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## INTRODUCTION

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### General remarks

In the first decade of this century, a hoard of manuscripts was discovered in a small room connected to the side of a cave shrine at Tun-huang in the province of Kansu in northwestern China. For students of literature, among the most important texts found there was a group of narratives written in semicolloquial Chinese. These texts deal with both religious (mostly Buddhist) and secular themes and represent the earliest known examples of the alternating prose–verse (*chantefable*, prosimetric) narrative style in China. They are of the utmost importance in understanding the development of a wide variety of popular literary genres, including various types of fiction, drama, and recitatives or chants. However, due to the difficult language in which these texts are written, far less attention has been paid to them than they deserve.

The purpose of the present work is to understand as much as possible of four representative texts. These are the Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and Chang I-ch'ao transformation texts and the Tun-huang story about Wu Tzu-hsü. It is my hope that competent literary historians will thereby be stimulated to examine closely the entire corpus of Tun-huang popular literature and to incorporate it as a fundamental topic in future discussions of the origin and evolution of vernacular literary forms. I have myself completed research on several basic questions regarding these texts and plan to publish the results of my work (entitled *T'ang Transformations*) in the near future. In particular, I have investigated the precise meaning of the problematic terms *pien* 變 and *pien-wen* 變文 which occur on some of the manuscripts as generic designations, Indian influences on the growth of popular narrative in China, and analogues in other Asian countries. To avoid duplication with *Transformations*, theoretical and historical discussion of *pien-wen* will only briefly be touched on here.

### The meaning of *pien-wen*

Since the discovery of the Tun-huang manuscripts, numerous explanations of the term *pien-wen* have been put forward by scholars studying

these texts. As we shall see in our discussion of the *pien-wen* corpus below, there is much disagreement about just what belongs therein. A large part of that disagreement stems from the lack of a precise understanding of the word *pien*. There is no ambiguity about *wen* since it simply means ‘text’. The problem lies with *pien* whose basic signification is ‘alter’ but which has a broad range of extended meanings. Among the more common renditions of *pien-wen* are ‘alternating text’, ‘popularization’ (i.e. popularized text), and ‘text relating a marvellous/strange incident’. Those who advance the ‘alternating text’ interpretation stress one formal characteristic of these prosimetric narratives, namely the alternation between prose and verse sections. This view has largely been discredited because, among other reasons, it is hard to justify the extraction of the stipulated meaning from the word *pien* standing by itself. The idea that *pien-wen* are ‘popularizations’ is still very prevalent and is the meaning intended by most modern scholars who write on this subject. But this explanation ignores the demonstrably strong Buddhist connotations of the term and, furthermore, requires some such forced interpretation as the following: ‘changed [from a canonical sūtra to a popular narrative] text’ or ‘changed [from literary language text to colloquial language] text’. The third major explanation of *pien-wen* mentioned above is much closer to the actual meaning of the term as it would have been understood by the T’ang (618–907) and Five Dynasties (907–959) individuals who wrote it as a generic designation on certain Tun-huang manuscripts. Modern scholars who advance this explanation legitimately refer to such Japanese expressions as *hen-na koto* 変な事 (‘unusual event’) and Six Dynasties (222–589) occurrences of *pien* where it seems to mean something like *ch’i* 奇 (‘strange’) or *i* 異 (‘uncommon’). Yet close, philological analysis<sup>1</sup> of the word *pien* as it is employed in numerous Buddhist texts and, more importantly, in the *pien-wen* themselves, reveals that the contemporary (late ninth through early tenth centuries) usage of the term was derived from Buddhist sources. Any explanation of *pien* as it applies to Tun-huang popular narratives must take into account its Buddhist connotations.

The *pien* of *pien-wen* is etymologically related to a Buddhist technical term meaning ‘transformation’. ‘Transformation’ here implies the coming or bringing into being (i.e. into illusory reality, Skt. *māyā*) of a scene or deity. The creative agent who causes the transformational manifestation

<sup>1</sup> This has been carried out in my forthcoming *T’ang Transformations* and will not be repeated here. *Transformations* also provides documentation for all other statements herein and an account of previous studies on the *pien-wen* genre. For abbreviated references to works cited, see the References.

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may be a Buddha, a Bodhisattva, or a saint such as Maudgalyāyana or Śāriputra. Highly skilled storytellers and actors – with the help of visual aids, gestures, and music – were also thought to be able to replicate transformational acts of creation. The ultimate religious purpose of such transformations was the release of all sentient beings from the vicious cycle of death and rebirth (*samsāra*). By hearing and viewing these transformations and reflecting upon them, the individual could become enlightened. Therefore, it is permissible to refer to *pien-wen* in English as ‘transformation text’ and the related visual art form, *pien-hsiang* 變相, as ‘transformation tableau’.

The philosophical basis for the concept of ‘transformation’ can readily be traced to its Indian sources. One of the most important ideas relating to this concept is expressed by a Sanskrit term indicating a changed state, *nirmāṇa* (Pāli *nimmāna*), which also can mean ‘a magical creation’.<sup>2</sup> The Sanskrit term *nirmāṇa-rati* (*lo pien-hua* 樂變化) thus means ‘enjoying magical creations’ and one expression for a transformationally manifested image is *nirmāṇa-nirbhāsa* (inadequately rendered in the Chinese version of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as ‘reflected/shadowy image’, *ying-hsiang* 影像).

Though originally alien to China, the Buddhistic notion of transformation proved fascinating to the Chinese people. In later popular culture, enormous delight was taken in the constantly shifting series of transformational guises adopted by the likes of Monkey in the novel, *Journey to the West*, by Wu Ch’eng-en 吳承恩 (fl. c. 1500–c. 1582). It is no accident that the performance of magic came to be known as *pien mo-shu* 變魔術 or *pien hsi-fa* 變戲法. Contemporary descriptions of the entertainers who told these T’ang and Five Dynasties transformation tales indicate that audiences were impressed by the manifestations evoked during their performances. Through singing, dancing, gestures, painted scrolls, shadow projections, and picturesque language, the performers recreated magically the characters and events in their stories.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ‘*Dharmasya nirmāṇam ivopaviṣṭam*’ (Aśvaghōṣa’s *Buddhacarita-kāvya-sūtra*, x.19): ‘[The Bodhisattva] sitting like a magic-image of dharma’, i.e., a ‘picture’ of Dharma. Johnston: ‘magically projected by Dharma’. Weller: ‘wie eine übernatürliche Schöpfung des Gesetzes’. Tibetan: *chos kyi sprul pa*. From Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II (New Haven, 1953), p. 302. The corresponding passage in the Chinese translation (*Fo so hsing tsan ching* 佛所行讚經) by Dharmarakṣa (414–21) accurately reads *yu jo fa-hua-shen* 猶若法化身 (Ta4.19c). The translation of the *Buddhacarita* (*Fo pen-hsing chi ching* 佛本行集經) by Jñānagupta (587) gives *ju chu fa-se hsiang hu-jan erh hua-hsien* 如諸法色像 / 忽然而化現 (Ta4.71c).

<sup>3</sup> See Matsumoto Eiichi 松本栄一, *Tonkō-ga no kenkyū* 敦煌画の研究 (Tokyo, 1937), vol. II, plate 54, for the sort of rough illustrations that may have been worked up rapidly to accompany the presentation of transformations.

**Corpus**

There is no agreement on how many *pien-wen* manuscripts exist. Estimates vary from around eighteen to over eight thousand! Such latitude obviously indicates that the terminology for dealing with Tun-huang literature remains in a chaotic state. The main reason why no consensus has been reached on the number of extant *pien-wen* is because no strict guidelines have been established for identifying the formal features of this genre. For some scholars, *pien-wen* signifies any noncanonical, nondocumentary literary text recovered from Tun-huang. Such a definition includes poetry of various types. Other scholars stipulate that a *pien-wen* be a popular narrative (in the broadest sense of the term) text from Tun-huang. The range of possibilities is still further narrowed by those who hold that it must be written in prosimetric form. Most students of Chinese popular literature recognize approximately eighty texts (those found in *Tun-huang pien-wen chi* (Peking, 1957), hereafter T) as legitimate representatives of the *pien-wen* genre. But when this body of texts is carefully examined, it is apparent that it embraces a disparate assortment of literary styles and forms. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to formulate a rigorous definition of *pien-wen* on the basis of this group of eighty texts.

A reasonable means for determining which texts are *pien-wen* and which are not is to examine and analyse those manuscripts that bear original titles designating them as *pien* or *pien-wen* and then extrapolate from this data the features of the genre. Very little contemporary evidence outside of the texts themselves sheds light on what the people of the T'ang and Five Dynasties periods conceived a *pien-wen* to be. Contemporary literary references to *pien-wen* tell us little more than that the oral antecedents of this genre were popular throughout China.

There is no essential, exclusive link between Tun-huang and *pien-wen*. The chief connection is the fortuitous one (dependent upon exigencies of climate and historical event) that the manuscripts happened to be preserved and discovered in Tun-huang. Some scholars view Tun-huang literary forms as if they were provincial in nature and thus not generally pertinent to the study of Chinese literature. But many of the manuscripts recovered from Tun-huang were copied down in far-distant parts of China and brought there by travellers. Similarly, although the Chin period (1115–1234) *Liu Chih-yüan Medley* 劉知遠諸宮調 was unearthed in the Gobi desert, we know that the printing blocks for it were cut in Shansi. The multitude of texts discovered in Japan (often in temples) is another case in point which demonstrates the mobility of Chinese popular literary texts.

Hence, 'Tun-huang *pien-wen*' simply implies '*pien-wen* discovered at Tun-huang', not '*pien-wen* peculiar to Tun-huang'.<sup>4</sup>

Several features identify the overwhelming majority of texts designated on the manuscripts as *pien* or *pien-wen*. They are narratives written in prosimetric style, the verse portions chiefly heptasyllabic. They deal with both secular and religious themes but all are written in semicolloquial language.

Another important fact was brought out by Umezu Jirō and Naba Toshisada many years ago but has not been much noticed outside of Japan: *pien-wen* have an intimate relationship to pictures. In *Transformations*, I demonstrate that the antecedent of *pien-wen* was actually a type of picture storytelling transmitted to China through Central Asia from India and having analogues in southeast Asian countries. Picture storytellers in ancient India included *śaubhikas*, *yamapaṭas*, *maṅkhas*, and *pratimādhāriṇs*. In modern India, these traditions survived well into the twentieth century in the performances of the *killēkyatas*, *katbus*, *cītrakathīs*, *citrakārs*, *paṭuās*, *par bhopos*, and many others.<sup>5</sup> It is probable that, in Central Asia, the Uighurs referred to pictures used in narrative storytelling as *körünč*. The same Indian traditions which passed through Central Asia into China and became *pien* also were transmitted to Indonesia where they are known as *wayang bèbèr*. An early Ming (1368–1661) traveller to Indonesia witnessed a performance of *wayang bèbèr* (dramatic storytelling utilizing a picture scroll or series of individual scenes on cards) and declared that it was just like Chinese 'expository tales' (*p'ing-hua* 評話). This is evidence that oral *p'ing-hua* was a type of storytelling with pictures and a direct descendant of *pien*. In Japan, the Sino-Indian picture storytelling tradition, known as 'picture explanation' (*etoki* 繪解), still survives to this day.

With regard to the relationship between *pien-wen* and pictures, I should like here only to analyse the formulaic expression occurring before verse passages that is a characteristic feature of almost all these texts. Indeed, in *Transformations*, I argue that this formula can be used as an identifying feature of manuscripts which lack titles specifically designating them as

<sup>4</sup> Judging from the rhyme classes compiled from the verse portions of the transformation texts and sūtra lectures (see Lo, *Studies*, 445–596), some of the Tun-huang texts display slight regional specificity (similar to the dialect of the city of Ch'ang-an during the T'ang). But this is a common phenomenon of Chinese popular literature from ancient times to the present day and cannot be used to classify an entire genre as being unique to a given locality. On the basis of rhyme variation alone, we can say only that there exist regional variants of a given genre.

<sup>5</sup> Detailed information on these types of storytellers may be found in *Transformations*.

*pien-wen*. The basic formula is ‘Please look at the place where XX [occurs], how does it go?’ (*ch’ieh k’an XX ch’u, jo-wei ch’en shuo?* 且看 XX 處若爲陳說).<sup>6</sup> The usage of *ch’u* 處 (‘place’) in the formula derives from the practice of picture storytellers pointing to a specific spot on their paintings when narrating the events it depicts. In time, the force of the word weakened so that it came to function simply as a sign of narrative rather than visual locus, parallel to clauses ending in *shih* 時 (‘time’) indicating narrative moment in other Tun-huang texts. It would appear that this verse-introductory formula in the written transformation texts was a stylized attempt to capture a distinctive feature of oral performances.

Given the criteria outlined above, we obtain a corpus of around eighteen to twenty-one extant *pien-wen*. Since there are multiple copies (with some variations) of several texts, only seven stories are actually represented.<sup>7</sup> This grouping is based on a definition that can be no more rigorous than T’ang and Five Dynasties usage itself. On the other hand, for the term *pien-wen* to have any meaningful signification, we ought to distinguish it from other types of popular literature which were discovered at Tun-huang and which bear titles identifying them by designations other than *pien-wen*. These include ‘lyric text’ (*tz’u-wen* 詞文), ‘rhapsody’ or ‘rhyme-prose’ (*fu* 賦), ‘tale’ (*chuan* 傳), ‘story’ (*hua* 話), ‘canto’ (*ch’ü[-tzu-tz’u]* 曲 [子詞]), ‘poem’ (*shih* 詩), ‘text’ (*shu* 書), ‘discussion’ (*lun* 論), ‘dialogue’ (*tz’u* 詞), ‘eulogy’ or ‘hymn’ (*tsan* 讚), ‘[apocryphal] sūtra’ (*ching* 經), ‘seat-settling text’ or ‘introit’ (*ya-tso-wen* 押座文), ‘conditional origins’ or ‘[founding] legend’ (*yüan-ch’i* 緣起, Skt. *pratītya-samutpāda*, or simply *yüan* 緣, Skt. *pratyaya, nidāna*), ‘causation’ (*yin-yüan* 因緣, Skt. *hetupratyaya, avadāna*), ‘cantillation’ (*yin* 吟), ‘account’ (*chi* 記), and ‘sūtra lecture’ (*chiang-ching-wen* 講經文).

It is particularly important to differentiate sūtra lectures from transformation texts. Sūtra lectures are line-by-line (occasionally word-by-word) explications of canonical scripture; transformation texts are prosimetric narratives whose sources are more often folk tales and legends than scripture. Depending on the circumstances (whether a cantor or other assistant is present), sūtra lectures are distinguished by formulaic expressions such as ‘Please sing/intone/chant’ or ‘Let us sing’ or ‘I shall begin to sing’ (*ch’ang Chiang-lai* 唱將來, *ch’ang k’an-k’an* 唱看看, etc.) before the quoted scripture passage; transformation texts generally possess the verse-introductory formula described above and in the appendix. Sūtra lectures were part of religious services known as ‘popular lectures’ or ‘lectures for

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this formula, see the appendix, pp. 27–8.

<sup>7</sup> A list of these pieces, with a discussion of certain problems relating to them, may be found in *Transformations*. If the doubtful cases are included in the total count, there are at most twenty-eight texts and twelve stories represented.

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the laity' (*su-chiang* 俗講) that have a history stretching back to the Six Dynasties period; transformation texts are written versions of folk entertainments that were current during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. And so on. T'ang usage is consistent; *chiang-ching-wen* were not thought by people of the ninth and tenth centuries to be a type of *pien-wen* nor vice versa.

The prosimetric form of *pien-wen* and of many other Tun-huang popular narratives calls for a brief discussion of the relationship between prose and verse in these texts. The proportion of verse to prose in Tun-huang popular narratives varies. Some are entirely in verse (e.g., the stories about Tung Yung 董永 and about the capture of Chi Pu 季布) and others are wholly prose (e.g., the tales of Han P'eng 韓朋, Ch'iu Hu 秋胡, 'Catch Tiger' Han 韓擒虎, and of Emperor T'ai-tsung 太宗 entering hell). Still others include only an incidental quoted poem (e.g., the accounts of Wizard Yeh Ching-neng 葉淨能 and the eminent monk Hui-yüan 惠遠). In the prosimetric narratives, there are two basic patterns for the relationship between prose and verse. In the first pattern, the verse is an integral component of the narrative structure; it helps to carry the story forward. Examples of this type are the story of Wu Tzu-hsü 伍子胥 and the Maudgalyāyana 目連 transformation text. The former, incidentally, uses verse sparingly while the latter, like Yüan period (1260–1367) drama, relies heavily upon it. The second pattern introduces most of the essential narrative content in the prose passages and utilizes the verse chiefly to recapitulate or embellish. Here the verse serves to emphasize certain aspects of the action or heighten the emotions of the actors. The Śāriputra and Chang I-ch'ao transformation texts fall under this category. The division between these two patterns is not rigid and most narratives share elements of both. With very few exceptions, the verse portions of Tun-huang popular narratives are heptasyllabic, the rhymes falling at the end of every second line. One rhyme may continue for several dozen couplets or may change after every half-dozen or so. The prose is highly conversational in some of the narratives while, in others, it exhibits pronounced euphuistic parallelism. I have tried to convey these stylistic differences in my translations by various means such as typographical arrangement and number of syllables per line.

### Scribes and performers

One of the issues that has most intrigued scholars working with *pien-wen* is who wrote them down and why? Earlier students<sup>8</sup> had suggested that

<sup>8</sup> For references on this and other points in these paragraphs, see *Transformations* and 'Inventory'.

they were promptbooks for the performers who presented the stories recorded on them before an audience. It was widely assumed that the performers were monks who used the *pien-wen* to attract crowds into the temples where they could then be instructed in more serious religious matters. But recent research by folklorists and students of oral epic has shown that storytellers seldom employ promptbooks.<sup>9</sup> There is, in any case, no proof that the written *pien-wen* were meant for this purpose. Serious doubt has also been cast on the assumption that professional religious (i.e. ordained Buddhist monks) functioned as entertainers.<sup>10</sup> The matter is altogether different with regard to *sūtra* lectures. There is strong evidence that some of the Tun-huang *chiang-ching-wen* were referred to by lecturers who were ordained Buddhist monks.

Information gleaned from contemporary literary sources, examination of parallel picture storytelling traditions in other societies, and internal evidence of the manuscripts themselves now allow us to determine with a high degree of probability that *pien-wen* were not promptbooks for use during performance. An example of internal evidence that corroborates this interpretation is a question that was recorded in the Śāriputra transformation text. After Śāriputra conjures up a mighty warrior-god, we read the following: ‘What was the appearance of his Diamond Deity?’ (T382.16).<sup>11</sup> This seems not to be strictly rhetorical but rather to be a perfunctory ‘question to the audience’. This question provides evidence that these texts were at a remove from promptbooks intended for use in performance. Rather, they would seem to be meta-texts<sup>12</sup> in the process of evolving into literary texts. Such disruptions of the oral narrative would be most likely to have occurred extemporaneously. The more removed from actual oral performance, the greater is the likelihood for many devices which constitute elements of the ‘simulated context’<sup>13</sup> in pseudo-oral

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, René Louis, ‘L’épopée française est carolingienne’, *Coloquios de Roncesvalles, Agosto, 1955* (Saragossa, Publications of the Faculties of Philosophy and Letters, 2nd ser. no. 18, 1956), 327–460 (esp. 452). Louis maintains that no *jongleur* steeped in the oral tradition would have worked from a written text.

<sup>10</sup>In conversation on March 14, 1981 and in a letter dated April 25, 1981, Stephen H. West informed me that he has data showing that many popular entertainers who passed themselves off as monks really were not. I also address this issue in *Transformations*.

<sup>11</sup>For abbreviations see ‘Usages and symbols’, ‘Notes on the texts’ and ‘References’. Page references to T are given in bold figures in the text.

<sup>12</sup>As used by Eugene Eoyang in ‘Word of Mouth: Oral Storytelling in the *Pien-wen*’ (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Ph.D. dissertation, 1971), this refers to written texts that bear clear marks of oral composition.

<sup>13</sup>An analytical concept presented by Patrick Hanan in his ‘The Nature of Ling Meng-ch’u’s Fiction’, in Andrew Plaks, ed., *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 85–114.



written narratives. The converse of this does not hold true, i.e. total absence of such devices does *not* constitute proof of orality. Proof that a given text was intended for performance always requires additional evidence external to the text itself. For example, there may be a colophon attached or an independent record stating the circumstances (date, place, etc.) of the performance. Or there may be historical and cross-cultural evidence available which confirms that a given genre is customarily employed for performance. Failing this, caution should be exercised in labelling any written or printed text as ‘oral literature’.

The colophon of one religious *pian-wen* tells us that it was copied for pious reasons. In the majority of instances that we can verify from the Tun-huang manuscripts, the scribes and copyists were lay students studying in monastery schools. Their curriculum embraced both secular and religious subjects. There is no evidence that the lay students themselves performed transformations. Certainly a vital oral storytelling tradition (known simply as ‘unrolling/unfolding/turning transformation [scrolls]’, *chuan-pien* 轉變, referring to the pictures displayed before the audience) lay behind the *pian-wen* manuscripts. The performers were primarily entertainers and not ordained monks. We know, for example, that singing girls from Szechwan performed transformations on the streets and in the banquet halls of Ch’ang-an during the T’ang period. Their main assets were their picture scrolls, their beauty, and their voices. That entertainers and storytellers frequently gathered around the temples to perform was as true of the T’ang period<sup>14</sup> as it was of the first part of this century<sup>15</sup> and in Taiwan today. But this does not mean that they themselves were religious specialists.

Transformation storytelling was a product of popular culture and, on occasion, was even attacked by the Buddhist establishment who wished to maintain good relations with the government. This is ironic, of course, because famous poets such as Po Chü-i 白居易 (772–846) and Emperor Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (for dates see the next section) himself enjoyed a good transformation performance from time to time. But ambivalent reception has been the frequent fate of folk and popular culture in China from the beginning of recorded history.

### Dating

It has generally been assumed that the Tun-huang popular narratives date from the late T’ang and Five Dynasties periods. This impression, however, is due primarily to the fact that the dates given in surviving

<sup>14</sup> See Sun Ch’i 孫榮 (c. 789–881), *Account of the Northern Quarter* 北里志.

<sup>15</sup> See Mao Tun 茅盾 (b. 1896), ‘Spring Silkworms’ 春蠶.

colophons fall within that time range. The colophons, however, are of little value in establishing date of authorship because they generally mention only the time when a given copy was made. As an example of the sort of close textual examination that can determine when a text was originally composed, the date of the Śāriputra transformation text will be briefly considered.

On T361.12, Emperor Hsüan-tsung is referred to by a lengthy title. The literary historian Cheng Chen-to (1898–1958) proposed, on the basis of this title, that the Śāriputra transformation text in which it occurs must have been written during Hsüan-tsung's reign.<sup>16</sup> Sceptics, however, have declared rightly that the title may have been employed retroactively. A closer look, nevertheless, compels us not to abandon the evidence of the title. When we turn to the *T'ang hui yao* 唐會要, a collection of important documents relating to the T'ang dynasty, we find that Hsüan-tsung held this title only for a little over a year and that the titles given him before and after differ by just a word or two.

On March 22, 742, [Hsüan-tsung] was given the honorific title Emperor Sage in Civil Affairs and Divine in Military Matters of the Epochal Beginning and Heavenly Treasure Reign-Periods. On June 13, 748, he was given the honorific title Emperor of the Epochal Beginning and Heavenly Treasure Reign-Periods Who Is Sage in Civil Affairs and Divine in Military Matters and Who Responds to the Way. On July 23, 749, he was given the honorific title Emperor of the Epochal Beginning and Great Heavenly-cum-Earthly Treasure Reign-Periods Who Is Sage in Civil Affairs and Divine in Military Matters and Who Responds to the Way.

天寶元年二月十一日又加尊號開元天寶聖文神武皇帝。七載五月十三日又加尊號開元天寶聖文神武應道皇帝。八載閏六月五日又加尊號開元天地大寶聖文神武應道皇帝。<sup>17</sup>

It seems highly improbable that anyone writing long after 749 would have remembered this title which was used for such an exceptionally short length of time. It is far more likely that Hsüan-tsung's temple name ('Original Progenitor' 元宗) or his posthumous title ('Greatly Sage and Greatly Pespicious Filial Emperor of the Utmost Way' 至道大聖大明孝皇帝) would have been used. Still, we must agree with the sceptics that this alone does not settle the date of authorship.

If we look at the previous line in T, we notice the statement that it has

<sup>16</sup> Cheng, *Popular*, 225.

<sup>17</sup> *T'ang hui yao* (1884 edn), p. 1.7a.