known cities, trying to capture in words their intimate impressions of hurtling traffic and soaring towers, of wide avenues and crowded markets. Collected works provide valuable materials for an intellectual history of the city because many of the genres they contain demanded the honest expression of authentic emotions.<sup>15</sup> In poems (*shi* 詩) and commemorations (*ji* 記), especially, literati often attempted to convey to their readers what they saw and what they felt at a particular place at a particular time: at a garden pavilion in spring or on a mountain slope in autumn, by a city gate at dawn or on an urban bridge at dusk.<sup>16</sup> By approaching the cities of the Tang and the Song through such compositions, through the sensations elicited by the urban environment, this intellectual history of the city preserves the

13 Cf. Foucault 1972, 126–165; Kaye 2014, 74.

14 Balazs 1964, 23–24. Cf. Balazs 1964, 135, 142.

15 Even collected works as a whole were read as an expression of the author’s character, both by readers and by authors themselves. See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.71.1504; Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1169 preface, 3–4; Chen Xiang, *Guling xiansheng wenji*, 1135 preface, 3a; Fan Chunren, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*, 1212 colophon, 1b, 10.7a–9b; Fan Zhongyan, *Fan Wenzheng gongji*, 1089 preface, 1a–2a; Li Deyu, *Li Deyu wenji*, 847 preface; Liu Tui, *Liu Tui ji*, 3.8a; Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 20.250–251, 19.234–235; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 8.7b; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 3.43, 3.46–47, *fu*.5.2758–2759; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 20.164a; Su Song, *Su Weigong wenji*, 1139 preface, 1–2; Wang Yucheng, *Wang Huangzhou xiaoxu ji*, II.preface.1a–2b; Xu Xuan, *Xu gong wenji*, 23.4a–5a; Zeng Zhao, *Qufu ji*, 3.6b–7b. Cf. Owen 1996, 15–33, 55–82; Shields 2015, 86–87, 101–103, 121–131.

16 On poetry as authentic expression see Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, 1.7.146; Li Shen, *Li Shen ji*, 276; Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 33.497; Qiji, *Bailian ji*, 5.2a, 6.12b; Shi Jie, *Culai Shi xiansheng wenji*, 18.212–213; Shao Yong, *Yichuan jirang ji*, 1065 preface; Sima Guang, *Wenguo Wenzheng Sima gong wenji*, 65.15ab; Su Shi, *Su Shi shiji*, 16.844; Su Shunqin, *Su Shunqin ji*, 13.165; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 3.3a–4a; Zhang Lei, *Zhang Lei ji*, 55.840; Zheng Gu, *Zheng Shouyu wenji*, preface. Cf. Nugent 2010, 136–137. On writing as an engagement with the landscape, see Cai Xiang, *Cai Xiang ji*, 1.18; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 22.606, 27.738, 42.1165; Lü Nangong, *Guan yuan ji*, 2.1a–9a; Lü Wen, *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 2.12; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 96.968; Su Shi, *Su Shi wenji*, *juan* 67–68, *passim*; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 3.1b–2a, 3.3a–4a; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang wenji*, 3.3a, 4.2b.

connection between the text and the city, between writing and walking, between the present and the past.<sup>17</sup>

The preservation of this connection is needful, because only this connection offers resistance to the received notions of the present, whether it be the division of the premodern past by modern disciplines, the rejection of indigenous concepts in favor of foreign ones, or the elevation of the particular development of cities in Europe to a universal, normative model for all cities of every period.<sup>18</sup> Because this book is written in English, for readers who may have a limited knowledge of the Middle-Period past, it cannot avoid the use of foreign terms or implicit (and sometimes explicit) comparisons with the history that attaches to that language. But by mimicking the style and borrowing the metaphors of the sources, by approximating their concepts and following their associations, the book allows their “proposed worlds” to unfold “in front of the text” and thereby to reveal “the buried potentialities of the present.”<sup>19</sup> In those proposed worlds, the same moral pattern inheres in the flow of money as in the flow of water, and a penetrating understanding of that moral pattern gives imperial officials the ability to set monetary policy and to build irrigation networks, to write lucid prose and to solve murder cases. As they walked among the anonymous crowd, moreover, and as they examined antique objects in temple markets, literati in the eleventh century developed notions of the individual and the self that resembled those discovered by the men and women who rode the omnibuses and strolled through the arcades of nineteenth-century Paris.

## Words, Not Wards

Most of the secondary literature about Middle-Period cities has to date taken the opposite approach.<sup>20</sup> Japanese historians since the 1930s, American historians since the 1950s, and Chinese historians since the 1980s have

17 As Karen Newman writes about early modern Paris and London, paraphrasing Theodor Adorno: “through literary representation, sense experience becomes at once knowable and historical,” as “the specificity of aesthetic form preserves sense experience in the past, gives sensory phenomena and their perception a history.” Newman 2007, 83.

18 On the resistance of the text and the connection of the present to the past, cf. Chakrabarty 2008, 237–239; Dane 2003, 7, 112; Newman 2007, 150; Ricoeur 1981, 116.

19 Ricoeur 1981, 143, 295.

20 Exceptions are, for example, Clunas 1996; Duan 2020; Hirata 2006; Ihara 2008, 49–56; Meyer-Fong 2003; X. Wang 2011; and the work of Stephen H. West, such as West 1985, 1997, 1999, 2005.

collected locations of buildings and details of urban practice from a wide range of sources—historical records and notebooks, poems and memoirs, local gazetteers and miracle tales—in order to reconstruct the physical layout and social structure of Middle-Period cities, and in order then to analyze these conjectured cities by the terms and narratives of the modern social sciences.<sup>21</sup> In this approach, the layout and institutions of Middle-Period cities reveal a particular stage of historical, cultural, or economic development, of which they are the “outgrowth” or the “reflection.”<sup>22</sup> This materialist approach to urban history has yielded useful maps as well as plausible estimates of population figures and commercial activity, but its broad aggregation of texts has severed the connection between the present and the past, and between the text and the city. Because the approach does not distinguish between texts written in the past tense and texts written in the present tense, between accounts of personal experience and compilations of reported fact, it cannot preserve individual itineraries through the city or historical perceptions of urban life. These urban histories, in other words, use texts “as a means of deducing circumstances and movements that are not, in themselves, contained within the texts.”<sup>23</sup> They seek the sense of the text *behind* the text instead of in front of it; they presume that this sense is something hidden, something withheld, instead of something disclosed.<sup>24</sup>

By ignoring the resistance of the text, such urban histories become vulnerable to the tautologies of social science and the homologies of modernity.<sup>25</sup> Historians in the United States, for example, have long debated the merit of Max Weber’s argument, in *The City (Die Stadt, 1921)*, that cities in China were not urban communities because they did not have independent civic institutions.<sup>26</sup> Even those who object to Weber’s arguments have accepted his

21 For a brief account of the historiography of Middle-Period cities, see de Pee and Lam 2017, xiv–xviii. For examples of this materialist approach see Chang 1977; Cheng and Li 1993; H. Clark 1991; Dai 1992; Gernet 1962; Han 2011; Kracke 1975; C. Li 1993; G. Liang 1997, 334–480; Lin 1986; F. Liu 2011; Marmé 2005; Quan 1972, 186–199; So 2000, 161–185; Sogabe 1940; Gp Wang 2006, 6–8; T. Wu 1984; Xiong 2000; J. Xu 2008, 2011; Y. Xu 2000; K. Yang 1993; Yi 1986, 2005; B. Zhou 1992, 2001; F. Zhou 1997.

22 See, for example, Cheng and Li 1993, 1992 series preface, 1; Dai 1992, preface, 1, 1–24; Han 2011, 4–5; Hirata 2004, 110; C. Li 1993, 1–3; G. Liang 1997, 591–592; Ye 1986, vol. 1, 5, 14–17.

23 Koselleck 2004, 75. Cf. de Certeau 1984, 137–138; LaCapra 2000, 24–38; Newman 2007, 150–151.

24 See Ricoeur 1976, 87. Cf. Ricoeur 1981, 48–53, 150–152.

25 Cf. Barlow 1993, 225–228; Benjamin 1968, 261–262; Chakrabarty 2008, 27–42; Farquhar and Hevia 1993; Frank 1998, 13–31. Urban histories published in the People’s Republic of China often explicate their presentist agenda. See, for example, Cheng and Li 1993, 1992 series preface, 5; Dai 1992, preface, 4–10; Y. He 2014; Z. He 2010, 1–2; C. Li 1993, 3; Lin and Jin 1984, 142; Lin 1986, 451; Tang 2008, 45; Y. Zhou and Liu 1997.

26 See Weber 1958, 81–85, 119–120. Cf. L. Li 2012, 165; Ma 2006, 367–368.



terms of analysis, endeavoring to prove that independent civic communities did in fact exist in Chinese cities, instead of dismissing Weber's arguments as circular and irrelevant.<sup>27</sup> Although Weber introduced references to Asian cities in order to expand the application of his urban sociology, he effectively pre-empted a sustained, dynamic historical and cultural comparison by defining "the city" as an "urban community" (*Stadtgemeinde*) that he equated with the institutions of medieval European feudalism.<sup>28</sup> As a result, when Chinese cities resemble European cities, they confirm the universality of European urban characteristics, but when Chinese cities differ from European cities, they prove the non-universality of Chinese urban institutions.<sup>29</sup>

What nearly all scholars present as the defining event in the urban history of the late Tang and early Song, namely the destruction of walled residential wards, is a figment of social-scientific theory. In 1931, the Japanese historian Katō Shigeshi (1880–1946) published an article, "On the Development of Cities during the Song Dynasty" ("Sōdai ni okeru toshi no hattatsu ni tsuite"), in which he argued that nearly all cities during the Tang and early Song were laid out on a grid; that the markets and residential wards formed by the perpendicular avenues were surrounded by walls and guarded by a curfew; that only high officials were allowed to pierce these walls with gates to their mansions and thus to have direct access to the avenues; and that in the course of the eleventh century these walls were destroyed and the curfew abolished. As evidence for the universality of these walled wards, Katō cited an 828 edict in the *Digest of Tang Documents* (*Tang huiyao*, 10th century) that prohibits the piercing of neighborhood walls, except by high officials, and an anecdote about an official who in 1018 ordered that the ward gates of Yingtian Prefecture (present-day Shangqiu, Henan province) remain open during the night in order to dispel rumors about man-eating ghosts.<sup>30</sup> In a revised version of the 1931 article, published in 1952, Katō added a law from the *Annotated Tang Code* (*Tanglü shuyi*, 653) that prohibits "climbing over the walls of government offices and the walls or stockades of wards or

27 For confirmations of Weber's arguments see, for example, Elvin 1978; Mote 1977, 101–153; Y. Xu 2000, 77–84. For refutations of Weber's arguments that confirm Weber's terms of analysis see, for example, Fei 2009, 11–13, 247–252; Rowe 1984, 3–14, 327–346.

28 See Weber 1958, 80–81.

29 Cf. Abu-Lughod 1989, 77n19. Andrew Zimmerman (2006, 54) explains that "Weber's later work on the religions of Europe, China, and India elaborated a culturally differentiated world that did not place Europe in the position of conqueror but rather in a position of adjacent superiority," and that Weber's neoracism "operates through differentiation and inclusion, rather than through the binaries, hierarchies, and exclusions of imperialist or colonialist racism."

30 See Katō 1931, 105, citing Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1867–1868; Katō 1931, 105–106, citing Li Tao, *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, 92.2118–2119.

markets” and an anecdote about a visit by Emperor Wendi (r. 581–604) of the Sui dynasty (589–618) to Bianzhou (present-day Kaifeng, Henan province), during which shopkeepers and residents along the emperor’s route were ordered to keep their gates shut for the duration of his progress.<sup>31</sup> “Since the middle of the 20th century,” writes Bao Weimin, “the academic world has essentially elaborated the consequences of the ‘Katō model.’ ... As a result, discussions of the ward system are a central subject in present academic debates of historical development during the Tang and the Song.”<sup>32</sup>

Bao Weimin remains nearly alone in perceiving that walled wards existed in the imperial capitals at Chang’an and Luoyang, but not in prefectural capitals or in county seats.<sup>33</sup> He reminds his readers that the many Tang cities that lacked outer walls cannot have had walled neighborhoods, and that many cities were too small to require division into walled wards.<sup>34</sup> Bao Weimin has moreover dissociated the existence of walled markets from the existence of walled residential neighborhoods. He argues that, on the one hand, the institution of supervised, walled markets during the Tang did not preclude the existence of informal, open markets and, on the other hand, that supervised walled markets continued to exist during the Song.<sup>35</sup> The uncritical acceptance of the “Katō model,” according to Bao Weimin, has led historians both to exaggerate the restrictions on commerce during the Tang and to neglect such restrictions during the Song.<sup>36</sup>

31 See Katō 1952, 311–312, citing Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi*, 8.170 and Wei Zheng, *Sui shu*, 56.1386.

32 See, for example, G. Chen 2009, 160; Cheng and Li 1993, 57–58, 102; Dai 1992, 20–21, 203–207; De Weerd 2013, 302–305; C. Heng 1999, xvi, 1–2, 37–50, 70–90, 205–209; Hirata 2004, 114; Ihara 1979, 64–67; Ihara 1983, 108–109; Johnson 1985, 413–414; Kida 1978, 279–284; Kubota 2008, 205; C. Li 1993, 16–17; G. Liang 1997, 481; Jg Liang 2007, 23–24; F. Liu 2011, 30–35; Ma 1971, 74–82; Naba 1938, 170–175, 186–187; Ning 2002, 116; Shiba 2002, 82–86; X. Wang 2011, 51; S. Wu 2005, 22–23; T. Wu 1984, 11–12; Ye 1986, vol. 1, 17, 22–23; Y. Xu 2000, 128, 132; K. Yang 1993, 1–2, 209–210, 264–267, 280–281; Z. Yang 2006, 222; Zhao 1985, 246–247; B. Zhou 1992, 3, 16, 68–69, 232–233; Zhu 1987, 100–104.

33 See Bao 2014, 179; Bao 2018, 29. In his *Researches on Song Cities* (*Songdai chengshi yanjiu*, 2014), Bao Weimin is not consistent in his rejection of the “Katō model,” because he confirms the conventional narrative of the collapse of walled wards and markets several times. See Bao 2014, 1, 86–87, 102.

34 See Bao 2014, 109–110. For examples of cities that lacked outer walls, see Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 43.1214; Wang Jian, *Wang sima ji*, 3.1b; Yu Jing, *Wuxi ji*, 15.13ab, 15.15a; Zhang Ji, *Zhang Wenchang ji*, 2.10a.

35 See Bao 2011, 185–187; Bao 2014, 181–189, 192–199, 202–204. Katō Shigeshi himself wrote two articles about informal markets during the Tang, in 1926 and 1933. See Katō 1952, 380–421. For examples of walled markets in the Song, see Liu Chang, *Gongshi ji*, 4.33; Song Qi, *Jingwen ji*, 8.87.

36 See Bao 2011, 180–181; Bao 2014, 172–175.

To Bao's criticism one might add that Katō's evidence contradicts his arguments instead of supporting them. First, the law against breaking curfew, in the *Annotated Tang Code*, locates ward gates and curfews specifically in the capital, as it specifies that the closing of the gates at night and their reopening at dawn were determined by the drum on top of the Shuntian Gate, the central gate of the palace city in Chang'an.<sup>37</sup> The high-ranking officials whom Tang law permitted to open gates on the avenues lived in the capital too.<sup>38</sup> Second, that the residents of Bianzhou were ordered to lock their gates and shops during Emperor Wendi's visit proves that shops and residences in Bianzhou opened directly onto the thoroughfares. Local officials had to approximate by improvisation the long, continuous walls that lined the avenues in the capital but that did not exist in Bianzhou. The anecdote suggests, moreover, that only the presence of the emperor required closed residential wards and a curfew. Third, the anecdote about the ward gates in Yingtian Prefecture strengthens the likelihood of this latter connection, because Yingtian Prefecture was built as the Southern Capital of the Song Empire.<sup>39</sup> Fourth, among his evidence for the disappearance of walled wards and curfews in the course of the eleventh century, Katō cites an entry from *Notes by a Former Court Official Retired to Chunming* (*Chunming tuichao lu*, 1070s) in which Song Minqiu (1019–1079) remarks that curfew drums in Kaifeng had fallen into disuse. In that same entry, however, Song Minqiu states (on the authority of a certain Ma Zhou of the Tang dynasty) that curfew drums during the Tang were in use only in Chang'an and Luoyang, and later also in the Northern Capital.<sup>40</sup> In sum, Katō offers no evidence that walled wards existed in prefectural cities. His evidence instead proves the opposite: namely, that walled wards (and

37 See Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi*, 26.489–490.

38 Some historians have equated the Tang law against constructing gates on thoroughfares (*xiang jie kai men* 向街開門) with Tang and Song laws against the encroachment on roadways (*qin xiangjie* 侵巷街), and have therefore cited instances of such encroachment as evidence that walls around residential wards still stood during the early decades of the eleventh century. The laws against encroachment, however, applied to streets and alleyways as well as to avenues, and they forbade residents not from opening gates on the thoroughfares, but from building walls and planting trees in the public road, where they obstructed traffic. These laws had nothing to do with walled wards or with the prohibition of shops along thoroughfares. For the text of the laws, see Dou Yi, *Song xingtong*, 26.416; Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1867; Wang Qinruo, *Cefu yuangui*, 14.148; Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi*, 26.488–489. Cf. Bao 2011, 189.

39 Katō in fact explains that Yingtian Prefecture owed its layout, with its straight, wide central axis, to its status as Southern Capital. See Katō 1931, 103. Xia Song's dismay at the derelict state of the Southern Capital in 1014 makes it difficult to imagine that the city did in fact have walled wards in 1016. See Xia Song, *Wenzhuang ji*, 16.6b–8a.

40 See Katō 1952, 320, citing Song Minqiu, *Chunming tuichao lu*, 1.11.

curfews) existed only in the imperial capitals, where they facilitated the protection of the palace against nocturnal intruders.<sup>41</sup>

Indirect evidence from primary sources confirms that walled wards existed in the capitals and not in the prefectures. First, the gated wards of the Tang capitals not only facilitated the enforcement of the curfew, but also formed a cosmic grid. During droughts, the southern gate of every ward would be closed and every northern gate would be opened, sometimes with an altar set up in front of it, in order to solicit rain (the north being associated with *yin* and moisture). During heavy rain and floods, conversely, the northern gates would be closed and sacrifices would be brought at the southern gates.<sup>42</sup> But when Bai Juyi (772–846) and Liu Zongyuan (773–819) tried to end prolonged rains and floods in the prefectures where they served, they brought sacrifices at city gates, not at ward gates.<sup>43</sup> Second, records of disasters from the Tang period report that earthquakes and floods brought down the walls of wards in the capitals, but nowhere else. When it rained heavily from July 21 to August 1, 682, for example, “the Luo River swelled greatly, swept away more than two hundred houses in the Establishing Virtue and Profound Reverence Wards on the Henan side [of Luoyang] and the Respectful Admiration Ward on the Luoyang side, and destroyed the Heavenly Ford Bridge and the Middle Bridge.”<sup>44</sup> When the same river flooded at Fuzhou (present-day Fu County, Shaanxi province), on August 15, 727, it “entered the prefectural seat, setting it more than ten feet under water and destroying the dwellings of the residents, drowning an unknown number of people.”<sup>45</sup> Third, archaeologists have found traces of ward walls in Xi’an and Luoyang, but not in prefectural capitals or county seats. The archaeologist Su Bai, though intent on discovering evidence of walled wards throughout the Tang Empire, found only regular grids of streets, not foundations of neighborhood walls or neighborhood gates.<sup>46</sup>

41 Cf. Thilo 2006, 163–175.

42 See Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1354–1355, 37.1358–1360, 37.1363, 37.1365; Luo Yin, *Luo Yin ji*, *chanshu*.5.236; Wang Pu, *Tang huiyao*, 86.1875. Cf. Wang Qinro, *Cefu yuangui*, 60.638. Cf. also Thilo 2006, 368–369.

43 See Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi ji*, I.40.891; Liu Zongyuan, *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 41.1094. Cf. Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, 20.247–248.

44 Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1352. The capital Luoyang was the seat of two counties, Henan County and Luoyang County, each of which administered a number of wards. Cf. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1357 (“Eliciting the Way Ward in the capital was in one night submerged and become a lake”), 37.1358–1359.

45 Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1358. Cf. Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 37.1352, 37.1353, 37.1360, 37.1361–1362 (“A flood in Suzhou and Huzhou destroyed six dikes, entered the walls of the prefectural seats, and inundated dwellings and wells”).

46 See Su 1990.

That historians have long accepted Katō Shigeshi's arguments about the collapse of a medieval "ward system" (*hōsei* 坊制) during the transition from the Tang to the Song is surprising, not only because Katō provided very little evidence to prove the universal construction of walled wards, but also because his arguments derived from historiographical and ideological convictions that are now by no means widely shared. As Stefan Tanaka has demonstrated, Japanese historians during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries developed Hegelian schemes of cultural transformation in order to claim for "the Orient" (*tōyō* 東洋) a modernity that developed independently from European modernity but that equaled European modernity in maturity and achievement.<sup>47</sup> In these schemes, civilization and power moved southward from northern China to southern China, and thence eastward to Japan. The historian Naitō Konan (Naitō Torajirō, 1866–1934) during the 1910s and 1920s proposed that this Oriental modernity began in the Song dynasty, which he considered the first modern period in world history. He argued that the military commissioners of the late Tang and the rulers of the tenth-century kingdoms and empires had destroyed an aristocratic order and had caused a series of structural changes—the institutionalization of imperial autocracy, the recruitment of officials through competitive examinations, the prominent role of commoners in politics and culture, the monetization of the economy—that together inaugurated a new stage in the life cycle of Chinese civilization.<sup>48</sup> Katō Shigeshi's articles about the destruction of ward walls and market walls contributed to this narrative of Hegelian transformation and Oriental modernity.<sup>49</sup>

Although these articles argue that the walled markets and gated wards prove the existence of a medieval aristocratic order, it in fact requires the assumption of a medieval aristocratic order to make plausible that the Tang and its predecessors had erected such walls throughout their empires, in order to constrain the movement and commerce of their subjects. Instead of appearing as a physical impossibility, the walled grids of hundreds of prefectural cities became a theoretical necessity, the grim evidence of a medieval age.<sup>50</sup> Subsequent historians have rejected the Hegelian scheme

47 See Tanaka 1993. Cf. Nohara 1946a, 54, 56; Tam 1980.

48 For this general historical narrative see, for example, Naitō 1922, 1–12; Naitō 1938, 8–53, 337–377. For Naitō's subscription to Hegelian ideas and their implications for current political relations between Japan and China, see Naitō 1938, 1–11, 13–14, 54–95, 263–280, 297–304. Cf. Tam 1975, 260, 272–276, 322–323. On the place of the Tang–Song transition in the life cycle of Chinese history, see Naitō 1938, 312–313. Cf. Miyakawa 1955, 535–543; Miyazaki 1967, 96–106; Sogabe 1940, 2; Tam 1980.

49 See Naba 1938. Cf. Ning and Chen 2010, 126–127.

50 Cf. McDermott 1984, 14–33; McDermott and Shiba 2015, 347–367.

behind Katō's (and Naitō's) conception of the transition from the Tang to the Song as well as the imperialist agenda of "Oriental history" (*tōyōshi* 東洋史), but they have shared Katō's conviction that the modern social sciences offer more accurate, more objective terms of analysis than the Middle-Period sources.<sup>51</sup> By mining Middle-Period sources for the data required by the generative machinery of social-scientific theory, historians have broken the resistance of the sources to the homologies of the present and have thereby accepted a broad theory of historical development whose evidence is inadequate and whose premises they reject.<sup>52</sup>

In their contribution to a themed issue of *Past & Present* on "The Global Middle Ages," Conrad Leyser, Naomi Standen, and Stephanie Wynne-Jones argue that "a focus on what towns thought of themselves, together with a consideration of what towns *do*," enables comparative histories that refute linear narratives of urban development.<sup>53</sup> *Urban Life and Intellectual Crisis* contributes to such non-linear comparative histories by distinguishing between histories of the city and histories of the writing of the city, and by recognizing the writing of the city as a distinct, deliberate, ideological operation. The historians who have undertaken to reconstruct the cities of the Middle Period have done so in hopes of understanding what these cities must have represented to their inhabitants, but what these cities represented

51 Similar to the *Ostforscher* (experts on Eastern Europe) who provided historical arguments in support of the *Drang nach Osten* (drive to the East) in Nazi Germany, Japanese historians of China helped justify the Japanese invasion of the Republic of China as a historical mission to save the senescent civilization from Western colonialism. Japanese scholarship of the 1930s and 1940s, again like *Ostforschung*, was misrepresented and protected during the 1950s and 1960s by the anti-Communist politics of the Cold War. In two widely cited articles, for example, Miyakawa Hisayuki (1955) and Miyazaki Ichisada (1967) represented Naitō Konan as a scholar concerned purely with historical interpretation—even though his own sons stated in a 1938 preface that their father's work demonstrated the historical inevitability that vigorous, young Japan would resuscitate the large, old country of China by armed conflict. See Naitō 1938, preface, 15–17. Miyazaki himself had espoused the ideology of "Oriental history" in works such as *Primitivist Peoples and Civilizationist Societies in the Orient* (*Tōyō ni okeru sobokushugi no minzoku to bunmeishugi no shakai*, 1940). Whereas the pernicious politics of *Ostforschung* have been thoroughly exposed, however, first in Poland and the German Democratic Republic, and since the 1970s in the German Federal Republic, the legacy of Japanese imperialist scholarship in the historiography of China—including the so-called Naitō hypothesis, about the Tang–Song transition—remains unexamined. On the career of *Ostforschung* and *Ostforscher*, see Burleigh 1988.

52 Janet L. Abu-Lughod (1987, 155) makes a similar argument about the development of "the idea of the Islamic city" by scholars who "drew upon a small and eccentric sample of pre-modern Arab cities" and "more than that, drew upon one another in an *isnad* [i.e., a chain] of authority." I thank Dana Sajdi for this reference.

53 Leyser, Standen, and Wynne-Jones 2018, 258. Cf. Wooldridge 2015, 10–12.

to their inhabitants—at least to the inhabitants about whom historians can hope to know anything with certainty—the surviving sources state directly. In the much reduced, carefully controlled space of their collected works, the literati of the late Tang and the early Song have placed themselves with deliberation, in delighted admiration of urban beauty, in thoughtful contemplation of urban crowds, in playful ambivalence toward urban commodities, in puzzled scrutiny of urban commerce.

Literati in the eleventh century took up the commercial streetscape as a new but not as a dominant literary subject. The place they created for the city in writing was not extensive, but only in their collected works is writing connected directly to an authentic, historical, individual experience of urban space. The cities of the Tang and the Song were built of wood and tile and tamped earth. They were burnt down and built over. Only a few dozen buildings from the ninth through eleventh centuries are still standing, scattered across the People's Republic of China. Because other remains lie under the apartment blocks and highways of modern metropolises, archaeologists rarely have an opportunity to examine them, much less to reconstitute streetscapes or the experience of urban life.<sup>54</sup> Once, too, genres of writing may have existed that provided greater scope for the material detail of cities. In the thirteenth century, and perhaps earlier, printed guides acquainted traveling merchants with the cities where they lodged on their journeys, and candidates in the imperial examinations may well have written to their families about life in the capital, but no such texts survive today from the late Tang or the early Song.<sup>55</sup> Of eyewitness accounts that

54 In Chang'an and Luoyang, archaeologists have located the city walls, excavated city gates and palaces, and surveyed some roads, government buildings, houses, and a market. Surveys and excavations at Kaifeng, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou likewise have determined the location of the walls, the gates, and the palaces, and excavated a few bridges, government buildings, roads, houses, and shops. See G. He 1983; Henan shifan daxue dilixi 1982; Kaifengshi wenwu gongzuodui 1998; Luoyang shifan xueyuan He Luo wenhua guoji yanjiu zhongxin 2005; Tang 2008; H. Yang 1994; Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Xi'an Tangcheng fajuedui 1961; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo et al. 2010; F. Zhou 1997.

55 A few short, informal letters by Li Zhiyi give brief characterizations of Kaifeng, Luoyang, and Jinling (present Nanjing, Jiangxi province): "The longer I live in the capital, the more places I find that are to my liking. The richness of my experiences in the city I have most certainly not gathered by word of mouth, but by visiting them on foot." Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, I.26.199. Cf. Li Zhiyi, *Guxi jushi quanji*, I.30.226, I.33.249. The *Splendid Scenery of the Capital* (*Ducheng jisheng*, 1235) contains passages from a guidebook (or guidebooks) about Hangzhou that give the reader advice about how to avoid being cheated or robbed in the metropolis. See Guanpu naide weng, *Ducheng jisheng*, 92–93, 100–101. The Japanese monk Jōjin mentions in his diary that during his visit to Kaifeng in 1073, he purchased a *Map of the Capital Prefecture* (*Jingzhou tu*), a type of text that has not survived. See Jōjin, *Can Tiantai Wutaishan ji*, 6.474.

can animate the ground plans reconstructed by archaeologists or the maps printed in local gazetteers remain, therefore, only the erudite, allusive compositions preserved in the collected works of the foremost statesmen and men of letters.

The compositions of these statesmen and men of letters assume the reader's familiarity with the places of which they write. In their poems, for example, they choose a few vignettes—the fragrance of fallen blossoms crushed by the hoofs and wheels of revelers, a momentary quiet as the slanting sun strikes a famous bridge—in order to give proof simultaneously of their sensibility and their erudition, to preserve their sensory impressions and at the same time to contribute to a store of literature on the same theme and on the same location. Their first readers in fact often stood next to them, crafting their own poems about the same scene. Their precise compositions do not represent the general sentiment of their time, much less transcribe a material reality that “reflects” an objective stage in a universal history of human development. But considered as historical documents, these literary compositions have value precisely because they present individual views and ideological interpretations of the city.

Literati in the eleventh century changed the literary geography of inherited genres, and devised a number of new genres, in order to make a place for the city in writing. In this new literary space, they competed to create novel literary effects, and they showed themselves to advantage, standing out as individuals among the crowd, acquiring valuable antiques by their connoisseurship, and searching for an immanent pattern in the flow of traffic and in the circulation of goods. By opening up their poems and their commemorations to urban roads and transport canals, literati allowed market vendors to set up their stalls in their verses, and cloth merchants from Sichuan to litigate in an inscription for a government office in Hangzhou. Because literati endeavored to replicate the refinement of their taste by the wit of their compositions, their epigrams and catalogs reproduce the competitiveness of connoisseurship and urban consumption.

An intellectual history based on such literary engagements with the city makes nonsense of the common argument that Middle-Period cities differed but little from the countryside, and of the argument that Middle-Period cities were below the medieval cities of Europe because they lacked autonomous civic institutions. Instead of framing its sources within a universal, linear model of development that is based on the particular history of Europe, this intellectual history of the Middle-Period city demonstrates the particularity of that European history by showing that many of its defining elements could occur, and did occur, in an alternative sequence



and in foreign configurations.<sup>56</sup> The rapid development in the eleventh century of the urban genre of landscape painting, for example, from a naturalistic technique in the service of moral metaphor to a technique of visible brushstrokes in the service of individual expression, proves that defining elements of Impressionist painting could exist in a society without photography and without mechanized transport—and that metropolitan painters in nineteenth-century Paris and London did not invent a visual language unique to modern Europe, but rather found themselves in an urban environment that allowed them to understand for the first time the paintings and prints made in metropolitan Kaifeng and Edo.<sup>57</sup>

It is in such an effort at historical back-and-forth that this introduction opens under the sign of the Cat and Racket. In the epigraph, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) muses that perhaps the city writes itself, in letters formed by the beams of half-timbered houses in the medieval streets of Paris, where they are read by the passerby and interpreted by historians. These sentences, however, are the opening lines of Balzac's *Human Comedy* (*La Comédie humaine*, 1829–1847), his ambitious, visionary effort to devise a form and a mode for writing modern life—a “history of society at large,” its customs illustrated by “two or three thousand conspicuous types,” in a manner to “please, at the same time, the poet, the philosopher, and the masses who want both poetry and philosophy under striking imagery.”<sup>58</sup> Subsequent writers of modern life and the industrial city acknowledged the achievement of Balzac and admitted their debt to him. Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), for example, concluded his review of the salon of 1846 with an homage to Balzac, citing the latter's characters and heroic authorship to impress upon his readers that modern life has its own beauty and that “Parisian life abounds with poetic and marvelous subjects.”<sup>59</sup> Imputing his own admiration for Balzac (and his own taste for paradox) to one of his characters, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) wrote that, “The nineteenth century, as we know it, is largely an invention of Balzac.”<sup>60</sup>

56 Cf. Frank 1998, 4–31; Hymes 2015, 664.

57 See Powers 1995; Powers 2013.

58 Balzac, “Avant-propos,” 18, 10, as translated in Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket*, 13, 4. Balzac moreover prided himself on having saved some old houses and architectural details by having described them in his novels. See Balzac, *La Maison du chat-qui-pelote*, 1185n3.

59 Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2, 496.

60 Wilde, *Intentions*, 35. In his own voice, Oscar Wilde called the *Comédie humaine* “the greatest monument that literature has produced in our century.” On Balzac's achievements in writing the city and modern life, see also Brooks 2005, 22–39, 130–140; Harvey 2003, 23–57; Moretti 1998, 106–113.

The sign of the Cat and Racket, therefore, advertises the invention and the labor it requires to find a language and a form for writing urban life. Moreover, because Balzac admired the old-fashioned sign and sympathized with its solid, old-fashioned owner, the sign hangs above this chapter also as a reminder that the industrial city was first written by a conservative who condemned the destabilizing forces of money as a threat to what he deemed to be the natural order of society. In his effort to demonstrate that Catholicism and the monarchy provided the only stable foundation for French society, Balzac presented such a sharp analysis of “men, women, and things, that is to say, persons and the material expression they give to their thought” that, according to Alexandre Péraud, he “invented modern money.”<sup>61</sup> So penetrating, in fact, was Balzac’s analysis of modern society that Karl Marx based much of his understanding of social relations on the work of this reactionary monarchist.<sup>62</sup> (This transmutation of literature into social theory “is somehow more pleasing than the opposite thing,” as Vladimir Nabokov writes *à propos* the misrecognition of Karl Marx’s Russian translator as “a Government Inspector traveling incognito,” in a “vulgar imitation” of Nikolai Gogol’s play.<sup>63</sup>) Literati in the Song Empire wrote the city in hopes of discerning in its threatening profusion an enduring, immanent moral pattern and in hopes of protecting their privileged position within the political and economic order. Under the sign of the Cat and Racket, then, walks the historian as passerby, as *flâneur*, past the written buildings of Balzac and into the poems and commemorations of eleventh-century literati.<sup>64</sup>

61 Balzac, “Avant-propos,” 12–14, 9, as translated in Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket*, 3 (with modifications); Péraud 2019, 8. Cf. Harvey 2003, 23–35.

62 See Harvey 2003, 13–17; Péraud 2019, 11.

63 Nabokov 1944, 40–41.

64 On the figure of the *flâneur*, see Benjamin 1983a, 36–37, 66; Benjamin 1983b, 524–569 (section M); Ferguson 1994a, 82–99; Ferguson 1994b; Gleber 1999. On the *flâneur* as reader and historian, see Ferguson 1994a, 80–81; Frisby 2001, 28–29, 35–51; Gellay 1993, 249–251; Gleber 1999, 43–83; Opitz 1992, 176–181.

