Lecture Abstract

The shi poems in the Wen xuan are classified into twenty-three categories. There is one troublesome category designated "Bai yi" 百一, which literally means “one hundred one” or “one of a hundred.” The “Bai yi” category in the Wen xuan contains only one poem by a single poet, Ying Qu 應璩 (190–252). Li Shan 李善 (d. 689) in his commentary to the Wen xuan records four explanations of title “Bai yi” all of which state that Ying Qu’s poems contained veiled criticisms of contemporary affairs. In this paper, Knechtges examines the extant fragments of Ying Qu’s poems. He also considers the question of why some sources designate his poems not as “Bai yi,” but xin shi 新詩 or “new poems.” Knechtges adduces evidence to show that Ying Qu was considered throughout the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao period the premier author of poems critical of contemporary affairs, and his poems were called “new” because he was the first poet to use the pentasyllabic form to write a series of critical poems. Knechtges also reconsiders Ying Qu’s “Bai yi” poem included in the Wen xuan and argues that it may actually contain an implicit criticism of the court.

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