Let me begin by talking about the problem of attribution in the formative period of Northern Song *ci* and the probable absence of certain authorship except in a few cases. I want to consider how this entered a regime of authorship, in which most extant texts have authors—or, more problematically, have too many authors. Finally, I shall close with the two Southern Song imprints of Ouyang Xiu’s *ci* and the visual rhetoric of seriousness in the Jinti *yuefu* version as a means of representing legitimate authorship.

Like our counterparts in China, we want our texts of “song lyric,” *ci* 詞, to belong to a system of authors arranged in chronological order. In this way we can tell literary historical stories like those we tell for classical poetry and prose. It is a map of differences that tells us what to expect and how to situate a text. The fact is, however, that both the textual record and the very nature of song lyric in the Northern Song may not give us what we want. There are simply too many multiple attributions of authorship in the Northern Song before the age of Su Shi, suggesting a systemic problem in the nature of the sources, rather than a particular problem with individual texts.¹ From Su Shi on through the rest of the Northern Song there are different, but related problems. We need to face the problems in what we have.² In this case our current notion of “literary history” may have been imposed upon the textual record for *ci* before the age of Su Shi.

¹ We do, of course, find multiple attributions of poems in the pre-Tang and Tang, but nowhere near the percentages that we find in the lyric collections of Feng Yansi, Ouyang Xiu, and Yan Shu. In pre-Tang and Tang poetry authorship is, on the whole, a more stable property of a poem than the title or text. The major exception is in the supplements to Du Mu’s poetry, where a substantial number of works are assigned to other poets on better authority. The Du Mu supplements, with a substantial number of quatrains, are a useful parallel case to the situation in song lyric: when the author is unknown, the text is attributed to Du Mu as the most famous “representative” of the quatrain.

² For Feng Yansi, Liu Yong, Yan Shu, Zhang Xian, and Yan Jida, the majority of the most prominent figures in Song song lyric through the age of Su Shi, our only early source is an early Ming manuscript, the 1441 *Baijia ci* 百家詞 by Wu Na 吳訥, (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989) whose own sources are unknown, perhaps in part traceable to a Southern Song *Baijia ci*. The 1441 edition will hereafter be cited as *Baijia ci*. See Wang Zhaopeng 王兆鹏, *Cixue shiliao xue* 詞學史料學 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 101–19 (hereafter Wang Zhaopeng). We should note that, with the exception of the two versions of the Ouyang Xiu collection, duplicate attributions are primarily from this single source.
Let me do a second beginning with what would be called a *ruhua* 入話 in Chinese. I have recently been humming to my child the melody of a Welsh song “Suo Gan” to put him to sleep. I decided to look it up on the Web. I found that the lyrics were by Charlotte Church, or Evan Thomas Davies, or John Williams, or “traditional,” or someone else. There followed a series of comments by various users, each angrily arguing for his or her favorite author and dismissing other claims. One person stoutly maintained that “Suo Gan” was by his great-grandfather (Davies).

For someone working on Northern Song *ci* this final authorial identification of the unknown lyricist could not but bring a smile—a smile engendered by the fact that the earliest datable collection of song lyrics of an individual lyricist was made by one Chen Shixiu 陳世修 in 1058, collecting the scattered remains of the lyrics of his maternal grandfather or, more likely, great-grandfather Feng Yansi 馮延巳. He was surely convinced that the lyrics he had collected were indeed written by his grandfather/great-grandfather, but at least some of those lyrics are clearly not by Feng Yansi; these are the lyrics attributed to others in *Huajian ji* 花間集, compiled during Feng Yansi’s lifetime with a much...

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3 We have this preface through the *Baijia ci*, the earliest extant edition of Feng Yansi’s lyrics. Here we should address the claim of one Cui Gongdu 崔公度 who wrote a later colophon on the Feng Yansi collection in the Yuanfeng reign (1078–1085). According to Luo Bi’s 羅泌 preface to Ouyang Xiu’s *ci* from the late twelfth century, Cui Gongdu claimed that his manuscript was “entirely in Feng Yansi’s own hand” 皆馮延巳親筆. Apparently Luo is still quoting Cui in the next period: “Among them those that have mistakenly entered *Liuyi ci* have also been noted in the *Tongrui zhi* and the *Xin'an zhi* in recent times” 其間有誤入六一詞者,桐汭志新安志亦記其事. What follows is clearly Luo Bi, the new editor of *Liuyi ci*, casting doubt on the authority of inclusion in Feng Yansi’s collection. “When we now look at Yansi’s lyrics, everywhere they are mixed in with the Tang *Huajian ji* and *Zunjian ji* 现觀延巳之詞,往往往自與唐花間集尊前集相混.” (Ying Song Jizhou ben Ouyang Wenzhong gong “Jinti yuefu” sanjuan 景宋吉州本歐陽文中攻近體樂府三卷, in Wu Changshou 吳昌綬 and Tao Xiang 陶湘 comp., *Yingkan Song Jin Yuan Ming ben ci* 景刊宋金元明本詞 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989], 42). Chen Zhensun’s 陳振孫 later *Zhizhai shulu jiete* 直齋書錄解題, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 21.615) reports Cui’s colophon differently: “Cui Gongdu (aka Boyi) of Gaoyou wrote at the end, claiming that the copy in his home library was the most detailed and reliable, but that the *Zunjian* and *Huajian* collections often got the names wrong, and that the lyrics of Ouyang Xiu recently in circulation also often included them, and that in every case they failed to get the truth.” Some important points in the history of song lyric hang on the contradictions between these two accounts of Cui Gongdu’s colophon, but the question we must ask here is the validity of Cui’s claim, made two decades after Chen Shixiu’s edition. The rough size and the multiple attributions of this edition make it sound very much like the Chen Shixiu edition, and it seems highly unlikely that a transmitted older manuscript would so closely resemble a manuscript that was explicitly “gathered.”