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The Compilation of *Xinxiu Bencao* and “Tribute” in Tang China:  
On a Fragment of the Work Held in the National Library of China

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The fragment of a Tang period hand-copy of *Xinxiu Bencao* 新修本草 (the first “Material Medica” to be compiled by imperial order, in AD 659) held by the National Library of China (doc #臨. 2371) corresponds to the fragment of the work unearthed in Dunhuang and provides important clues to the work’s compilation process.

The recent “discovery” of the Ming period copy of the “Statutory Codes of the Northern Song Dynasty (Tiansheng-Ling 天聖令) has revealed the content of its Medical Code (医疾令) which clearly describes the Tang period administration of “material medica” (*bencao* 本草).

The research to date on the Tang Medical Code has focused in reconstructing it, and the work on sections related to pharmacology needs to consider the intent surrounding the compilation of *Xinxiu Bencao* in the early years of that Dynasty.

The present article is an attempt to clarify that intent by showing the relationship between the work’s preface, the Medical Code and medical institutions in general from the Northern Dynasties period on.

First, a comparison of Doc #臨. 2371 and the Dunhuang fragment of *Xinxiu Bencao* reveals that the early Tang period compilation project was promoted by Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (?-659 the brother-in-law of the dynasty’s founder, a high ranking bureaucrat and legalist).

Secondly, according to the Tiansheng Code, whenever the imperial surgery needed medicinal herbs, it was to refer to the *bencao* manual to ascertain where the herbs could be harvested and then order them through the Budget

Bureau (Shangshu-sheng 尚書省 Hubu 戶部 Duzhi 度支), which is thought to have been the source of herbal supply to several outlets.

The main compiler of the *Xinxiu Bencao*, Su Jing 蘇敬, held the post of quality controller and carrier of tribute goods, providing him with the expertise in pharmacology required to complete the work.

*Xinxiu Bencao* not only represents the Tang Dynasty’s continuation of the Northern Dynasties’ commitment to protecting the lives of its subjects, but also describes for the historian the Dynasty’s institutions surrounding “tribute,” by which it attempted to control the distribution of goods throughout the empire. While existing as a manual for harvesting medicinal herbs, the work is also a comprehensive index of those herbs which flowed through the empire as tribute goods.

The Red Sea Trade in the Thirteenth Century:  
An Analysis of Exports from Egypt to Yemen

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The trade conducted across the Red Sea between the Arabian Peninsula and the African continent is known to have flourished from the middle of the tenth until the late fifteenth century, at which time the Portuguese began making inroads into the Indian Ocean. The research to date on the Red Sea trade has considered it from such different viewpoints as the merchants involved, modes of trade and trade routes; however, the articles of trade, a subject of vital importance in any examination of trade, have not been adequately examined. Consequently, in this article the author considers the Red Sea trade during the thirteenth century by examining the goods that were exported from Egypt to Yemen at that time.

The discussion is based on *Nūr al-Ma‘ārif fī Nuẓūm wa Qawānīn wa A‘rāf al-Yaman fī al-‘Ahd al-Muẓaffarī al-Wārif*, a collection of documents pertaining to tax administration compiled during the reign of the second Rasūlid sultan, al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf b. ‘Umar (r. 647-94/1249-95), analyzing a section entitled “Goods arriving from the regions of Egypt,” containing documents relating to the customs house at the port of ‘Adan, listing in great detail the numerous