Promoting Palindromes – Female Agency & Art Making in China

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Presentation & Representation

Images & the Imaging

Objectivity & Gendered Subjectivity

Reclaiming Female Agency

The Way of Water 上善若水 – Empresses, Art and Agency in Song China
Women as patrons, tastemakers, interpreters

*Arbiter/mediator*: patron, collector, collaborator, creator

-Uncovering the subversive power of women
- Promoting Palindromes: Su Hui & Empress Wu
- Empress Liu and Sage Mother Worship
- Imperial Women and the Art of Writing
- Empress Wu and the Aesthetics of Worthiness, on Didactic Art
- Empress Yang and the Art of Expression
- The Way of Water & Behind the Screen
Funerary objects from the Royal Consort Fuhao of the Shang

Anyang, c. 1200 BCE
Empress Dowager Wenmin (442-90) & the making of twin-caves at Yungang, c. 480
Empress’ Procession, Bingyang Central Cave, Longmen, c. 520
Empress Ling (d. 528) and the making of Yoning Temple, 517
Empress Wu Zetian
Fengxian Temple, c. 675
武則天与《萬歲通天帖 - 唐摹王羲之一門書翰》

Empress Wu as calligrapher and collector

（武）則天以（王）方慶家多書籍，嘗訪求右軍遺跡。方慶奏曰：「臣十代從伯祖羲之書，先有四十餘紙，貞觀十二年太宗購求，先臣並以進之，唯有一卷現今存。又進臣十一代祖（王）導…並九代三從伯祖晉中書令（王）獻之以下二十八人書，共十卷。」則天御武成殿示群臣，仍令中書舍人崔融為《寶章集》以敘其事，復賜方慶，當時甚以為榮。《舊唐書》,卷89《王方慶傳》

后不欲奪志，遂稱之。《寶章集》

飾錦繡，訪求右軍書，貞觀十二一代祖書，共十書，共十書，共十書，共十書，共十書。
Record on Su Hui’s Silk-woven Palindrome, 692
Su Hui’s *Huiwen* palindrome

*Live not on evil, madam, live not on evil.*
—Traditional palindrome, from Bergeson, *Palindromes and Anagrams*
Illustration of Su Hui’s *Huiwen* palindrome, 15th C
僭越之责
武則天第二？
武后臨朝圖
Empress Liu (969 – 1033)
Sage Mother Hall at Jin Shrine, c 1020’s
Female Sovereignty & the Myth of Changing God at the Ji Shrine
The Making of a New Paradigm: Empress Liu (969-1033) and the Sage Mother Cult
晋祠 聖母殿 雕刻群像  Sculpture Program at the Sage Mother Hall
晋祠聖母殿
重簷七間殿堂
the Sage Mother Hall
Conflating image of female deity & empress
Who was the sage mother? 聖母何人？

- 女媧，西王母，后土
- 水神，雨神

- 古今女主后妃：
  叔虞母邑姜
  武則天 “聖母臨人帝業永昌”
  章獻明肅劉后 - 名符其實一代聖母
Empress Cao as Empress Dowager Regent and Collector
曹后 (1016 - 79), 善飛白書, 「慈壽宮寶」 鑑藏章, 「盡購李成畫」
The Way of Water: Feminine Domain and the Cultural Spaces of the Song Women

Female Virtue & Talent
賢志、瑞文與奉華寶藏
－南宋皇室女性之鑒藏品味與性別文化空間    李慧漱

Mindful of Worthiness:
Art Collection, Production and Gender Space of the Southern Song Imperial Women
Empress Wu of Gaozong (r. 1127-62)

- Accomplished calligrapher and the emperor’s ghostwriter
Empress as collector and producer of didactic art
Imperial women as collector of rare books and fine objects

書- 司馬光《資治通鑑考異》「奉華堂印」

瓷器 - 北宋定器與汝青瓷器「奉華」款
收藏器與使用器之別
Empress Yang (1062 – 1233)
- Emperor’s ghostwriter, artist, patron
- Female agency of art
Receiving the wind, she presents her artful charm;
Moistened from the dew, she reveals her pink beauty.
The Last Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) & Female Agency to the Modern Era