One obvious answer is that, no, it should not be, and that this volume is just a beginning. Careful reading of the book, as I have suggested, would only emphasize the depth, complexity, and the challenges that still lie ahead. And if fears of world literature are warranted, it is all the more important that we pay heed to the long lineage of Japanese readers engaged with the *Genji*. There was, and continues to be, a fruitful tradition of Japanese scholarship, although Harper laments, here and there (pp. 40, 225), the passing of a certain kind. The final chapter carries the discussion into the Meiji period and the twentieth century. This was when diplomats, authors, and critics attempted to launch *Genji* into the contemporary, global era. This chapter seems underdeveloped. Its subject is more extensively served in Michael Emmerich's *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2013). However, having these sources here—of readers closer to our time contemplating the relevance of *Genji* for their concerns—hammers home an implicit message of the book's subtitle, *Sources from the First Millennium*. For if there was a first millennium, we are in the second. As this book makes abundantly clear, *Genji* will only continue to inspire new interpretations.

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Transgressive Typologies: Constructions of Gender and Power in Early Tang China. By REBECCA DORAN. Harvard-Yenching Institute Monographs, vol. 103. Cambridge, Mass.: HARVARD UNIVERSITY ASIA CENTER, HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS. Pp. viii + 260. $39.95.

Although Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705) and the following generation of female leaders ruled competently during the late seventh and early eighth centuries, their rule has primarily been remembered as a "female-led aberrance" within the Chinese literary-historical tradition. In *Transgressive Typologies*, Rebecca Doran shows the ways historians and writers constructed this era as transgressive by associating female power with the reversal of gender roles and narrative typologies that embody unnaturalness, excess, and sexual deviance.

The central image here is a woman's transgression: she fails to recognize her proper cosmological role and ritual place, is promiscuous, and engages in improper sexual relationships. Why has this era been retrospectively reconstructed as transgressive? Doran suggests two reasons. The first has to do with women power holders' subversion of normative gender hierarchies and roles established since the Eastern Han. Just as "subservient" roles of mother and wife were defined as "natural," women rulers were perceived as "unnatural." The second concerns specific historical circumstances. Following Wu Zhao's death, two factions vied for power. When Li Longji 李隆基 (Xuanzong 玄宗; r. 712–756) took the throne, writers under the new regime condemned the Wu-Zhou period and its female leaders to burnish the legitimacy of Li-Tang rule.

The book's introduction outlines the study's scope and focus. Doran is most concerned with portrayals of early Tang women leaders found in Tang through Southern Song sources. As she explains, the anecdotal collections compiled two to four generations after the female leaders' deaths played a pivotal role in crafting the canonical, transgressive image; by the Song, their reputations within the historical and literary traditions were essentially fixed. This being the case, only when there are important discrepancies between representations does she consider later sources from the Ming and Qing. Doran's basic questions are: "How did the images of the female leaders from the Wu-Zhou period [. . .] through the Jinglong era become crystalized in the rhetoric of history, historical romance, and fiction? What assumptions inform the process of negative 'canonization?'" (p. 16). Her focus on the construction of cultural images and values allows Doran to engage a wide range of texts such as standard histories, anecdotal accounts, and fictional sources, without concern for their historical accuracy or "reliability."

Chapter one, "Female Rule and Its Representation," traces literary-historical constructions of pre-Tang women leaders to provide a context for examining how portrayals of early Tang women leaders draw upon and depart from convention. Examining archetypes of praised and condemned female lead-

ers from the Western Han through Sui eras, Doran finds that the legitimacy of female power is defined by whether or not the woman in question adheres to prescribed gender roles, thus demonstrating her devotion to the patriarchal ruling structure. For example, two prominent negative archetypes associated with destructive female leaders are the anti-mother and the sexually promiscuous woman, both of which subvert established gender roles and undermine patrilineal and patriarchal norms. Rather than limit her concerns to promoting the interests of her husband and the imperial male line, a woman leader who contends with her sons and/or engages in multiple sexual affairs prioritizes her own power and ambition. As later chapters illustrate, portrayals of early Tang women leaders draw from this tradition. As the political power of female leaders of the late seventh and early eighth centuries was unprecedented in Chinese history, condemnatory constructions of their era develop new negative typologies.

Chapter two, "(Self) Expression and Gendered Legitimacy," analyzes the writings of early Tang women leaders to understand how their celebratory self-images are reworked into condemnatory images in later accounts. Doran finds that contemporary and retrospective portrayals of this era often deal with similar themes, but that their treatments of these themes differ, with one being celebratory and the other condemnatory. This narrative strategy is understood in terms of "inversion," referring to the way retrospective materials negatively depict themes and images praised in contemporary writings. While in their writings, female leaders and their courtiers celebrate cosmic approval, images of the divine female, and the power of the imperial court over the celestial and natural spheres as a means of legitimizing their rule, retrospective accounts invalidate their power by reworking these themes and images into cosmic rejection, figures of transgressive women, and female excess. In these negative portrayals, "their power as women itself is defined as the inversion of appropriate and natural gender behavior" (p. 73).

The remaining parts of the book focus on retrospective constructions of early Tang female leaders as transgressive from three thematic aspects. Chapter three, "Ritual, Signs, and the Interpretation of Female Power," investigates the narrative use of ritual and signs as a way to denounce female rule. Many later historical and anecdotal accounts condemn female political power as an "unnatural" violation of the cosmic order. Such accounts identify "auspicious signs" of the Wu Zhao era as "fraudulent" and "inauspicious"; they associate female participation in state ritual with deception and intrigue; and they interpret songs and dreams as foretelling the failure of female power.

Chapter four, "Building Power: Symbolic Architecture, Conspicuous Consumption, and Rule by Women," explores how retrospective materials portray early Tang female rule as unnatural by associating female power-holders with materialism, excess, greed, and destruction. Disproportionate emphasis on women leaders' luxurious mansions, landed estates, and expenditures on clothing and adornments is intended to associate female-led government with the pursuit of material things, in opposition to "good" government that emphasizes the needs of the people. As such, the extravagance and greed that characterize female-led politics is depicted as arising from transgressions of "natural" gender norms.

Chapter five, "Gender Anarchy and the Rhetorical Overthrow of Female Rule," examines the use of sexual transgression as a way to denounce female rule, not just in Tang and Song historical and anecdotal sources, but in Ming and Qing fiction, drama, and pornography as well. These works emphasize "unnatural" sexual relationships between older female leaders and younger male associates by way of portraying a world of "gender anarchy," in which the "female usurps the 'male' position, forcing the male into the inferior 'female' position of concubine or dependent" (p. 189). These "unnatural" figures—"male" women and "female" men—are employed to construct an upside-down, dangerous world resulting from female rule.

This monograph addresses important issues concerning historiography, typology, and gender. Grounding her study in "the theoretical understanding of history as a type of culturally situated narrative that engenders particular types of plot structures and historical characters designed to guide readers towards particular moral messages" (p. 231), Doran investigates the use of typologies in the construction of condemnatory narratives of early Tang female rule, and the assumptions that inform this negative "canonization," showing how historical circumstances and cultural biases shaped the writing of history. As members of the winning factions, historians and writers under the Li-Tang regime produced negative images of the losing factions: portraying women leaders as transgressive figures

and eliminating details and voices that did not agree with their condemnatory narratives. The "history" they produced tells us more about their conceptions of gender and power than about the "truth" of the women leaders' lives. That negative archetypes of early Tang female rule have survived and flourished in the Chinese historical and literary tradition is testament to the strength of predominant cultural prejudices against female power.

The condemnatory narratives of early Tang female rule are composed of "transgressive typologies." Take depictions of women leaders' male associates as an example. Despite their familial, social, and official diversity, the men are invariably defined by sexual misconduct and violation of gender norms. This suggests that portrayals of these men are informed more by typologies associated with contemporary ideas of gender and sexuality than by historical "reality." At times, typologies are so ingrained in the retrospective narratives that they trump historical reality. Referring to Denis Twitchett's study, Doran notes that negative biographies often rely heavily on typologies, because details that might add complexity and ambiguity to the histories of "evil" defeated factions are frequently eliminated during the writing and transmission of "history."

At the heart of "transgressive typologies" is gender inversion. Doran shows that the negative portrayals of female power center on the conceptualization of appropriate gender roles and the subversion of these expectations. In fact, condemnatory narratives define female power as an "inversion from the correct norm, as a source of destabilization based upon a reversal of gender roles that are perceived as natural" (p. 232). Negative typologies emphasize the cosmic, sociopolitical, and sexual disorder that stems from women leaders' transgressions of gender roles: failure to recognize their proper cosmological role leads to cosmic denunciation; desire to possess material things results in the destruction of the natural social order; and dominance in the sexual realm creates an upside-down world of "gender anarchy." This focus on transgression of gender roles in narratives of female power is most evident when we compare portrayals of condemned male and female rulers. While condemned male rulers' sexual transgressions are typically described in terms of overindulgence, their sexual relations with younger women are viewed as "natural," even "romantic." Female rulers' sexual adventures, on the other hand, are characterized as fundamentally "unnatural" and "inappropriate." Recurrent themes such as female leaders exchanging "sexual favorites" and older women forcing sexual favors upon younger men all serve to underscore the "unnaturalness" of female power.

This book is a major contribution to the study of the conception of gender and power in Chinese history. As monographs devoted to portrayals of women within the Chinese tradition have largely focused on the late imperial period, a study on medieval attitudes opens new ground. Doran hopes that her book "has opened a dialogue about the interconnectedness between historical image-making, collective (male) identity, and changing conceptions of gender" (p. 238). Indeed, it inspires us to ponder the relationship between male writers' portrayals of women and their constructions of male identity. It has long been thought that sexual norms, gender relations, and the conception of appropriate gender roles changed from the seventh to tenth centuries, and yet we do not fully understand these important changes. Following Doran's successful example, it would be fruitful to examine portrayals of other types of women to understand changing conceptions of gender in medieval China. For example, what might representations of female entertainers—important subjects of Tang-era poems and stories—tell us about changing sexual norms and gender roles? What does the co-existence of condemnatory portrayals of female leaders and celebratory depictions of female entertainers tell us about contemporary ideas regarding gender and power? How are male writers' changing portrayals of women related to their constructions of male literati identity? In sum, *Transgressive Typologies* is an engaging and inspiring book that deserves to be taken seriously by scholars and students of Chinese literature, history, and gender studies.

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