



KONFUZIUS-INSTITUT LEIPZIG

莱比锡孔子学院

Der Ort für chinesische Sprache und Kultur

SINOLOGISCHE VORTRAGSREIHE:
Freunde aus der Ferne

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IDENTITY AND TRADITION FOR THE TANG ELITE: DU FU (712–770) AND HIS POETRY

David McMullen (University of Cambridge)

This lecture will describe the background to the flourishing of verse in the High Tang period and to Du Fu's achievement as, traditionally, China's greatest poet. It will account for the range of Du Fu's verse, to include his 'poems of entreaty'; his poems of self apology; his poems in the yuefu tradition and his great poem series. It will argue that for Du Fu verse was a social instrument, an exploration of his literary heritage that provided him with different identities, that of the ru scholar advising the emperor; the recluse withdrawing from official life; and finally the committed poet, intent on building up a collection of poetry that would secure for him the immortality for which he craved. He argued with himself as to which of these identities should take priority in his mind, before maintaining that writing verse was his main avocation.

