

China and Inner Asia Organized Panel Session

(391) The Meanings of Things: Material Culture in Middle Period China



3/25/2018



8:30 AM - 10:30 AM



Location: Washington Room 2, Exhibit Level

Sponsored By Society for Song, Yuan, and Conquest Dynasty Studies

Drawing on a variety of textual, visual, and historical materials, this interdisciplinary panel explores the ways in which the unprecedented interest in material things shaped the structure of knowing and learning in the Song Dynasty (960–1279). The four papers that compose the panel collectively advance two propositions: that the wider cultural changes associated with the Song cannot be understood in isolation from the physical objects that conditioned these changes; and that the history of material culture would be incomplete without consideration of its intellectual, social and aesthetic underpinnings. We progress from literary engagements with things (Huijun Mai and Yunshuang Zhang), through discussions of the material dimensions of textual production (Ya Zuo), to analyses of material processes that occurred independently of writing (Jeffrey Moser). From the biographies of scallops to the mold-marks of bronzes, we move from the wordiest effusions of materiality in the documentary record to the silent things unvoiced in texts. In so doing, we explore the ways in which things, as both subjects and objects, shaped the Song experience.

Organizer(s)

**Huijun Mai**

Harvard University, Massachusetts

Paper Presenter(s)

**Huijun Mai**

Harvard University, Massachusetts

**Yunshuang Zhang**

University of California, Los Angeles, California

**Ya (Leah) Zuo**

Bowdoin College, Maine

**Jeffrey Moser**

Brown University, Rhode Island

Discussant(s)**Dorothy Ko**

Barnard College, Columbia University, New York

Presentations:

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

"Four Treasures" or "Four Friends": The Identity of the Brush, Inkstone, Paper, and Ink in Song Literary Culture

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Technicity in Song Material Arts

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

The Double Life of a Scallop: Anthropomorphism of Everyday Things in Northern Song (960–1127)

8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

The Making of a Scroll-Chapter: The Material and Intellectual Dimensions of Juan