

Correspondence

A Reply to Somers

In an otherwise adequate review by Robert M. Somers in the 1978 issue of this journal of a collection of essays edited by me and John Curtis Perry there are three inaccuracies which need to be mentioned. In the first place, *Essays on T'ang Society: The Interplay of Social, Political and Economic Forces* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976) does not sell for \$35.00, but rather \$15.00. Somers's statement about a "vastly inflated price" would have been justified if his facts had been correct. Second, he states that the opening pages by Denis Twitchett, which were reprinted here from another volume and which served as an introduction to the remaining essays, cover "Chinese history from the fall of the Han to the end of the T'ang, a period of seven centuries, in sixteen pages." Again, this is in error. The essay is a general discussion almost entirely of the Sui (589–618) and T'ang (618–907) dynasties. Finally, Somers states that the volume's bibliographical essay on Western literature dealing with the T'ang has "little or no direct relevance to the essays in this volume." This statement is entirely mistaken. With very few exceptions, the works cited deal directly with aspects of T'ang social, political, and economic life. Also, he is incorrect in saying that this bibliography is "designed for an undergraduate seminar." Instead, it was designed for any reader who is not a specialist on the T'ang period. These corrections aside, Somers's discussion of the principal essays by Arthur Wright, Edwin Pulleyblank, Denis Twitchett (other than the one mentioned above), and Larry Moses is basically accurate and informative.

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