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Identity and Narrative: A Special Female Case of Chinese Ancient Autobiography

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Abstract- Li Qingzhao (李清照,1084-1155) is one of the most excellent and most famous female scholars in Chinese literature history, whose Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone1 (Jin Shi Lu Houxu, 金石录后序), as a rare female autobiography in Chinese ancient literature, has made many unique creative contributions to the development of Chinese biographic literature. As a female autobiography, Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone has covered three identities of Li Qingzhao - a daughter of a noble family, a wife of a civil official and a female scholar - and the self-recognition of the three identities constitutes the triple female perspective of her autobiography. As a lament work, Epilog to Record on Metal and Stone has integrated three dimensional narration spaces - autobiographic facts, lament for her deceased husband; biographical facts, lament for her collected objects; and historical facts, lament for the perished country. The richness, appropriateness and exquisiteness of the discourse structure for three dimensional lament under a triple female perspective have made Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone a milestone in Chinese biographical history.

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Abstract- Li Qingzhao (李清照,1084-1155) is one of the most excellent and most famous female scholars in Chinese literature history, whose Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone[1] (Jin Shi Lu Houxu,金石录后序), as a rare female autobiography in Chinese ancient literature, has made many unique creative contributions to the development of Chinese biographic literature. As a female autobiography, Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone has covered three identities of Li Qingzhao - a daughter of a noble family, a wife of a civil official and a female scholar - and the self-recognition of the three identities constitutes the triple female perspective of her autobiography. As a lament work, Epilog to Record on Metal and Stone has integrated three dimensional narration spaces - autobiographic facts, lament for her deceased husband; biographical facts, lament for her collected objects; and historical facts, lament for the perished country. The richness, appropriateness and exquisiteness of the discourse structure for three dimensional lament under a triple female perspective have made Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone a milestone in Chinese biographical history. It has not only filled the blank of female authors in ancient Chinese biography, but also provided a narrative spatial model of three dimensional interactions, laying the solid foundation for Li Qingzhao to be a landmark figure in Chinese biographic history.

Keywords: li qingzhao, epilog to records on metal and stone, autobiography, female perspective, lament.

I. Introduction

As the most excellent female poet in Chinese history, Li Qingzhao has also left a striking page in Chinese biographic literary creation, filling the blank of female authors in this field. The Epilog she wrote to Records on Metal and Stone, a book composed by her deceased husband, is widely recognized as a masterpiece in Chinese literary history. In nearly one thousand years, the Epilog has been included in many anthologies. Lin Yutang (林语堂, 1895-1976) has selected several dozen ancient Chinese classics into *The Importance of Understanding*[2], and paintings; they discussed and appreciated their collections at night under candlelight; they quoted classics while drinking tea, and interspersed with laughter; they were separated on a journey and then into two worlds. The country was captured and she left her home for a long and lonely journey, during which most of their collection was lost. This story of the assembly and subsequent dispersal of both people and objects, including the Epilog. From a triple female perspective of a noble family daughter, a civil official's wife and a female scholar, *Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone*[3], as an autobiography, incorporates Li Qingzhao's grief of losing her husband, sorrow of losing her collections, and pain of losing her country, into vivid description of their harmonious married life before her husband died. They painstakingly and frugally collected inscriptions following the tides of history, had terribly tortured Li Qingzhao.

"The lonely inner world of Li Qingzhao in later life contained most heavy things of a tragic destiny: a subjugated country, a broken family, the loss of a husband and roving in strange places: all life's misfortunes befell her. Loss of both hometown and love, of her survival space and spiritual space, had ruthlessly driven her into an unprecedented lonely world. Therefore, her homesick yearning and widowed grief integrated and were hard to separate...As a result, the later life of Li Qingzhao contained the psychological and emotional experiences of a woman facing the overwhelming disasters of the era, which reflected her intense concerns for the time and constituted the most brilliant page of aesthetic awareness of a tragic woman."[1] Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is a condensed work comprehensively reflecting those aspects; its uniqueness and value as an autobiography should also not be disregarded.

II. Autobiographic Positioning in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone

Before we probe into the specific text of Epilog to Record on Metal and Stone, we should take a brief look at the work to which it acts as epilog: Records on

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[1] Translated by Stephen Owen, from *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties 唐宋文选*, written by Han Yu 韩愈 et al, translated by Xie Baikui 谢百魁 et al, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2012, pp. 777.

[2] Selected, Translated, and Introduced by Lin Yutang 林语堂: *Translations from the Chinese (The Importance of Understanding)*, Cleveland:The World Publishing Company.1960.

[3] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 777.

[1] Shu Hongxia 舒红霞, *Female Aesthetic Culture - A Study on Song Female Literature(Nvxing Shenmei Wenhua:Songdai Nvxing Wenxue Yanjiu, 女性审美文化——宋代女性文学研究)*, Beijing:People's Publishing House. 2004, pp. 108-09.

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Metal and Stone (Jin Shi Lu, 金石录) itself. What kind of book is it? What thoughts has it expressed? Why does Li Qingzhao have such an inseparable relation with it?

Records on Metal and Stone is a great academic work of Zhao Mingcheng (赵明诚,1081-1129), the first husband of Li Qingzhao, which has recorded about two thousand metal and stone rubbings from Xia (夏, around 2100 B.C.-1600B.C.), Shang(商, around 1600B.C.-1028B.C.), Zhou(周, around 1027 B.C.-256 B.C.) to Sui(隋,589-618), Tang(唐,618-907) and the Five dynasties (五代,907-960). Zhao Mingcheng is a renowned epigraphist and a relic collector. He was born in the fourth year of the Yuanfeng 元丰 reign of Emperor Shenzong (神宗) of the Song Dynasty (1081), and died in the third year of the Jianyan 建炎 reign of Emperor Gaozong 高宗(1129), at the age of 48. Therefore, Records on Metal and Stone was a book to which he devoted his whole life. In the Northern Song Dynasty, Ouyang Xiu(欧阳修,1007-1072) laid the foundation for epigraphy, and was subsequently imitated by numerous scholars, making it a very popular hobby. Inspired by Records on Ancient Collections (Ji Gu Lu,集古录) of Ouyang Xiu, Zhao Mingcheng devoted himself to this field, and accomplished Records on Metal and Stone with 2,000 volumes[2] in 20 years, twice the scale of Ouyang Xiu's Records on Ancient Collections. In his Preface to Records on Metal and Stone, Zhao Mingcheng wrote, "Since I was young, I liked viewing metal and stone inscriptions of former dynasties by following famous scholars and officials to broaden my horizons. Later, I got Records on Ancient Collections by Ouyang Xiu, and cherished it much, thinking that it could correct former errors and help subsequent scholars. However, it has some omissions, and is not arranged chronologically. Therefore, I decided to expand it to a new book for the benefit of other scholars."[3] These words suggested that Ouyang Xiu contributed much to the advocacy and leadership of epigraphy, and Records on Metal and Stone by Zhao Mingcheng was a conscious imitation and transcendence of Records on Ancient Collections.

As Zhao Mingcheng had composed a foreword to the book, Li Qingzhao had to place her afterword at the end, hence epilog, corresponding to the preface at the beginning of the book. It was a tradition to use preface or epilog as a form of autobiography since Autobiography of Taishigong (Taishigong Zixu,太史公自序) by Sima Qian (司马迁,B.C.145-B.C.90), followed by Ban Gu(班固,32-92)'s Autobiography in Han Shu(Han Shu•Xu Zhuan,汉书•叙传), Cao Pi(曹丕,187-226)'s Autobiography in Critique of Literature(Dian Lun•Zi Xu, 典论•自叙), Ge Hong(葛洪,284-364)'s Autobiography in Outer Chapter of Baopuzi(Bao Pu Zi Wai Pian•Zi Xu,抱朴子外篇•自叙), but later autobiographies gradually became independent parts of books. In this case, as an excellent afterword to the book of her deceased husband, how can Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone by Li Qingzhao be recognized as her autobiography? It is determined by its content.

Pu Jiangqing (浦江清, 1904-1957) commented on Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone, "This work detailed the couple's early life and hobby, experience and separation, collection and dispersion of metal and stone inscriptions, books and paintings, which is full of life incidents and is excellent both in style and sentiment. The life story of Zhao and Li was brief in History of Song (Song Shi, 宋史), but this work can very well supplement the former account. Therefore, in style, this work is an epilog, but in content, it is an autobiography. Qingzhao was good at verse as well as prose, but she wrote it in prose. She narrated her experience in an easy-going way. As her late years were lonely and sorrowful, she didn't intend to stir up emotions. Therefore, the style was natural and neat."[1] From the above analysis, we can confirm that Epilog to Records of Metal and Stone is indeed an autobiography.

Zhao Baisheng(赵白生,1964-), a well-known biographic expert, once concluded, "Simply put, the main task for autobiographers is to present two relations: first, the relation between me and others; second, the relation between me and the times. In presenting the two relations, the ego is continuously disclosed. To manifest the relation between me and others, biographic facts are needed; to manifest the relation between me and the times, historic facts are needed. As a matter of fact, an autobiography is a trinity centering on autobiographic facts.[2] "In the Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone, the specific reference to Records on Metal and Stone focuses on the first paragraph at the beginning: "What are the proceeding chapters of Records on Metal and Stone?—The work of the governor Zhao De-fu[3]. In it he took inscriptions on bells, tripods, steamers, kettles, washbasins, ladles, goblets, and bowls from the Three Dynasties of high antiquity all the way to the Five Dynasties [immediately preceding our Song]; here also he took the surviving traces of acts by eminent men and obscure scholars inscribed on large steles and stone disks. In all there

[2] Each volume as compared to modern books, just occupied around 10-20 pages of a modern book.

[3] Zhao Mingcheng 赵明诚, *Collation of Record on Metal and Stone(Jin Shi Lu Jiaozheng,金石录校正)* reviewed by Jin Wenming 金文明. Shanghai:Shanghai Fine Arts Publishing House, 1985.pp. 1.

[1] Pu Hanming 浦汉明 ed. Ji Zhenhuai 季镇淮 rv. *Pu Jiangqing Essays on Literature and History(Pu Jiangqing Wenshi Zawen Ji,浦江清文史杂文集)*. Beijing:Tsinghua University Press, 1997. pp. 143.

[2] Zhao Baisheng 赵白生, *A Theory on Autobiography Literature (Zhuanji Wenxue Lilun, 传记文学理论)*. Beijing：Peking University Press, 2014. pp. 35.

[3] Zhao De-fu 赵德甫 was another name of Zhao Mingcheng.

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were two thousand sections of what appeared on metal and stone. Through all these inscriptions one might be able to correct historical errors, make historical judgments, and mete out praise and blame. It contains things which, on the highest level, correspond to the Way of the Sages, and on a lower level, supplement the omissions of historians. It is, indeed, a great amount of material."[4] Then, the second paragraph from the end reads, "Of those two thousand inscriptions, colophons were written of five hundred of two."[5] All these inscriptions were made by Zhao Mingcheng. The rest of the work, of course, develops by following the collection and dispersal of objects in Records on Metal and Stone. It has clearly presented these two relations - the relation between "me" and "others", namely, the relation between Li Qingzhao and Zhao Mingcheng; the relation between "me" and "the times", namely, the relation between Li Qingzhao and the turmoil at the turning point of the Northern Song(北宋,960-1127) and Southern Song(南宋,1127-1279) Dynasties. During the unfolding of the two relations, Li Qingzhao continuously disclosed her ego.

The end of Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone notes that Li Qingzhao finished this work in the second year of the Shaoxing 绍兴 Reign (1132AD), or three years after Zhao Mingcheng died. Given the content of the epilog, it should fall into the category of "commemorative biography" "纪念性传记" defined by Zhao Baisheng, "Many commemorative biographies are composed by kith and kin: a narration by a widowed wife of her deceased husband; a memorial article by a husband for his deceased wife; a work by children recalling their parents.…The common point of these biographies is that biographers try to construct a lofty monument for the deceased so that the living are encouraged by their greatness."[6]

The first half of this epilog is a work of this type, but the second half relates facts which occurred after the death of Zhao Mingcheng. Therefore, if the first half is regarded as a biography for the couple, the second half is undoubtedly the autobiography of Li Qingzhao. If the two parts are placed together, Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is an autobiography that relates significant experiences of the author during her narration to commemorate her deceased husband and her deceased husband's life.

III. Formation of the Triple Female Perspective in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone

The epilog is written from the perspective of a woman, the style of which can be found in ancient times. In the whole process of Chinese ancient female literature, this is certainly a monumental work of boudoir literature. Li Ciming(李慈铭,1830-1894) of the Qing Dynasty(清代,1636-1911) commented in Yuemantang Reading Notes(Yuemantang Dushu Ji, 越缦堂读书记): "When I read Records on Metal and Stone by Zhao Mingcheng, I found an epilog written by Li Qingzhao. It related the intricate experiences of the couple with vigorous strokes and beyond any restrictions. I always like to read it, and think that it is the most excellent boudoir article from the Song Dynasty."[1] It is thus clear that people in earlier times had regarded this as a model work from the genre of boudoir writings.

Now, we will start from this aspect to discuss the three identities of Li Qingzhao and their presentation in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone as a noble family daughter, a civil official's wife and a female scholar, and how these three identities are interwoven to form a triple female perspective.

a) *The identity as a noble family daughter/daughter-in-law*

The identity as a noble family daughter and a daughter-in-law is clearly displayed by Li Qingzhao when she tells us her family background: "In 1101, the first year of the Jian-zhong reign, I came as a bride to the Zhao household. At that time my father was a division head in the Ministry of Rites, and my father-in-law, later a Grand Councilor, was an executive in the Ministry of Personnel. My husband was then twenty-one and a student in the Imperial Academy.[2] When his father, the Grand Councilor, was in office, various friends and relations held positions in the Imperial Libraries.[3] …I recall that in the Chong-ning reign, a man came with a painting of peonies by Xu Xi(徐熙) and asked twenty thousand cash for it, In those days twenty thousand was a hard sum to raise, even for children of the nobility."[4] The introduction of her maiden family and her husband's family suggests her identities as a noble family daughter and a noble daughter-in-law.

"My father" is Li Gefei (李格非,1045-1105), father of Li Qingzhao, who is a famous litterateur in the Northern Song Dynasty and writes a masterpiece Record of Famous Gardens in Luoyang(Luoyang Ming Yuan Ji,洛阳名园记). History of Song(Song Shi,宋史) introduces him like this, "Li Gefei wrote a book named as Luoyang Ming Yuan Ji, he said in it 'the rise and fall

[4] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 777.
[5] Ibid., pp.789-91.
[6] *A Theory on Autobiography Literature*. pp. 122.

[1] Li Ciming 李慈铭 comp., You Yunlong 由云龙 ed., *Yuemantang Reading Notes (Yuemantang Dushu Ji,越缦堂读书记)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2000. pp. 565.
[2] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp.777.
[3] Ibid., pp. 779.
[4] Ibid., pp. 779.

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of Luo-yang is a sign of the empire's order or chaos.' Later Jin forces sacked Luo-yang, and people realized his words were wise words."[5] In the first year of the Jianzhong Jingguo 建中靖国 Reign (1101AD), Li Qingzhao and Zhao Mingcheng got married, when Li Gefei was the vice minister of the Ministry of Rites. He "was appreciated by Su Shi[6] (苏轼,1037-1101) because of his articles"[7], and worked with Liao Zhengyi(廖正一), Li Xi(李禧), and Dong Rongtong(董荣同) in the library, who were collectively named "The Later Four Scholars 后四学士" of Su's disciples for their literary grace. Li Qingzhao and her mother were also included into the biography of Li Gefei in History of Song: "His wife is the granddaughter of Wang Gongchen(王拱辰,1012-1085), and is also good at literature. His daughter is named Qingzhao, who is well known for her poems and articles. Qingzhao was married to Zhao Mingcheng, son of Zhao Tingzhi(赵 挺 之 ,1040-1107). Li Qingzhao assumes for herself the art-name Yian Jushi (Hermit Yi'an, 易安居士,)."[1] Li Qingzhao's mother is the granddaughter of Wang Gongchen, a famous civil official of the Northern Song, and is also good at poems and articles. Wang Gongchen was ranked the first in the imperial examination in the eighth year of the Tiansheng 天圣 Reign of Emperor Renzong 仁宗 of the Northern Song Dynasty (1030AD). The emperor appreciated him very much, and granted him a name, Gongshou 拱寿. He was promoted to be vice minister of the Ministry of Supervision 御史中丞. From this we can see, the scholarly family background had contributed much to Li Qingzhao's sublime personal pursuit and excellent literacy.

"Grand Councilor" 丞相 is Zhao Tingzhi, father of Zhao Mingcheng, who entered officialdom as a "Palace Graduate" 进士上第[2]. He is a critical minister in the Northern Song period, and was the vice minister of the Ministry of Civil Office 吏部侍郎 at the time. These backgrounds constitute true noble families. Therefore, Li Qingzhao and Zhao Mingcheng were matched for marriage, which laid a solid foundation for their congenial interests and harmonious relationship. "When his father, the Grand Councilor, was in office, various friends and relations held positons in the Imperial Libraries."[3] This implied the petticoat influence of their eminent family, creating favorable conditions for their relic collection. "Although we were descendants of noble families" suggests that Li Qingzhao clearly confirmed their acknowledgement and positioning as members of the upper social class.

Therefore, the first female perspective of Li Qingzhao in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is directly positioned through a concise introduction of her family background. In other words, she is a daughter and a daughter-in-law from scholarly and noble families, but her identity is presented through human relations.

b) A Civil Official's Wife

The female perspective with the identity as a civil official's wife comes mainly from direct description, particularly of the couple's inner household and the resolution of Li Qingzhao to "follow" her husband's will.

The civil official status of Zhao Mingcheng is evidently stated in many sections of the work, "When two years later, he went to take up a post, we lived on rice and vegetables and dressed in common cloth; but he would search out the most remote spots and out-of-the-way places to fulfill his interest in the world's most ancient writings and unusual script."[4] "Later we lived privately at home for ten years, gathering what we could here and there to have enough food and clothing. Afterward, my husband governed two prefectures in succession, and he used up all his salary on 'lead and wooden tablets' for scholarly work."[5] "In 1126, the first year of the Jingkang 靖康 reign, my husband was governing Zi-chuan 淄川".[6] "The next autumn, the ninth month of 1128, my husband took charge of Jian-kang Prefecture 建康府 but relinquished the position in the spring of the following year. Again we put everything in boats and went up to Wu-hu 芜湖 and Gu-shu 姑熟, intending to take up lodging on the river Gan 贛水. That summer in the fifth month we reached Chi-yang 池阳. At that point an imperial decree arrived, ordering my husband to take charge of Hu-zhou 湖州 and to proceed to an audience with the Emperor before he took up the office. Therefore he had the household stop at Chi-yang, from which he went off alone to answer the summons."[1]

The identity of Li Qingzhao as a civil official's wife is displayed in her autobiography through interactive pleasure between husband and wife, which is rare in male works. For instance, "We would sit facing one another, rolling them out before us, examining and munching. And we thought ourselves persons of the age of Ge-tian 葛天[2]."[3] "We kept the painting with us a few days, and having thought of no plan by which we

[5] Tuo Tuo 脱脱, et al. *History of Song(Song Shi,宋史)* .Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, 1977. pp. 13121.
[6] Su Shi was the literary arena leader of the Northern Song, imultaneously was also a profound scholar in his time.
[7] *History of Song*, pp. 13121.
[1] Ibid., pp. 13122.
[2] Ibid., pp. 11093.
[3] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 779.
[4] Ibid., pp. 779.
[5] Ibid., pp. 779.
[6] Ibid., pp. 783.
[1] Ibid., pp. 783.
[2] Ge-tian 葛天 was a mythical ruler of high antiquity, when everyone lived in a state of perfect contentment. - Cited from *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 873.
[3] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 779.

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could purchase it, we returned it. For several days afterward my husband and I faced one another in deep depression."[4] "When he got hold of a piece of calligraphy, a painting, a goblet, or a tripod, we would go over it at our leisure, pointing out faults and flaws, setting for our nightly limit the time it took one candle to burn down."[5] "I happen to have an excellent memory, and every evening after we finished eating, we would sit in the hall called 'Return Home'归来堂 and make tea. Pointing to the heaps of books and histories, we would guess on which line of which page in which chapter of which book a certain passage could be found. Success in guessing determined who got to drink his or her tea first. Whenever I got it right, I would raise the teacup, laughing so hard that the tea would spill in my lap, and I would get up, not having to been able to drink any of it all. I would have been glad to grow old in such a world. Thus, even though we were living in anxiety, hardships, and poverty, our wills were not broken."[6] "Books lay ranged on tables and desks, scattered on top of one another on pillows and bedding. This was what took his fancy and what occupied his mind, what drew his eyes and what his spirit inclined to; and his joy was greater than the pleasures others had in dancing girls, dogs, or horses."[7] These touching and private elegant pleasures in the boudoir between husband and wife are rarely seen in works by male writers, but these vivid plots and psychological states under Li Qingzhao's description are full of a woman's soft emotions, and her ideal of putting love first in her life.

The civil official's wife identity of Li Qingzhao is also reflected in her cordial love to her husband, and her firm compliance with and implementation of the feudal concept of "following one's husband 从夫".

Her profound love for her husband is reflected in the description when she heard that her husband was seriously ill on the journey to his new post. "As he was hurrying on his journey, he suffered sunstroke from the intense heat, and by the time he reached imperial headquarters, he had contracted a malarial fever. At the end of September, I received a letter that he was sick in bed. I was very alarmed, considering my husband's excitable nature and how nothing had been able to prevent the illness from deteriorating into fever; his temperature might rise even higher, and in that case he would have to take chilled medicines; then the sickness would really be something to worry about. Thereupon I set out by boat and traveled three hundred leagues in one day and one night. At the point when I arrived he was taking large doses of chai-hu 柴胡 and yellow-qin 黄芩; he had a recurring fever with dysentery, and the illness appeared mortal. I was weeping and in such a desperate state I could not bring myself to ask him what was to be done after his death."[8] The tone of this paragraph is full of concerns, affections and rebukes of a wife to her husband. She knows very well that her husband is impatient, and that he would mistake medicines to worsen his illness. She set off immediately after she received the letter, "traveled three hundred leagues in one day and one night"[9]. As expected, her husband was mortally ill, and finally died. She was so heart-stricken that she didn't bring herself to ask him what was to be done after his death. Her deep affection was also reflected in her mourning for Zhao Mingcheng after he had died for three years. When she recalled him, his lovely voice and expression were so vivid that it seemed to have occurred yesterday: "Nowadays when I chance to look over these books, it's like meeting old friends. And I recall when my husband was in the hall called 'Calm Governance' 静治堂 in Lai-zhou 莱州: He had first finished binding the volumes, making title slips of rue leaves to keep out insects and tie ribbons of blue silk, binding ten juan into one volume. Every day in the evening when the office clerks had gone home, he would do editorial collations on two juan and write a colophon for one inscription."[2] Endless nostalgia and depression were expressed under her pen, making people sigh deeply even after one thousand years.

Her virtue in "following her husband" is reflected in her firm attitude towards maintaining their collections despite her eternal separation from her husband and even after she had to face a homeless and terrible experience.

Before Zhao Mingcheng died, for the separation when her husband set off for his new post, Li Qingzhao wrote: "On June 13, he set off to carry out his duty. He had the boats pulled up onto the shore, and he sat there on the bank, in summer clothes with his headband high on his forehead, his spirit like a tiger's, his eyes gleaming as though they would shoot into a person, while he gazed towards the boat and took his leave. I was terribly upset. I shouted to him, 'If I hear the city is in danger, what should I do?' He answered from after, hands on his hips: "Follow the crowd. If you can't do otherwise, abandon the household goods first, then the clothes, then the books and scrolls, then the old bronze—but carry the sacrificial vessels for the ancestral temple yourself. Live or die with them; don't give them up!"[3] The advice given by Zhao Mingcheng is ridiculous to most people as he requested her to abandon clothing instead of collections when she had to run away from

[4] Ibid., pp. 779.
[5] Ibid., pp. 779.
[6] Ibid., pp. 779-81.
[7] Ibid., pp. 781.
[8] Ibid., pp. 785.
[9] Ibid., pp. 785.

[1] A *juan*, originally a "scroll," came to be something like a chapter. The size of a library was measured not in volumes but in *juan*.—Cited from *Selections of Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 873.
[2] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 789.
[3] Ibid., pp. 783-85.

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home if the country was occupied by invaders. Personal necessity and safety shall be placed after hobbies! It's evident that a journey for refuge would be full of risks. If she meets storm and snow, clothing can save her life. At critical moments, clothing can be exchanged for food. However, collections are not easy to take, and increased hugely the difficulty of her journey. Furthermore, at critical moments, they don't have practical value but may be sources of disasters. At his last moment, Zhao Mingcheng still cherished his collections very much. "He took a brush and wrote a poem. When he finished it, he passed away, with no thought at all for the future provision of his family."[4] What was the political situation then? "His Majesty had already sent the palace ladies elsewhere, and I heard that future crossings of the Yangtze 长江 were to be prohibited."[5] Zhao Mingcheng neither told his wife where she could go, nor requested her to abandon the collections. To most people, his will was foolish, or even ruthless.

The rest of the work indicated that Li Qingzhao had always followed the instructions of her husband to maintain their collections without caring about risks. She would not give up one piece until her last resort. She practiced the Ancient Chinese traditional female's virtue of "following one's husband" with her life. In the whole work, we can't find one complaint from her about protecting the relics, but just helplessness and sighs whenever her efforts are in vain. It is very clear, that in the female perspective of Li Qingzhao, her behavior was unquestionably correct and just, as it complied with feudal behavioral rules and regulations for a wife. Her resolution and conviction in observing the sacred "following one's husband" principle, as a civil official's wife, constitutes the second female perspective in Li Qingzhao's autobiography.

c) Female Scholar

In the first half of the article, the female scholarly identity of Li Qingzhao mostly coincides with her identity as a civil official's wife. For instance, she wrote this about Zhao Mingcheng's life, before his entering officialdom: "On the first and fifteenth days of every month, my husband would get a short vacation from the Academy; he would 'pawn some clothes' for five hundred cash and go to the market at Xiang-guo Temple 相国寺, where he would buy fruit and rubbings of inscriptions."[1] And after he became an civil official, "There one might find many ancient poems omitted from the Classic of Poetry (Shi Jing, 诗经), unofficial histories, and writings never before seen, works hidden in walls and recovered from tombs. My husband would work hard at copying such things, drawing ever more pleasure from the activity, until he was unable to stop himself. Later, if he happened to see a work of painting or calligraphy by some person of ancient or modern times, or unusual vessels of the Three Dynasties of high antiquity, he would still pawn our clothes to buy them."[2] "Thus our collection came to surpass all others in fineness of paper and the perfection of the characters."[3] "When the book collection was complete, we set up a library in 'Return Home' Hall 归来堂, with huge bookcases where the books were cataloged in order. There we put the books. Whenever I wanted to read, I would ask for the key, make a note in the ledger, then take out the books. If one of them was a bit damaged or soiled, it would be my responsibility to repair the spot and copy it out in a neat hand. There was no longer the same ease and casualness as before. This attempt to make things convenient led instead to nervousness and anxiety. I couldn't bear it. I began to plan how to make do with only one meat dish in our meals and how to do away with all the finery in my dress. For my hair there were no ornaments of gilding or embroidery. Whenever he came upon a history or the work of a major writer, if there was nothing wrong with the printing and no errors in the edition, he would buy it on the spot to have as a second copy."[4] Combined with the foregoing plots to cite books and taste tea, these words create a vivid image of a woman who has elegant hobbies, profound knowledge and doesn't long for vanity. In such a feudal society, when a talentless woman could generally be treated as virtuous, Li Qingzhao could love the collection of relics with her husband, and could appreciate them as well as her husband. In the plot to cite books and taste tea, they played a game that one asked questions and the other answered. When one raised a historical incident, the other had to tell the particular page, volume and book the answer lay in. The one who gave the correct answer could drink tea first. This game can only be played by experts who have been well read and who have known relevant knowledge extremely well. Their boudoir game stressed profound knowledge, and their hobby is as refined as possible. Her female scholarly identity has integrated her natural gender and scholarly personality, a combination which produces a special image of Li Qingzhao within the grand historical background, and a colorful taste for her autobiography with an unusual female perspective.

After Zhao Mingcheng died, the Jin invasion threw the Southern Song Dynasty into violent storms, and people suffered much from fluctuating political situations. Li Qingzhao had to leave her home and lodge in houses belonging to others. The mental tendency of her work at this time reveals the female perspective even better. In the second half of the epilog,

[4] Ibid., pp. 785.
[5] Ibid., pp. 785.

[1] Ibid., pp. 787-79.

[2] Ibid., pp.779.
[3] Ibid., pp.779.
[4] Ibid., pp. 781.

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what Li Qingzhao cared about is how to try her best to maintain their collection. At the turning moment between the Northern Song and Southern Song, many male scholars expressed their intense patriotism and transformed themselves from civil officials to military officers, which we can't find in Li Qingzhao's autobiography (unsurprisingly, given her gender).

As we have discussed above, Li Qingzhao wrote this article in the second year of the Shaoxing 绍兴 Reign (1132AD), when Emperor Zhao Gou ruled the country. "Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200)[5] said, 'At the beginning of the Shaoxing 绍兴 reign, the country contains talented people, but their works are coarse, not mentioning grievance and tenderness. Therefore, an appropriate academic spirit should be fostered.' Undoubtedly, the spirit fostered and advocated by literature is patriotism, which supplies courage, strength and confidence to people in wars."[1] If compared with Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone, this paragraph seems to exhibit some differences. Li Qingzhao's article is refined and touching, and the second half is full of grievance and tenderness. At the end, she quotes ancient stories of Xiao Yi(萧绎, an emperor of the Liang dynasty, 508-555AD, reigned in 552-554AD) and Yang Guang(杨广, the second and also the last emperor of the Sui Dynasty, 569-618AD, reigned in 604-618AD), and inquires into historical and cosmic space and time. It has a bleak tone full of laments, but patriotism has not been clearly advocated. In the period's wider literary background, its uniqueness is manifested.

"The invasion of Jin 金 overthrew the The Northern Song Dynasty, and people in central China were pushed to wars. Consequently, scholars who had long enjoyed peaceful and abundant life were also driven to battlefields. As the Northern Song had long valued civil officials, they controlled the wand of the imperial court. In this case, decisions from civil officials would not only influence their own promotion or demotion, but also determine the life and death of the country and its people."[2] "In such a background, at the end of The Northern Song, many scholars united to advocate armed force. Some of them led troops, and some determined to join the army. The former gossiping and coward spirit of The Northern Song scholars changed to a new social and political ideal to protect the country and defeat the enemy. As a result, a martial spirit came into being with characteristics of bravery, resolution and fortitude."[3] As a woman, Li Qingzhao didn't have opportunities to fight on battlefields. Therefore, she didn't express such great patriotic ambitions in her autobiography as Lu You(陆游,1125-1210) and Xin Qiji(辛弃疾,1140-1207) did.[4] At the turning point between the Northern Song and the Southern Song dynasties when the country was conquered and families were ruined, her aspiration displayed in the autobiography was to maintain their collections as much as possible. Is it that Li Qingzhao didn't have patriotism? No. Her universally appreciated Xiari Jueju(夏日绝句, Quatrains in Summer) are a good case in point, "Living, one should be an outstanding man; Dead, one should be an outstanding ghost. Even today, I forget not Xiang Yu(项羽),[5] Who refused to flee to the east side of the Wu River(乌江)."[6] The commentary below this poem in Reselection of Li Qingzhao's Poems (Chongji Li Qingzhao Ji, 重辑李清照集) says, "Through carefully chewing over its sentiment, we conclude that this poem would have been written in the Jianyan(建炎) Reign when northern troops fled southward in panic."[7] In the poem, she yelled for the conquered territory and ruined country, effectively exposing her righteous patriotism. By quoting the old story of Xiang Yu, she satirized the muddleheaded and incompetent ruling class of the Southern Song, and her intense patriotism jumped out of the lines. So, why wasn't her intense patriotism clearly expressed in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone? Instead, the central themes were her endeavors to protect their collection and the sheer grief after some objects got lost. Why?

The reason is that protecting the collection was her husband's will, and also a behavior that she persisted in, being faithful to their love. The collection was the evidence for their love. In the second volume of his Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Hegel wrote, "It is especially in female characters that love is supremely beautiful, since for them this surrender, this sacrifice, is

[5] Zhu Xi 朱熹, one of the most great thinkers, philosophers and educators of the Song Dynasty.

[1] Wang Xiaoshu 王晓舒, *Chinese Literature Spirit, Volume Song and Yuan(Zhongguo Wenxue Jingshen·Song Yuan Juan,中国文学精神·宋元卷)* [M]. Ji Nan, Shandong Education Press, 2003. pp. 147-48.

[2] Ma Maojun 马茂军, Zhang Haisha 张海沙, *Dilemma and Transcendence: A History of the Mentality of Literati in Song Dynasty(Kunjing Yu Chaoyue:Songdai Wenren Xintai Shi,困境与超越——宋代文人心态史)*, Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press, 2001.pp. 177.

[3] Ibid., pp. 179.

[4] Lu You and Xin Qiji are the two most famous patriotic poets of the Southern Song Dynasty,both of them not only wrote a great deal of patriotic poems,but also experienced military career to defend the country.

[5] Xiang Yu(项羽,ca.232-ca.202 BC) was a well-known political figure in Chinese history. He was also a prominent military leader in the late Qin dynasty.When he was defeated in Gai Xia(垓下),he felt discredited see Koto elders who lived in the east side of the Wu River, his homeland, so he refused to go across the river, and then he commited suicide with his sword on the shore of the Wu River.Although he failed, his moral integrity and heroism has been admired by the later generations of China for over 2000 years.

[6] Li Qingzhao 李清照 comp. Huang Mogu 黄墨谷 rv., *Recollection of Li Qingzhao Works(Chongji Li Qingzhao Ji,重辑李清照集)*. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, 2012. pp. 86.

[7] Ibid.

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the acme of their life, because they draw and expand the whole of their actual and spiritual life into this feeling, find a support for their existence in it alone, and, if they are touched by a misfortune in connection with it, dwindle away like a candle put out by the first unkind breeze."[1]

Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is the afterword Li Qingzhao wrote for Zhao Mingcheng's book, but the latter died. Therefore, as a lament article, it is under the lonely, grievous and desperate mood of a widow that her autobiography develops an explicit theme. A weak, helpless and sad woman relates her private story, and other personal characteristics such as lofty patriotism are placed behind, so that an implicit theme can be formed for the author to express her grief in a turbulent historical period. This tender quality, with integration of explicit and implicit themes, and a combination of evident and hidden lines is just the most distinct feature of the female perspective in the autobiography. This is the third female perspective of Li Qingzhao's autobiography.

In conclusion, the female perspective of Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is comprehensively unfolded with three identities of Li Qingzhao, i.e., a daughter and daughter-in-law of noble families, a wife of a civil official, and a female scholar. These three identities coincided or crossed over each other in the work, to develop a special kind of lament work with a triple female perspective.

IV. Narrative Space for Three Dimensional Lament in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone

As a lament work from a female perspective, Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is also special in its development of its lament theme layer by layer in the whole narrative space. In other words, it is an autobiography presented in a narrative space with a three dimensional lament. The reason for three-dimensional lament is that "the core of an autobiography is autobiographic facts, but neither biographic facts nor historic facts can be dispensable. Actually, they are a harmonious trinity, and constitute the three-dimensionality of autobiographic facts."[2]

The three dimensional laments in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone are lament for her husband, lament for collected objects and lament for the country. The three dimensions are interwoven in the work, corresponding respectively to autobiographic facts, biographic facts and historic facts. Now, let's probe into the text and analyze Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone in these three dimensions:

a) Autobiographic facts – lament for her husband

This section focuses on real description of Li Qingzhao's emotions and psychological activities. It contains the most personal content and private feelings, things which others can't know. Therefore, it is the part that can best present "the self's" inner world in the autobiography. These feelings are almost all related to the objects collected by the couple.

When she described the happy scene, how she and her husband collected objects, quoted books and tasted tea, Li Qingzhao concluded, "I would have been glad to grow old in such a world. Thus, even though we were living in anxiety, hardships, and poverty, our wills were not broken."[3] When they had frugally collected so many items, that objects were piled in rooms and scattered on tables and beds, Li Qingzhao wrote, "This was what took his fancy and what occupied his mind, what drew his eyes and what his spirit inclined to; and his joy was greater than the pleasures others had in dancing girls, dogs, or horses."[1] When she parted from her husband on the boat, she described "I was terribly upset"[2], and her husband's words were not an expression of love, but placed the collection in the first place. When she heard that her husband was ill abed due to summer-heat and wrong medication, she wrote, "I was very alarmed, considering my husband's excitable nature and how nothing had been able to prevent the illness from deteriorating into fever."[3] Hurriedly, she came to her husband who was incurable so that she had to witness the death of her beloved. "I was weeping and in such a desperate state I could not bring myself to ask him what was to be done after his death."[4] When she came to Guiji and the collection was stolen by the landlord, she sighed, "I was terribly upset"[5]. With a conquered country, broken family, and her homeless life, their collection was reduced dramatically in size, and the remainder was incomplete and worthless. Li Qingzhao mocked herself, "Yet I treasure them as if I were protecting my own head—foolish person that I am!"[6] Three years after her husband died, when she read Records on Metal and Stone again, Li Qingzhao had a myriad of feelings, "Nowadays when I chance to look over these books, it's like meeting old

[1] G.W.F.Hegel:*Hegel's Aesthetics:Lectures on Fine Art*,translated by T.M. Knox,Oxford:Clarendon Press,1998. Vol.I, pp. 563.
[2] *A Theory on Autobiography Literature,* pp.32.

[3] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp.779-81.

[1] Ibid., pp.781.
[2] Ibid., pp.783.
[3] Ibid., pp.785.
[4] Ibid., pp.785.
[5] Ibid., pp.789.
[6] Ibid., pp.789.

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friends."[7] She recalled scenes when her husband sorted out their collection in Jingzhi Hall of Donglai 东莱堂. Back to reality and comparing with the past, as a widow, she felt extremely depressed, "It is so sad—today the ink of his writing seems still fresh, but the trees on his grave have grown to an armspan in girth."[8] At the end of the work, she made a serious interrogation and contemplation of destiny that had been long hidden in her heart, "It must be that the passions of human nature cannot be forgotten, even standing between life and death. Or perhaps it is Heaven's will that beings as insignificant as ourselves are not fit to enjoy such superb creatures.[9] Or perhaps the dead too have consciousness, and they still treasure such things and give them their devoted attention, unwilling to leave them in the world of the living. How hard they are to obtain and how easy to lose!"[10] "A span of more than thirty years—how much calamity, how much gain and loss have I witnessed! When there is possession, there must be loss of possession; when there is a gathering together, there must be a scattering—this is the constant principle in things. Someone loses a bow; another person finds a bow; what's so special in that? The reason why I have recorded this story from beginning to end in such detail is to let it serve as a warning for scholars and collectors in later generations."[11] Her lamentations include grief for the collection and grief for her husband, and even lament for uncertain fate. The collection was the common interest of her husband and her. All details of relic collection, appreciation, fondling and protection were evidences of their love. The collection was not only their hobby to pursue ancient culture, but also a part of their life that was the most important and glorious so that the collection had been infused into her blood and whole life. The sincere, detailed and undisguised psychological description centering on the collection has incorporated her love to her husband and affection to inscriptions, books and paintings, which constitutes the first narrative dimension of the article, autobiographic fact.

b) Biographical fact – lament for the collection

The purpose of biographic facts is to manifest the relation between me and others, which is also the main line for the autobiography of Li Qingzhao. In the epilog, the ties to connect Li Qingzhao and her husband as well as others that she dealt with after her husband died are objects listed in Records on Metal and Stone. The evolving process of the collection from few to many, from many to few, from dispersion to collection, and from collection to dispersion is cleverly correlated to the relations between her and her husband, and is also a critical ploy to demonstrate that Li Qingzhao is closely linked to the birth of Record on Metal and Stone.

The first half of the epilog, namely, the part from when the author was married to Zhao Mingcheng until Zhao Mingcheng's death, focuses on their indulgence in relic collection. In the foregoing discussion, we saw that they went to Xiangguo Temple 相国寺, buying relics with all of their savings. Collection was their common interest, ideal and pursuit, and their love increased as the collection grew. Biographic facts also told readers the starting time and deep ideas for their collection, main sources and economic foundations for collection acquisition, spiritual happiness and mental satisfaction that the collection brought about, and financial embarrassment and dissatisfaction with the collection. Furthermore, her creation of a literary image of Zhao Mingcheng was closely related to their collection.

The most touching part of Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is the spiritual pleasure and mental satisfaction that relics bring to their marriage, which have been presented in the foregoing discussion of their collation, night appreciation, book citing and tea tasting. These extremely touching details tell readers what overwhelming and incomparable pleasure and emotional experience the relics described in Records on Metal and Stone have given to the author. In this sense, Records on Metal and Stone has infused into her life so that she couldn't give up and forget. These facts are "the most pregnant moments"[1] elaborated on the collection during their marriage, and the facts are exceptionally representative and suggestive.

The foregoing details on their relic compilation, maintenance and frugal collection have clearly demonstrated their common interest and relic acquisition without paying attention to cost. For the sake of their hobby, they would live in poverty but with much joy. Their extraordinary aesthetic interest and their profound love are vividly presented. They sorted their books, and Li Qingzhao lived with plain clothes and simple meals but she was spiritually satisfied in the private world of their collection.

After the impressive description of pleasure gained from the collection, Li Qingzhao turned to narration of their life's tragedy after the Jingkang Incident. "The next autumn, the ninth month of 1128, my husband took charge of Jian-kang Prefecture 建康府 but relinquished the position in the spring of the following

[7] Ibid., pp.789.
[8] Ibid., pp.791.
[9] "Superb creatures," *you-wu* 尤物, here figuratively applied to books and antiques, usually refers to dangerously beautiful women, who inspire destructive passion in those attracted to them.—Cited from *Selections of Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 873.
[10] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp.791.
[11] Ibid., pp.791.

[1] "the most pregnant moments(最富于孕育性的顷刻)" comes from *Narrative Study on Spatial Dimensions (Kongjian Weidu De Xushixue Yanjiu, 空间维度的叙事学研究)* by Long Diyong 龙迪勇, Beijing: Chinese Social Science News, Oct. 19, 2012.

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year. Again we put everything in boats and went up to Wu-hu 芜湖 and Gu-shu 姑熟, intending to take up lodging on the river Gan 贛水. That summer in the fifth month we reached Chi-yang 池阳. At that point an imperial decree arrived, ordering my husband to take charge of Hu-zhou 湖州 and to proceed to an audience with the Emperor before he took up the office. Therefore he had the household stop at Chi-yang 池阳, from which he went off alone to answer the summons."[2] We have seen their conversation about what should be done to the collection in dangers. This exceptionally impressive and reminiscent part is the core of the whole article. After the riverside farewell, when they met again, "He took a brush and wrote a poem. When he finished it, he passed away, with no thought at all for the future provision of his family."[3] At the time when the country was conquered and the family was ruined, he told his wife that she must stay with their collection, and he had never expressed any idea to abandon the relics. Therefore, he treasured the collection more than his own life. His will sanctified Li Qingzhao's behavior in seeking to protect their collection during her life as a refugee.

In the epilog, Li Qingzhao also recorded her relation with other people, which supplies biographic facts after the death of Zhao Mingcheng. Without her husband, Li Qingzhao was extremely lone and helpless, and didn't know where to settle herself. "The situation was getting more serious by the day. I thought of my husband's brother-in-law, an official in the Ministry of War on garrison duty 兵部侍郎 in Hong-zhou 洪州, and dispatched two former employees of my husband to go ahead to my brother-in-law, taking the baggage."[1] "At Gui-ji 会稽, I chose lodging in a cottage belonging to a local named Zhong 钟. Suddenly one night someone made off with five of the baskets through a hole in the wall. I was terribly upset and offered a substantial reward to get them back. Two days later, Zhong Fu-hao 钟复皓 next door produced eighteen of the scrolls and asked for a reward. By that I knew that the thief was not far away. I tried every means I could, but I still couldn't get hold of the rest."[2] Other details such as seeking shelter among noble relatives of her late husband, and the stealing of relics by the landlord suggest the hardship she faced during her attempts to find refuge and the efforts she made.

The arrangement of biographic facts in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone is seamless. The facts are interwoven with collected objects, and appropriately illustrated the relations between the author and her husband and other people. This is the second narrative space - biographic facts.

[2] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp.783.
[3] Ibid., pp.785.

[1] Ibid., pp.785-87.
[2] Ibid., pp.789.

c) Historical facts – lament for the country

Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone indicated many historical facts about the Song Dynasty, which were closely related to the fates of Li Qingzhao and their collection. It can be said that these facts are hidden traces and historical backgrounds for Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone, and constitute the historical element of the work. The miserable experience of Li Qingzhao and their collection in the historical turmoil of a subjugated country and broken family stands as the epitome of the experiences of Song scholars in wars and vagrancy after the invasion of Jin troops.

"Autobiographers often present themselves with particular identities, and identity recognition is an essential principle for them to arrange autobiographic facts, biographic facts and historical facts."[3] "Biography neither relates pure history, nor complete literary fabrication; it should be a cohesion, and an account that is based on history but perfects in writing. The relation between history and article is neither one or the other, nor barriers one another. Instead, they complement each other and are interrelated."[4]

Li Qingzhao used her female scholarly identity to treat historical facts in the autobiography. At the turning point of the Northern and Southern Song dynasties, the Jingkang Incident 靖康之祸 became the critical transition of Li Qingzhao's fate, and also the division line between her life statuses. In the Northern Song period, her father and father-in-law were both senior officials, and her husband was promoted gradually. She was brilliantly talented, and enjoyed the graceful life of the literati class. She had a pleasant family atmosphere, and a harmonious marriage, all contributing to an idyllic life for her. Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone has manifested many happy details between her and her husband. After southward migration, her personal destiny was tightly related to the country's fate. If the nest is overthrown, how can you find an intact egg? Disasters of individual scholars are illustrated through the gradual reduction of the collection. Loss of the collection brought heavy sorrow and grief to Li Qingzhao, and reflected in microcosm the national calamities and traumas of the age.

"In 1126, the first year of the Jing-kang reign, my husband was governing Zi-chuan 淄川 when we heard that the Jin Tartars were moving against the capital. He was in a daze, realizing that all those full trunks and overflowing chests, which he contemplated so lovingly and mournfully, would surely soon be his possessions no longer. In the third month of spring in 1127, the first year of the Jian-yan reign, we hurried south for the funeral of his mother. Since we could not take the overabundance of our possessions with us, we

[3] *A Theory on Autobiography Literature,* pp. 83.
[4] Ibid., pp. 44.

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first gave up the bulky printed volumes, the albums of paintings, and the most cumbersome of the vessels. Thus we reduced the size of the collection several times, and still we had fifteen cartloads of books. When we reached Dong-hai, it took a string of boats to ferry them all across the Huai 淮河, and again across the Yangtze 长江 to Jian-kang 建康. In our old mansion in Qing-zhou 青州 we still had more than ten rooms of books and various items locked away, and we planned to have them all brought by boat the next year. But in the twelfth month Jin forces sacked Qing-zhou, and those ten or so rooms I spoke of were all reduced to ashes."[1] Historical facts are closely related to the size of the collection. As the national calamities got worse, the collection became smaller, and her life was increasingly miserable. The collection's reduction implies that the author couldn't protect the relics she treasured. It is evident that the nation weakened and the political situation became turbulent.

The disintegration of the country and the upheaval of the political situation are also manifested in the reduction of the collection. Let's see how rapidly the collection was reduced to one or two tenths of its former size: "After the funeral was over, I had nowhere to go. His Majesty had already sent the palace ladies elsewhere, and I heard that future crossings of the Yangtze were to be prohibited. At the time I still had twenty thousand juan of books, two thousand copies of inscriptions on metal and stone with colophons, table services and mats enough to entertain a hundred guests, along with other possessions equaling those already mentioned. I also became very sick, to the point where my only vital sign was a rasping breath."[2] "In February that winter, the Jin invaders sacked Hong-zhou 洪州 and all was lost. Those books which, as I said, it took a string of boats to ferry across the Yangtze 长江 were scattered into clouds of smoke. What remained were a few light scrolls and calligraphy pieces; manuscript copies of the collections of Li Bo 李白, Du Fu 杜甫, Han Yu 韩愈, and Liu Zong-yuan 柳宗元; a copy of Current Tales and Recent Bons Mots(Shi Shuo Xin Yu,世说新语); a copy of Discourses on Salt and Iron(Yan Tie Lun,盐铁论); a few dozen rubbings of stone inscriptions fron the Han 汉 and Tang 唐; ten or so ancient tripods and cauldrons; and a few boxes of Southern Tang 南唐 manuscript editions—all of which I happened to have had removed to my chambers to pass time during my illness, now a solitary pile of leftovers. Since I could no longer go upriver, and since the movements of the invaders were unpredictable, I was going to stay with my younger brother Li Hang 李沆, a reviser of edicts. By the time I reached Tai-zhou 台州, the governor of the place had already fled. Proceeding on to Shan 剡 through Mu-zhou 睦州, we left the clothing and linen behind. Hurrying to Yellow Cliff 黄岩, we hired a boat to take us toward the sea, following the fleeing court. The court halted a while in Zhang-an 章安, then we followed the imperial barge on the sea route to Wen-zhou 温州 and Yue-zhou 越州. In February, during the fourth year of the Jian-yan 建炎 reign, early in 1131, all the officials of the government were released from their posts. We went to Qu-zhou 衢州, and then that May, now the first year of the Shao-xing 绍兴 reign, we returned to Yue-zhou 越州, and in 1132 back again to Hang-zhou 杭州."[3] Furthermore, the collection made Li Qingzhao a suspect of treason and she experienced a near escape, "When my husband had been gravely ill, a certain academician, Zhang Fei-qing 张飞卿, had visited him with a jade pot—actually it wasn't really jade but alabaster. I have no idea who started the story, but there was a false rumor that they had been discussing presenting it to the Jin 金 as a tribute gift. I also learned that someone had made formal charges in the matter. I was terrified and dared say nothing, but I took all the bronze vessels and such things in the household and was ready to turn them over to the imperial court. But by the time I reached Yue-zhou 越州, the court had already gone on to Si-ming 四明. I didn't dare keep these things in the household any longer, so I sent them along with the manuscripts to Shan 剡. Later when the imperial army was rounding up defeated enemy troops, I heard that these had all been taken into the household of General Li 李将军. That 'solitary pile of leftovers,' of which I spoke, had now been reduced by about fifty or sixty percent. All that remained were six or so baskets of books, paintings, ink and inkstones that I hadn't been able to part with. I always kept these under my bed and opened them only with my own hands."[1] Up to now, less than a half collection was left. Although she tried her best to maintain the collection, her bad luck was far from its end. When she lodged in a certain Zhong's household, the collection was stolen, and she couldn't purchase the objects back, "Two days later, Zhong Fu-hao 钟复皓 next door produced eighteen of the scrolls and asked for a reward. By that I knew that the thief was not far away. I tried every means I could, but I still couldn't get hold of the rest. I have now learned that they were all purchased by the Circuit Fiscal Supervisor 运使 Wu Yue 吴说. Now seventy or eighty percent of that 'solitary pile of leftovers' is gone. I still have a few volumes from three or four sets, none complete, and some very ordinary pieces of calligraphy".[2]

[1] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp. 783.
[2] Ibid., pp. 785.

[3] Ibid., pp.787.

[1] Ibid., pp.787-89.
[2] Ibid., pp.789.

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It is very obvious that the political situation led to the dramatic reduction of the collection from an immense number to one or two tenths with little value. The direct causal relationship between the two perfectly manifested the restrictive effect of historical facts on the personal fate of individuals. Implicitly, Li Qingzhao described, under national turmoil, the fact that scholars can't control their fates, but end up being bullied and tortured in a "big panic 大惶怖".

The beginning of Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone reads, "Yet catastrophe fell on Wang Ya 王涯 and Yuan Zai 元载 alike: What did it matter that the one hoarded books and paintings while the other merely hoarded pepper? Chang-yu 长舆 and Yuan-kai 元凯 both had a disease—it made no difference that the disease of one was a passion for money, and of the other, a passion for the transmission of knowledge and commentary. Although their reputations differed, they were the same in being deluded."[3] At the end of the work, she sighed, "Long ago when the city of Jiang-ling 江陵 fell, Xiao Yi 萧绎, Emperor Yuan of the Liang 梁元帝, did not regret the fall of his kingdom, yet destroyed his books and paintings [unwilling to see them fall into the hands of his conquerors]. When his capital at Jiang-du was sacked, Yang Guang 杨广, Emperor Yang of the Sui 隋炀帝, wasn't concerned with his own death, only with recovering his books [demonstrated when his spirit overturned the boat in which they were being transported so that he could have his library in the land of the dead][4]."[5] The two paragraphs correspond to each other, where Li Qingzhao integrated historical facts, legends and personal opinions. The first paragraph tells us that Li Qingzhao was extremely sad and disappointed at the degeneration of the current spiritual and cultural situation, and the depreciated value of worldly ideas. Therefore, she made severe mocking comments to show the great upheaval of her life. The second paragraph relates that she compared her collection to the special behavior of Xiao Yi and Yang Guang when they were confronted with national crises and life-and-death disasters, even after death, which suggests massive lamentation and serious interrogation. By contrasting the will of Zhao Mingcheng at the riverside, at the conclusion of Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone, Li Qingzhao related their collection to this life-and-death theme. In discourse about Zhao Mingcheng, his seemingly foolish and illiberal hobby as an epigraphist has illustrated great historical values and issues of the meaning of cultural heritage, transcending an individual's times and (one might say metaphorically) moving heaven and earth. At the same time, the recall of two former emperors who treasured their relics over their live when their capitals were being sacked has effectively displayed her grief and anger for a conquered country and ruined families. In this way, she incorporated her lament for the country when South Song was in turbulence. She also expressed her longing for the peaceful, comfortable and scholarly-oriented life in the The Northern Song period. Consequently, she announced her resolution for the collection's spiritual value, and "never-give-up" mentality, even if the country and family faced devastating calamities. These facts constitute the third dimension of the three-dimensional narrative space – lament for history.

"Although biography and history are different in narrative object and writing purpose, they have one essential point, that is, both of them have to be constructed on facts. Faithfully following facts is a fundamental principle that both of them shall comply with."[1] "In historical works, most that we read show a temporal spiral progress (a historical outlook), the cause and effect of events and rise and fall of dynasties, so that we can understand inner logics that drive the historical train forward. The other way round, biography will not take a panoramic view and grasp vital veins, but focus on particular events. The focus is always placed on meaningful details - biographic facts and autobiographic facts. Fluctuating emotions, elusive ideas and impending disasters are all carefully edited so that a movie with individuality is presented to the readers. For this reason, the difference of writing purposes leads to different styles of biography and history."[2]

For the lament autobiography, Li Qingzhao clearly introduced historical facts into the Epilog, and cleverly demonstrated the causal relations to her personal fate with an implicit narrative method. This constitutes the third dimensional narration for Li Qingzhao's autobiography, historical facts - lament for the country.

In short, with her unique female perspective, in Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone, Li Qingzhao integrated three narrative spaces, namely, autobiographic facts - lament for her husband, biographic facts - lament for the collection, and historical facts - lament for the country, which constitute a special autobiographic style with three lament spaces. It has contributed much to ancient autobiographic writing, with a compositional structure that is rich and appropriately selected.

[3] Ibid., pp.777.

[4] This story about Yang Guang is in *The Record of the Emperor Yang of the Sui's life in the twenlfth year of Daye 大业 Reign of the Sui Dynasty(616)* (*Nanbu Yanhua Lu, 南部烟花录,in fact it is a novel described Yang Gaung's life in 616).*Normally the author of it was regarded as Yan Shigu 颜师古(581-645,a famous historian and linguist of Tang), but another opinion of later generations regarded it as a novel of the Song Dynasty.

[5] *Selections of the Tang and Song Dynasties*, pp.791.

[1] *A Theory on Autobiography Literature,* pp. 46.

[2] Ibid., pp. 45.

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V. Conclusion

Comprehensively analyzed, the three dimensional laments in a triple female perspective of Epilog to Records on Metal and Stone are closely interwoven and inseparable. They are a trinity.

Complicated plots and sentimental tones continuously expose the ego of the author through relations between me and others, between me and the times. The whole work is full of ups and downs, offering amazing impressions to the reader. The massive amount of information contained in the epilog also provides traceable, genuine and reliable materials for later generations. Incontrovertibly, this is an autobiography with refined conceptions, complex constructions, and profound meanings. It has not only filled the blank of female writers in the Chinese autobiographical field, but also provided a quite special narrative structure with three dimensional interactions. It has added much value to the original book, and has an irreplaceable status as a literary model. It is a great milestone in Chinese autobiographic history. As a result, Li Qingzhao becomes a landmark figure in Chinese biographical history as well.

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