Antiquaries and Politics

Antiquarian Culture of the Northern Song, 960–1127

Interest in the remains of the remote past can be kindled by many sparks: the collector’s passion for residues from antiquity, the polymath’s dream of recovering human history, or a ruler’s search for self-affirmation or dynastic legitimation. In any case, as a ramification of its own time and place, antiquarian interest is often woven into the concatenation of historical events, with some concerns openly declared but others remaining unspoken, discreetly shared within a consent group. Only through careful investigation can modern researchers discover the unspoken underpinnings and grasp the development of antiquarian practices in their historical, cultural, and political dynamism.

Scholars of the Northern Song period (960–1127) were the first in China to collect and study ancient relics in a systematic way and to thereby establish the research discipline of jinshtixue 金石學, the study of ancient bronze ritual objects and stone steleae. Their investigations of ancient inscriptions laid the foundation for later epigraphic studies; their antiquarian practices set a model for later antiquaries; and the catalogs they compiled provided the major sources of knowledge on ancient bronzes throughout the Yuan (1279–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and early years of the Qing (1644–1911) periods. The “modern” character of Song antiquaries’ work leads some scholars to consider Northern Song antiquarianism the indigenous origin of modern Chinese archaeology. But why did antiquities suddenly catch the attention of scholars in the eleventh century? Because most Northern Song antiquaries were active in the political arena as scholar-officials (shidafu 士大夫), this chapter will take into consideration their political and cultural agendas and show that the driving forces underlying the rise and expansion of antiquarianism during the Northern Song period were deeply intertwined with the political concerns of scholar-officials.

The Rise of Antiquarianism

Northern Song antiquarianism commenced with the advocacy of Ouyang Xiu 欧陽修 (1007–72), a versatile man who was distinguished in all major intellectual fields: a capable official, fluent writer, shrewd historian, and keen antiquary. In literature, he promulgated writing in the style of antique prose (guwen 古文)
striving to restore literary writing to the classical stage of Confucius and Mencius, and ultimately succeeded in bringing this literary movement to fruition. In the study of the Confucian classics, he encouraged students to be critical of received texts and exegeses, inaugurating an age of doubt and reason. As a historian, he completed the Xin WuTai shi 新五代史 (New history of the Five Dynasties) without government support, a work that deeply impressed his contemporaries with its straight moral standards borrowed from the Chunqiu 春秋 (Springs and Autumns annals), a classic text thought to have been edited by Confucius (Kongzi 孔子, trad. 551–479 BCE) that later gave the name “Springs and Autumns” to the historical period (770–ca. 450 BCE) it chronicled.

Ouyang was also one of the pioneers in collecting and studying inscriptions on bronze ritual objects from the Shang (ca. 1550–ca. 1046 BCE) and Zhou (ca. 1046–256 BCE) dynasties and stone stele from the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) to Tang (618–906) periods, and left a work on this topic titled Jigu lu 集古錄 (Records of collecting antiquity). Taken together, Ouyang’s works was so influential that it is fair to say that he led the cultural development of Northern Song China during the second half of the eleventh century.

As an antiquary, Ouyang was interested not in stone and bronze objects per se but rather in the words inscribed on them, as evidenced in the Jigu lu. The work comprised a collection of inscriptions in the form of ink rubbings made from bronze and stone engravings, as well as Ouyang’s comments on them. Most of the ink rubbings have been lost; only Ouyang’s commentary survives. In the preface to the Jigu lu, Ouyang enthusiastically expresses the enjoyment he found in collecting ink rubbings. Ronald Egan has demonstrated the importance of this sentimental aspect of Ouyang’s collecting, which resonated with other contemporary aesthetic pursuits among intellectuals.

Throughout the Jigu lu, however, Ouyang feels compelled to explain to his readers why collecting ancient epigraphs should be a dignified scholarly activity rather than a trivial hobby. He constantly stresses that his collection has aided greatly in correcting errors in the transmitted texts of the Confucian classics. In addition, he argues that the writing on ancient bronze objects and stone stele provided models for calligraphy. Ouyang once insisted to his friend the classicist Shi Jiè 史季（1005–45) that one’s mind and character are manifest in one’s calligraphy; therefore, a virtuous man should always write in a suitable calligraphic style. Such notions, as scholars have noticed, underlay Ouyang’s praise for the calligraphic style of Yan Zhengqing 項貞卿 (709–85), a patriotic statesman of the Tang period who had died heroically. As a high official charged with pacifying a rebel general, Yan was detained by the rebel but refused to surrender, standing upright until he was finally executed by hanging. By emulating Yan’s calligraphy, Ouyang believed, one could hope to partake in his exceptional
merits. The rubbing collection of Ouyang Xiu thus had a didactic dimension.

The first Chinese scholar to seriously collect ancient objects themselves, as opposed to their inscriptions, was Ouyang's younger colleague Liu Chang 劉敞 (1019–68). The several bronzes Ouyang had in his collection were gifts from Liu, as were most of Ouyang's rubbings of bronze inscriptions. Although Liu was the first to collect and study ancient bronze objects in a systematic way, he was best known as a classicist. In his biography of Liu, Wang Cheng 王稱 (fl. 1100s) detailed Liu's knowledge about ritual and listed his commentaries on the *Chunqiu* and other classical texts as his representative works. He is often regarded as one of the first scholars to seek to understand the classics in his own way instead of through the lens of the Han and Tang exegetical tradition.

In addition to his works on classical texts, Liu also wrote a book about ancient bronze ritual vessels, *Xian Qin guqi tu* 先秦古器圖 (Illustrations of antiquities from the pre-Qin periods), recording bronze objects he had collected in Shaanxi Province while serving as the superintendence there. Only the preface of the work survives, in which Liu explains why he compiled this work. Unlike with Ouyang, emotional satisfaction had no place in Liu's antiquarian activity. Liu viewed the objects as embodiments of ancient knowledge and thought that, because they were contemporary with the classics, they could shed light on the transmitted texts and thus complement or supplement the words of the sages. By studying them, he hoped that one day "the ritual specialists will clarify the [ritual] institutions, the paleographers will correct the words, and the genealogists will restore the proper order of generations and posthumous names." This scholarly orientation exemplifies Liu's own approach to ancient bronzes—investigating their inscriptions, functions, and historical associations. From this point of view, Liu was more a Confucian classicist than an antiquarian collector.

Although Liu was erudite, he confessed that he could not elucidate every aspect of the ancient bronzes he studied and that he could decipher only about half of the characters inscribed on the bronzes. Most of Liu's epigraphic studies do not survive, but citations contained in other works allow us to assess Liu's work. For instance, Liu's transcription of the inscription on an eighth-century BCE cauldron, the *Jin Jiang–ding* 晋姜鼎, was cited in Ouyang's *Jigu lu*; subsequently, both the image of the inscription and Liu's transcription in *Jigu lu* were reproduced in the *Kaogu tu* 考古圖 (Illustrations for the study of antiquity), another significant antiquarian work that will be discussed later. Here Liu uses circles to indicate characters unknown to him (see fig. 3). Indeed, given the incipient state of paleographic research in his time, a considerable part of the inscription was left untranscribed. Nonetheless, he assiduously compiled materials on the bronzes and their inscriptions in the hope that others
would continue his work. Rather than propounding a coherent point of view, Liu's *Xian Qin guqi tu* merely reports the material available to him and presents the current state of research. This way of presenting ancient bronzes and their inscriptions left a profound impression on later collectors and scholars.

Having been initiated and advocated for by Ouyang and Liu, the interest in collecting and studying antiquities spread quickly, especially after Ouyang was appointed an assistant councillor in charge of state affairs in 1061. During the late 1050s and early 1060s, Ouyang took many promising young men under his protection, and a circle of collectors formed around him. Its members shared their findings and exchanged rubbings, and they further inspired collecting by other literati serving at the imperial court or active in the capital. Although the younger generations had different predilections, they shared common interests in antiquities: Ouyang's chief protégé, the celebrated poet and painting theorist Su Shi 魏昇 (1036–1101), also collected ancient bronze vessels and left several commentaries on them. Su Shi's friend Li Gonglin 李公麟 (ca. 1042–1106), an accomplished literati painter, painted the bronze and jade objects he had collected onto scrolls, added his commentaries, and circulated the scrolls among his friends. Li's work is no longer extant, but fragments of his commentaries quoted in a later catalog have allowed Robert E. Harrist to make a partial reconstruction. Moving beyond the ritual, historical, and aesthetic dimensions of ancient bronzes, Shen Guo 沈括 (1031–95), the famous polymath of the time, further looked into the technical aspects of their production and offered his insightful observations.

With the spread of Ouyang's and Liu's works, collecting and studying antiquities flourished among scholars in the later half of the eleventh century. In 1092, the earliest extant illustrated catalog of ancient bronzes appeared: the *Kaogu tu*, compiled by the Confucian scholar Lü Dalin 吕大臨 (ca. 1047–93). Several editions of the *Kaogu tu* survive, most dating after the seventeenth century, but the eighteenth-century Siku quanshu edition is recorded to have been copied after a Song imprint. The *Kaogu tu* was pioneering in its time in that it juxtaposed an image of each object with that of its inscription (where present). This not only established a new format for cataloging bronzes but also provided an entirely new kind of visual experience (fig. 1). The *Kaogu tu* has exerted an enduring influence on antiquarian publishing practices that continues even today.

Remarkably, the *Kaogu tu* was not the record of one person's collection. In addition to works from the imperial collections, it included objects from thirty-seven private collectors, numbering more than two hundred objects in total, of which only eight pieces were owned by Lü's family. Since a drawing of each object is included, Lü must have been acquainted with the collectors in some way in order to gain access to the objects and make the illustrations. It
is unclear, though, what motivated him to organize these scattered collections into a comprehensive catalog. Lü Dalin’s brother, the renowned statesman Lü Dafang 吕大防 (1027–97), once said that “amassing treasures from the previous dynasties equipped one with the essential tools to make the country prosperous, but in what way could ancient treasures make a country prosperous?” Could the forces driving Lü Dalin to compile this work have transcended the evident factors in the intellectual and scholarly realm? To explore these questions, we must turn to the political situation of the late eleventh century. We shall see that political criticism became enmeshed in antiquarian projects such as the Kaogu tu at a time when irreconcilable factionalism had come to dominate court politics.

**Factional Politics and the Kaogu Tu**

To understand the effects the Kaogu tu might have had on contemporary politics, we must first ask: Who was Lü Dalin and who were the collectors whose bronzes were included in the Kaogu tu? Although the Kaogu tu is Lü Dalin’s only extant work, Lü was a well-known Confucian scholar. He first studied
with Zhang Zai 张载 (1020–77) and transferred to the school of Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033–1107) after Zhang's death. Both Zhang and Cheng were among the most renowned Confucian thinkers of their time. Steeped in the study of the Confucian classics, Lü had a particular interest in ritual. As one of Cheng's four most eminent disciples, he enjoyed enthusiastic praise from his contemporaries.

Lü came from a family of moderate means. His father held only local official positions, but Lü and three of his brothers achieved the jinshi degree, the highest honor for educated men. At court, Lü Dafang only served in a middle-ranking position, but his elder brother, Lü Dafang, was appointed chief councillor in charge of state affairs during the Yuanyou reign period (1086–94) of Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1086–1100). As we shall see, this connection proved crucial in Lü Dalin's compilation of the Kaogu tu.

The Yuanyou reign period was a key moment in late Northern Song factional politics. It marked the irreconcilable breach between two factions at the imperial court. The political strife at the time can be traced back to the late 1060s, when the scholar-official Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–86) convinced the young and ambitious emperor, Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1068–85), to launch a comprehensive reform to address military weakness, financial deficits, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and other social ills all at once. The fundamental and radical changes to government institutions, taxation, schooling, and the examination system inaugurated by Wang were at first received with much hope, but controversy soon developed into an open struggle among officials of the central government. Two factions emerged: the supporters of the reform, known as the New Party, and its opponents, the Old Party. The New Party was in power throughout Shenzong's reign, and sympathizers of the Old Party were either demoted or exiled. The political tide changed, however, when Emperor Shenzong died in 1085 and Dowager Empress Xuanren 宣仁 (1032–93), the regent for the young emperor, Zhezong, reversed the reform policies. The pro-reform New Party returned to power once again, however, when Emperor Zhezong assumed the throne in 1093 after the death of Dowager Empress Xuanren. The succeeding emperor, Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101–25), further sustained the reform policies by taking severe measures to proscribe any opposition to the reform. Modern historians consequently divide the late part of the Northern Song period into three phases: reform (1069–85), antireform (1086–93), and postreform (1094–1125). Protracted New Party–Old Party factionalism permeated every aspect of court politics during the last decades of the Northern Song. Most of the time, the conservatives were suppressed; they only came to power briefly in the antireform phase during the Yuanyou reign period. It was at that time that Lü Dafang, Lü Dalin's elder brother, was called back to the capital to serve as chief councillor. It is obvious from this promotion that Lü Dafang was a major antireform political
figure. Meanwhile, Lü Dalin served at the Imperial Library (bushusheng 祕書省) and worked on the Kaogu tu.

Not accidentally, some of the private collectors whose bronzes were included in the Kaogu tu were also among the most adamant opponents to Wang Anshi's reform policies. For instance, Wen Yanbo 文彥博 (1006–97), who owned sixteen bronze objects recorded in the Kaogu tu, had been councillor to Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1023–63). After quarrels with Wang over the reforms, Wen pleaded for permission to retire and left the capital, Kaifeng, for the western capital, Luoyang. Luoyang had become a center of conservatism and implicitly rivaled the imperial court at Kaifeng. Lü Dalin's teacher, Cheng Yi, who also opposed the reforms, was in Luoyang as well. Lü Dalin's acquaintance with Wen probably dates to this time. During the Yuanyou period, Wen was called back to the capital and served honorably at court until his retirement.

The pioneering antiquary Liu Chang was another collector whose objects were cataloged in the Kaogu tu, which includes thirteen bronze objects from Liu's collection. As Liu himself had died long before the Kaogu tu was compiled, Lü Dalin must have obtained these materials either from Liu's Xian Qin guqi tu or from his son, Liu Fengshi 劉奉世 (1041–1113). Pertinently, Liu Fengshi was another antireform figure who served at court during the Yuanyou reign.

A look at the biographies of the collectors represented in the Kaogu tu shows that many had served at the Yuanyou court: the aforementioned Li Gonglin, Lü Dafang, and Su Shi, as well as Su Song 蘇頌 (1020–1101), Wang Qinchen 王欽臣 (fl. 1000s), and Zhang Shunmin 張舜民 (fl. 1000s). Their collections, as well as the imperial collections from the Imperial Archives (mi ge 秘閣), the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (taichang 太常), and the palace storehouse (neicang 内藏), constituted a major part of the Kaogu tu. It becomes clear that the compilation of the Kaogu tu is the direct outcome of the reunion of the conservatives at the capital during the Yuanyou reign period—an outgrowth of the political situation of that time.

Having returned to the capital after some twenty years on the political sidelines, the Old Party scholar-officials of the Yuanyou reign period engaged in a variety of cultural activities, as evidenced in the comments they exchanged with one another. For instance, a colophon to Winter Forest (Hanlin tu 賢林圖), a painting by Li Cheng 李成 (ca. 919–67), shows that Lü Dafang, Fan Chunren 范純仁 (1027–1101), Li Gonglin, and Su Shi all viewed the painting owned by Wen Yanbo. Many of these men were also in Lü Dalin's circle, and we may assume that similar kinds of artistic gatherings also must have taken place for viewing bronzes, as suggested in Lü's preface to the Kaogu tu, where Lü recounts that he had examined numerous bronzes in scholar-officials' houses and was always able to sketch the likenesses of the objects and ponder upon them. Lu must
have viewed the bronze objects during occasional gatherings held by court officials and gradually accumulated enough material for a book.

Hence, for the politically sensitive literati reader of the late eleventh century, there would have been little question that the Kaogu tu was the product of conservative, antireform circles. The listing of collector-officials' names at the beginning declared this affiliation openly. Presumably, the compilation of the Kaogu tu celebrates the triumph of the conservatives' return to power and helped to mollify the resentment built up during the two decades of reform policies, a time when they were barred from court and their teachings and writings were severely suppressed while the theories of Wang Anshi and his school prevailed in school curricula and examinations.36

These political underpinnings do not undermine the accomplishment of the Kaogu tu. Not only were Lü Dali's readings of inscriptions regularly cited in later works but the format of the Kaogu tu served as a model for later catalogs—most notably, the early-twelfth-century catalog of the Song imperial collection, the Xuanhe bogu tu (Illustrated catalog of antique treasures from the Xuanhe Hall), which unquestionably marks the pinnacle of Northern Song antiquarianism.37 Compiled by court officials, the Xuanhe bogu tu recorded the ancient bronze objects collected at Emperor Huizong's court. As an imperial project, it was much vaster in scale than the Kaogu tu: it cataloged more than eight hundred bronze objects in thirty chapters. One of the goals in compiling the Xuanhe bogu tu was to provide examples for fashioning new ritual implements as part of Huizong's reform of state ritual, a deliberate continuation of Shenzong and Wang Anshi's reform. From the outset, then, the authority of the Xuanhe bogu tu far transcended the theoretical concerns of classical scholarship.

This concern with practical matters explains why the compilers of the Xuanhe bogu tu did not follow the epigraphically oriented model of Ouyang Xiu's Jigulu, which provided rubbings of inscriptions, transcriptions, and commentaries but no images of objects. Instead, they adopted the precedent of the Kaogu tu, juxtaposing illustrations of the object and a rubbing-like image of its inscription, with the authors' commentaries placed at the end of each entry (fig. 2). Essentially, there is no difference in format between the Xuanhe bogu tu and the Kaogu tu, and a comparison of the contents of both books shows that the court officials who compiled the Xuanhe bogu tu made extensive use of the Kaogu tu, often borrowing transcriptions of inscriptions from that work. The entries for the aforementioned Jin Jiang-ding, which had originally belonged to Liu Chang, provide a good example of the close relation between the two works. The inscription on this cauldron had been transcribed by Liu Chang and copied in Ouyang Xiu's Jigu lu,38 which the Kaogu tu quoted in addition to providing an image of the vessel.39 By Emperor Huizong's reign, the cauldron had entered
the imperial collection, and it was included in the Xuanhe bogu tu as well.\textsuperscript{10} A juxtaposition of the inscriptions and transcriptions in the three works shows conspicuous advances in scholarship (figs. 3–5).

Comparing Liu Chang's transcription, which Ouyang Xiu used in the figu lu (fig. 3), with Lü Dalin's transcription in the Kaogu tu (fig. 4), it is clear that Lü had made great progress. Liu's transcription still leaves many graphs untranscribed, which Liu indicated using circles, while Lü successfully deciphers every graph and sometimes provides the reader with the current Song equivalents,
which he noted using small characters (circled in fig. 4). Lü did not, however, accomplish this on his own; in his notes, he gives due credit to the paleographer Yang Nanzhong 杨南仲 (fl. 1000s), a contemporary of Ouyang Xiu.

The transcription for this object in the Xuanhe bogu tu (fig. 5) is by and large the same as in the Kaogu tu. The Xuanhe bogu tu authors sometimes have different opinions about individual characters (circled in fig. 5), but in most cases these discrepancies do not cause major differences in understanding. In addition, the Xuanhe bogu tu authors tended to prefer current character forms over the archaic forms; wherever Lü Dalin has suggested a current equivalent in small characters, the Xuanhe bogu tu authors replace the archaic character with it in their transcription. The rationale for this procedure (which modern paleographers would be prone to decry) may well have to do with the practical concerns of the work, which principally aimed to provide instructions for making ritual vessels. At any rate, it is obvious from this comparison that Lü Dalin’s Kaogu tu served as a basis for the Xuanhe bogu tu, just as Ouyang Xiu’s jigu lu had provided a foundation for the Kaogu tu. The Xuanhe bogu tu entry on the jin Jiang-ting, however, makes no mention of the Kaogu tu or Lü in its citations.

The deliberate failure to credit the Kaogu tu is characteristic of the Xuanhe bogu tu as a whole. The name Lü Dalin appears nowhere in the thirty chapters of the Xuanhe bogu tu. The omission is all the more striking because the authors of the Xuanhe bogu tu otherwise cite previous scholarship quite extensively. They refer, for instance, to such works as the Sanli tu 三禮圖 (Pictures for the three compendia on ritual), by Nie Chongyi 尼沖義 (fl. after 950); the Jigu lu, by Ouyang Xiu; the Guqi tu 古器圖 (Antiquities illustrations), by Li Gonglin; and, most tellingly, the Zi shuo 字說 (Interpretations of words), by Wang Anshi. Indeed, it is surprising how frequently one encounters Wang and his Zi shuo in the Xuanhe bogu tu, especially considering that it is an etymological work presenting the origins of words and has little to do with ancient bronzes or rituals. The explanation may, once again, be found in the political context.

The Xuanhe Bogu Tu and Its Political Polemic

Emperor Huizong’s reign, during which the Xuanhe bogu tu was compiled, is known as the postreform period. It was marked by a return of the reformers—or, more precisely, followers of the reformers, since most of the active figures of the reform period had by this time passed away. Nonetheless, the factional strife continued with accelerating ferocity. The emperor, in the second year after ascending to the throne, changed his reign name to Chongning 崇寧 (Respecting [Xi]ning), expressing his desire to resume the reform efforts
inaugurated during Emperor Shenzong's Xining reign. Guided by the principle of shaoshu 绍述 (continuing the legacy of the former emperors), Emperor Huizong and his councillor Cai Jing 祭京 (1047-1126) resumed many of the reform policies and favored followers of the New Party.

This reversal was followed by a series of reprisals against the conservative Yuanyou faction that culminated between 1102 and 1104. Many officials who had held office during the antireform period of the Yuanyou reign were banned from holding government positions, and their names were inscribed onto stone
stelae that were erected in front of the palace and thereafter displayed in school compounds all over the empire. The persecution extended to the family members and disciples even after the death of the Yuanyou officials themselves. The banned officials’ sons and brothers were blocked from taking higher-level examinations and thus denied the opportunity to serve in the central government, and their descendants were forbidden to marry into the Song imperial lineage. In addition, the scholarly works by the proscribed officials and those of their disciples—the so-called Yuanyou scholarship—were pronounced heretical and were banned, and the printing blocks were destroyed.

The list of proscribed officials of the Yuanyou reign is easily found. Not surprisingly, it includes Lü Dalin’s teacher Cheng Yi and many of Lü’s acquaintances; some had contributed their collections to the Kaogu tu, such as Liu Fengshi, Wang Qinchen, Zhang Shunmin, and Su Shi. Probably due to his minor role in court politics, Lü Dalin himself escaped proscription, but his brother Lü Dafang, who as we have heard had served as chief councillor during the Yuanyou period, was listed at the top. Also ranked at the top of the proscription list was Wen Yanbo, head of the Old Party and a major contributor to the Kaogu tu.
This political atmosphere influenced the further reception of the *Kaogu tu*. The work was not banned or burned like other works by Yuanyou scholars, probably because it played no role in examinations or school curricula. Is Yuanyou affiliation, however, was clear: the author was Lü Dafang’s brother, and many of the objects included came from members of the Yuanyou faction. The authors of the *Xuanhe bogu tu* must therefore have felt ambivalent about the *Kaogu tu*. On the one hand, it was the most comprehensive work on the subject of ancient bronzes composed up to that point; on the other, its strong Yuanyou association rendered it politically suspect. This is, presumably, why the authors decided to use the book but not to mention it or its author. Instead, the *Xuanhe bogu tu* compilers dutifully cited Wang Anshi whenever they could. The political motivations for favoring his writings are obvious.

Wang’s *Zi shuo* was one of the most disputed books of the time. While Wang viewed it as embodying the essence of his classical studies and sanctioned it in school curricula, the conservatives ridiculed it and criticized its inclusion of Buddhist and Daoist elements, which they regarded as corruptions of the Way. The book’s reception closely mirrored the changing currents of the factional politics in the late Northern Song. During the reform period, it was held up as authoritative and sanctioned by the state, while in the ensuing antireform period it was banned. The ban was removed in 1094 when the reform period began, and *Zi shuo* was again promoted to a high status during Emperor Huizong’s reign. This favored status did not last long, however. In 1125, when Emperor Huizong hastily abdicated the throne on the eve of the Jurchen invasion, which eventually brought down the Northern Song in 1127, and his son Qinzong 銘宗 (1101–61; r. 1126) ascended to power, Wang’s *Zi shuo* was banned once again and the New Party and its followers were likewise condemned. At this historical juncture, the ban on New Party scholarship was undoubtedly intended as an indirect criticism of Huizong’s political and military failures.

In such a politicized atmosphere, citing or not citing a work—whether the *Kaogu tu* or *Zi shuo*—would indicate one’s political affiliations. Political ideology permeated scholarly production because Song officials were not merely functionaries but also classicists, historians, writers, and critics. For them, the study of antiquities was more than scholarly research; it carried larger social and political significance. Given the predominance of political ideology in literati communities, some individual works compiled during this period, especially those written by authors who were more involved in court politics, show an obvious bias. *Tieweishan congтан* 調術山叢談 (Miscellaneous accounts in Mount Tiewei) by the court official Cai Tao 蔡條 (died after 1148) is a good example. Although this work contains many firsthand accounts unknown
elsewhere, Cai Tao’s views are marked by his attempt to defend his father, Cai Jing, Huizong’s chief councillor, whom his contemporaries condemned for having lost the Northern Song to the Jurchen. When commenting on the compilation of Xuanhe bogu tu, Cai Tao does not include a single mention of Lü Dalin and the Kaogu tu. This is no surprise, because Cai Tao’s father had been responsible for proscribing the Yuanyou officials with whom Lü was aligned.

And yet, despite the nearly unavoidable politicization of scholarship in the late Northern Song, there are also some works that are more neutral. One example relevant to this discussion is the Jinshi lu (Records of bronze and stone inscriptions) by an official antiquary, Zhao Mingcheng (1081–1129). Compiled posthumously by his wife, Li Qingzhao (1084–after 1155), the work is a catalog of Zhao’s rubbings collection with his commentaries appended. It followed the format of Ouyang Xiu’s Jigu lu, as clearly acknowledged in Zhao’s preface. Zhao’s interests in ancient writing brought him into conversation and occasional disagreement with earlier antiquarian scholars. While he did not agree with Lü Dalin on everything, neither did he pass him over in silence: Zhao relied on his own judgment. His general criticism of his eleventh-century forerunners—that they were too prone to relate inscriptions to historical texts, sometimes unnecessarily—remains valid today.

A noticeable inconsistency occurs in an account recorded both by Zhao Mingcheng and in the Xuanhe bogu tu. The account involves a royal family member, Zhao Zhonghuo (fl. early 1100s), who presents Emperor Zhezong with a square ancient bronze cauldron that bears an inscription saying that the cauldron was made by the Duke of Zhou (fl. 1000s BCE) for sacrifice to his father, King Wen (r. early 1000s BCE). Because both the Duke of Zhou and King Wen of the Zhou dynasty were renowned historical figures, this object received special attention from the emperor, who called in court officials to discuss it. But after careful scrutiny, they dismissed it as a forgery and Zhao Zhonghuo was fined. Interestingly, the Xuanhe bogu tu dates this occurrence to the Yuanyou reign period—the antireform period—whereas Zhao Mingcheng attributes it to Emperor Zhezong’s Shaosheng reign (1094–98), during the postreform period. Moreover, the authors of the Xuanhe bogu tu seized this opportunity to make an attack on the Yuanyou officials:

Now it is the time to follow the illustrious predecessors to initiate new great policies. So we use this precious object to admonish the wicked faction so that the righteous will not be blocked out from the imperial court. Meanwhile, it is a great joy to see this thing of another dynasty, mysterious and precious, reappear in the world.
The same anecdote also appears in a work by the writer Lu You 陆游 (1125–1210). Lu had heard the story from his father and, in agreement with Zhao, he dates the occurrence to the Shaosheng period. In my opinion, it is obvious that the authors of the Xuanhe bogu tu intentionally changed the date of the anecdote in order to denounce the Yuanyou officials. Antiquities and antiquarian knowledge were deeply intertwined with the political struggle at the imperial court.

Scholar-officials of the Southern Song period (1127–1279), who were not involved in the factionalism of the late Northern Song, were able to judge the antiquarian trends of the former dynasty more objectively. In his Zhou shi 禹史 (History of epigraphy), written under court sponsorship, Zhai Qinian 蔡京 (fl. 1100s) lists and describes the major antiquarian works of the Northern Song. He does not omit the Kaogu tu, but neither does he discuss the relationship between it and the Xuanhe bogu tu. He simply credits Emperor Huizong and his officials with the compilation of the Xuanhe bogu tu.

Later on, when recording the new ritual vessels made during Emperor Huizong's reign, Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–96) cites a late-twelfth-century official record:

> From Liu Chang's Xian Qin guqi tu, Ouyang Xiu's Ji gu tu, and Li Gonglin's Guqi tu to Lü Dalin's Kaogu tu, the authors made their records based on direct observation of the bronze objects from the Three Dynasties they had collected. From these catalogs came the newly organized ritual vessel system in Huizong's reign.

This twelfth-century author thus included Lü Dalin's achievement among the works that contributed to Huizong's new ritual system. By then, it seems, historical distance allowed for greater fairness than before in summing up the development of antiquarianism during the Northern Song.

**Conclusion**

The ambivalence with which scholars approached early antiquarian catalogs, as in the cases of the Kaogu tu and the Xuanhe bogu tu, reveals how scholarly authority can be wielded by intellectuals in a highly politicized society such as the late Northern Song period. Compared to earlier periods, the versatility of Song scholar-officials broadened the range of media through which their political agendas could be pursued. Even so, we should not dismiss Northern Song antiquaries' interest in the past as merely a convenient pretext or cover-up. Steeped in Confucian classics, the antiquaries endeavored to recover the "true" meaning of the texts and artifacts from antiquity. Their competition for
authority over antiquarian knowledge, albeit overshadowed by court factionalism, drove Northern Song antiquarianism to its height, bringing forth the pioneering works of the *Kao gu tu* and *Xuanhe bogo tu*. Only by recognizing the cultural and political currents faced by Northern Song antiquaries can we comprehend why antiquarianism was able to occupy such a prominent place in the scholarly world of the late Northern Song period.

**Notes**

All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.


3. See the essay by Yun-Chiahn C. Sena, this volume.


5. See Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Ouyang Wenzhonggong ji* 歐陽文忠公集 [Collected writings of Ouyang Wenzhong gong], in *Sibu congcan* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1984–89), j. 66, 7b–11b; see also Ouyang’s comments on calligraphy, in *Ouyang Wenzhonggong ji*, j. 129, 5a–b.

6. For the relationship between Ouyang Xiu’s promotion of Yan Zhengqing’s calligraphy and the political struggles between the emperor and the scholar-officials, see Amy McNair, *The Upright Brush: Yan Zhengqing’s Calligraphy and Song Literati Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).


14. Lü Dalin 呂大臨, *Kao gu tu* 考古圖 [Illustrations for the study of antiquity], in *Siku*
In Ouyang Xiu’s Jigu lu, there are correspondences between Ouyang and his friends regarding the exchange of rubbings. See Ouyang, Ouyang Wenzhonggong ji, j. 134, 20a–21a.

For examples, see Su Shi 蘇軾, “Dongpo tiba 東坡題跋 [Colophons by Dongpo],” in Songren tiba 宋人題跋 [Colophons by Song writers] (Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1962), 12, 119.


For examples, see Shen Guà 沈括, Mengxi bitan 墨溪筆談 [Brush talks from the Dream Brook studio], annotated by Hu Daojing 胡道靜 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1958), 192–94.

The earliest extant edition of the Kaogu tu is a fourteenth-century reprint of a 1290 edition, but the eighteenth-century Siku quanshu edition by the Qing court has the best illustrations. I thus use the former for the text and latter for illustrations. For a reproduction of the former, see Lü Dalin, Kaogu tu 考古圖 [Illustrations for the study of antiquity], in Siku quanshu congshu 存目叢書 [Collections of books listed in the section of surviving titles of Siku quanshu] (Taipei, Taiwan: Zhuangyan Wenhua, 1995), vol. 77, 614–750. For reproduction of the latter, see Lü Dalin, Kaogu tu, in Kaogu tu, Xu kaogu tu, Kaogu tu shiwén 考古圖, 紹考古圖, 考古圖釋文 [Illustrations for the study of antiquity, the sequel, and interpretations of words] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987). Also included in this book is a study of the editions of the Kaogu tu by Yong Geng, later included in Rong Geng 容庚, “Songdai jijin shuji shuping” 宋代吉金書籍評 [Study of the antiquarian catalogs of the Song], in Rong Geng xuanji 容庚選集 [Selected writings of Rong Geng] (Tianjin, China: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), 1–73.


For a biography of Lü Dalin, see Wang, Dongdu shiiliü, 1367–68; and Tuotuo, Song shi, j. 340, 10848–49.

Historical records are not consistent about the number of brothers in Lü’s family; some list six. According to the gazetteer, there were five, and four of them received the jinshi degrees in the years 1049, 1053, 1057, and 1061; see Lü Maxun 吕懋勳, ed., Lantian xian zhi 蘭田縣志 [Gazetteer of the Lantian county] (Taipei: Chengwen, 1969), 290.

For a biography of Lü Dafang, see Wang, Dongdu shiiliü, 1363–67; and Tuotuo, Song shi, j. 340, 10839–44.

For the study of factional politics of the late Northern Song, see Liu, Reform in Sung China, 9; Ari Daniel Levine, "Che-tsung's Reign (1085–1100) and the Age of Faction" and "The Reigns of Hui-tsung (1100–1126) and Ch'in-tsung (1126–1127) and the Fall of the Northern Song," in Denis Twitchett and Paul J. Smith, eds., The Cambridge History of China, vol. 5, pt. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 484–555, 556–643; and Luo Jiaxiang (羅家駒), Bei Song dangzheng yanjiu 北宋黨爭研究 [A study of factionalism in the Northern Song dynasty] (Taipei: Wenjin Chubanshe, 1993).

27. For a biography of Wen Yanbo, see Wang, Dongdu shiliue, 1013–25; and Tuotuo, Song shi, j. 313, 10258–65.

28. For a biography of Liu Fengshi, see Wang, Dongdu shiliue, 1160–61.


33. Wang, Dongdu shiliue, 1462–64; and Tuotuo, Song shi, j. 347, 11005–6.


35. Li, Kaogu tu, in Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, vol. 277, 615.

36. For the study of factional politics of the late Northern Song, see Luo, Bei Song dangzheng yanjiu.

About the title of this book: it is variably referred to as Bogu tu 博古圖, Xuanhe bognu tu 宣和博古圖, or Chongxiu bognu tu 重修博古圖 in bibliographic accounts and antiquarian works of the twelfth century. I follow the practice of the mid-twelfth-century official account Zhoushi 簡史 in using Xuanhe bognu tu throughout. Among the several titles, this was also more commonly used during the Southern Song.


39. Li, Kaogu tu, in Kaogu tu, Xukaogu tu, Kaogu tu shiwen, 8–9.


41. For examples, see Wang, ed., Zhida chongxiu Xuanhe bognu tu, j. 5, 11a; j. 6, 10a, 31a; j. 7, 25b, 37a–b.

42. Ouyang Xiu is only cited once; see Wang, ed., Zhida chongxiu Xuanhe bognu tu, j. 2, 34b.

43. Li Gonglin is cited a few times; see Wang, ed., Zhida chongxiu Xuanhe bognu tu, j. 3, 8a; j. 8, 9b; j. 13, 3b.

44. The book itself does not survive, but quotations in other works are compiled into a work. See Zhang Zongxian 李宗賢, Wang Anshi "Zishuo" ji 王安石字說輯 [Compilation of Wang Anshi's Zishuo], annotated by Cao Jinyan 曹錦炎 (Fuzhou, China: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 2005). Peter K. Bol argues that Wang Anshi had discovered an integrated system in his Zi shuo, which made Wang believe he
was going to be able to restore *siven* (this culture of ours). See Peter K. Bol, "This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 232–33.

45. Wang Anshi is among the sources cited most often—more than twenty times. For examples, see Wang, ed., *Zhida chongxiu Xuanhe bogu tulu*, j. 1, 30b; 44a; j. 2, 5b; j. 3, 10b; j. 5, 51b.

46. Tuotuo, *Song shi*, j. 19, 365, 368. There are two versions of *Yuanyou dangji bei*, the stele that listed proscribed Yuanyou officials: one was composed in the second year (1103) of Huizong's Chongning reign, in which 98 officials were proscribed; it was expanded to 309 officials the next year (1104). For a list of both, see Huang Yizhou 胡以周 et al., *Xu zizhi tongqian changbian shibu* 總資治通鑑長編補 (Supplements to the chronology of the Northern Song history) (Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1961), j. 21, 9; j. 24, 3–6.


50. Huang et al., *Xu zizhi tongqian changbian shibu*, j. 21, 9; and Tuotuo, *Song shi*, j. 22, 414.

51. For a collection of biographies of the proscribed individuals, see Lu, *Yuanyou dangren zhu*an.

52. The two parties had different opinions about the classics. In short, the New Party exalted the *Zhou li* (Rites of Zhou; comp. ca. 300 B.C.E.), while the Old Party promoted a moral didacticism based on the *Chunqiu* (Springs and Autumn annals). For the divergent views on the classics between the two camps, see the following works: James T.C. Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, 22–58; Robert M. Hartwell, "Historical Analogism, Public Policy, and Social Science in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century China," *American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1971): 690–727; and Bol, "This Culture of Ours," 212–54. For the sanction of Wang's works, see Tuotuo, *Song shi*, j. 346, 10969.


57. Zhao, *Songben jinshi lu*, 298.

58. See Wang, ed., *Zhida chongxiu Xuanhe bogu tulu*, j. 2, 5b.


