

Jian'an Literature Revisited:
Poetic Dialogues in the Last Three Decades of the Han Dynasty

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Abstract

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The Jian'an period (196-220), which is best known through the fictionalized account in the *Romance of the Three States*, is also an important literary period. It is celebrated for its major writers such as Cao Cao, Cao Pi, Cao Zhi and Wang Can. Previous scholars have mainly been concerned with the life and poetry of an individual writer. In this dissertation, I attempt to take an approach that crosses the boundary between individual writers. I read Jian'an poems—including *shi*, *fu*, and *yuefu*—as the authors' poetic dialogues with their contemporaries. This approach is based on the fact that the writers gathered at the court of Cao Cao and shared the language of poetry. Whether drinking together or living apart, they often engaged in a dialogue on a common topic through the medium of writing. Their topics range from travel, careers, expeditions, to merriment. Like the Athenian speechmakers in Plato's "Symposium," Jian'an writers also tried to impress, persuade, entertain and challenge one another in their poems. Having this context in mind and drawing inspiration from Western literature, I explore how Jian'an poems can be better understood and how the individual writers together established a literary tradition of their own.

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“Next we come to the Lesser City,
Which adjoins it on the west.
The hub of markets and shops,
The pool of a myriad merchants.”

These lines are cited from Professor David R. Knechtges' translation of Zuo Si's "Shu Capital Rhapsody." Whenever I read his translation of these lines, I seem to see an old commercial city standing in front of me, dazzling yet clear. During these six years, Professor Knechtges has given me guidance on classical Chinese that has allowed me to grasp the language and explore the world described in its words. He has also introduced me to numerous scholarly works and supported me with his immediate and generous comments. Because of him, I continue my study with courage and confidence.

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In the last three decades of the Han dynasty (A.D. 190-220), the imperial court collapsed and a succession of regional powers arose. Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220), one of the most powerful warlords, established a court that attracted both military and literary men. He said:¹

Had the state been without me, I do not know how many men would have claimed themselves emperors, and how many would have claimed themselves kings!
設使國家無有孤，不知當幾人稱帝，幾人稱王！

As a student of Chinese literature, one would like to add, “Had the state been without Cao Cao, I do not know how Jian’an writers would have met each other, and how they could have established a literary tradition of their own.” This literary tradition is known as Jian’an literature, named after the reign era Jian’an 建安 (196-220) of Emperor Xian of Han 漢獻帝 (r. 189-220).

In the Tang dynasty, Li Bo 李白 (701-762) characterized Jian’an literature by two seemingly contradictory qualities: *gu* 骨 (bone, which designates a solid, forceful quality) and *qili* 綺麗 (exquisite beauty).² Lin Wen-yüeh recognizes and discusses the former quality in “The Decline and Revival of *Feng-ku* (Wind and Bone): On the Changing Poetic Styles from the Chien-an Era through the High T’ang Period.”³ However, she believes that Li Bo did not include Jian’an literature when he criticized the works with the latter quality:⁴

¹ Chen Shou 陳壽, comp.; Pei Songzhi 裴松之, comm., *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959; rpt. 1982), 1.33 note 1. Also see Chen Shou 陳壽, comp.; Pei Songzhi 裴松之, comm.; Lu Bi 盧弼, ed. and comm., *Sanguo zhi jijie* 三國志集解 (1957; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 1.133.

The translation is based on Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao: Literary Studies on the Man and the Myth” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1976), 11.

² Li Bo 李白; Qu Tuiyuan 瞿蛻園 and Zhu Jincheng 朱金城, eds. and comm., *Li Bo ji jiaozhu* 李白集校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 18.1077, 2.91.

³ Lin Wen-yüeh, “The Decline and Revival of *Feng-ku* (Wind and Bone): On the Changing Poetic Styles from the Chien-an Era through the High T’ang Period,” in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T’ang*, eds. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen, 130-66 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁴ Lin Wen-yüeh, “The Decline and Revival of *Feng-ku* (Wind and Bone),” 130.

In one of his poems Li Po 李白 (701-762) once referred to “P’eng-lai literature and Chien-an *ku* (bone)” (蓬萊文章建安骨). In another context, he commented that the dominance of highly ornamented style in literature after the Chien-an period (196-220) was not to be valued (自從建安來，綺麗不足珍). There can be no doubt of Li Po’s admiration for the literature of the Chien-an period.

Referring to the same lines, Professor C. H. Wang has a different reading: “Li Po criticizes the whimsical ornateness which marks many poetic works since the Chien-an 建安 era (196-220).”⁵

This reading is closer to Li Bo’s lines: “Ever since Jian’an,/ The exquisite beauty is not worthy prizing” (自從建安來，綺麗不足珍). It implies that Jian’an literature consists of not only “bone” but also “exquisite beauty.” Li Bo perceived both qualities. What other aspects could Jian’an literature have? How are those aspects dealt with in modern scholarship?

Individual Writers—Group Composition—Symposia—Poetic Dialogues

From the 1960s to the 2000s, several doctoral theses and books in Western languages were written on the life and poetry of an individual Jian’an writer: Cao Cao, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226), Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232), or Wang Can 王粲 (177-217):

1. Ronald C. Miao. “A Critical Study of the Life and Poetry of Wang Chung-hsuan.” Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1969.
2. Lois Fusek. “The Poetry of Ts’ao P’i (187-226).” Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1975.
3. Paul W. Kroll. “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao: Literary Studies on the Man and the Myth.” Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1976.
4. Ronald C. Miao. *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry: The Life and Verse of Wang Ts’an (A.D. 177-217)*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982.

⁵ C. H. Wang, “The Nature of Narrative in T’ang Poetry,” in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T’ang*, eds. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen, 217-52 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 251.

5. Robert Joe Cutter. "Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry." Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1983.
6. Jean-Pierre Diény. *Les Poèmes de Cao Cao (155–220)*. Paris: Collège de France Institut des Hautes Études Chinoise, 2000.

An inevitable issue for these studies is to what extent one can read the writer's life into his poetry, and vice versa. Back in 1964, Hans H. Frankel raised this issue in his article "Fifteen Poems by Ts'ao Chih: An Attempt at a New Approach."⁶ He criticized the biographical approach that Huang Jie 黃節 (1873-1935), Yu Guanying 余冠英 (1906-1995) and others applied extensively in their commentaries.⁷ Hans H. Frankel observed:⁸

In their view Ts'ao Chih's poems (except those supposedly written in his youth) are a constant series of expressions of his frustrations, complaints about his misery, and fruitless appeals to the throne. [...] This judgment is not entirely wrong, but it fails to take account of the fact that we are dealing with an imaginative work of art, not with a factual record of happenings and experiences.

Hans H. Frankel proposed reading at least some of Cao Zhi's poems as his imaginative presentation of extremes: extreme distances, extreme locations, extreme situation. He further emphasized that melancholy was the noblest mode of Chinese lyric poetry. It is because of this that many of Cao Zhi's poems are melancholic.⁹

As Hans H. Frankel mentioned in his article, this approach was not really new. It had been applied especially by the New Critics to Western poetry. Nevertheless, his article indeed "brought out some aspects of Ts'ao Chih's poetry that had been obscured by previous

⁶ Hans H. Frankel, "Fifteen Poems by Ts'ao Chih: An Attempt at a New Approach," *JAOS* 84.1 (Jan.-Mar. 1964): 1-14.

⁷ Cao Zhi 曹植; Huang Jie 黃節, comm., *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 曹子建詩注 (1933; rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008). Yu Guanying 余冠英, ed. and comm., *Cao Cao, Cao Pi, Cao Zhi shi xuan* 曹操曹丕曹植詩選 (Hong Kong: Daguang chubanshe, 1959).

⁸ Hans H. Frankel, "Fifteen Poems by Ts'ao Chih," 2, 5.

⁹ Hans H. Frankel, "Fifteen Poems by Ts'ao Chih," 14.

interpretations.”¹⁰ In particular, Professor Robert Joe Cutter, who studied Cao Zhi’s poetry in his doctoral thesis, was aware of Hans H. Frankel’s arguments and took them into consideration in formulating his reading of Cao Zhi’s works.

In 1991, Christopher Leigh Connery wrote a doctoral thesis on Jian’an poetry: “Jian’an Poetic Discourse.”¹¹ Although he also discussed Cao Cao, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi individually in three of his chapters, he was mainly concerned with the subjectivity formed in their poems. In addition, he investigated the subjectivity formed in Jian’an social intercourse in his last chapter.¹² The issue of literary social intercourse in early medieval China also interested Chinese scholars such as Hu Dalei 胡大雷 and Ruan Zhong 阮忠, who respectively wrote *Zhonggu wenxue jituan* 中古文學集團 in 1996 and *Zhonggu shiren: qunti ji qi shifeng yanhua* 中古詩人：群體及其詩風演化 in 2004.¹³

An important aspect of Jian’an social intercourse is group composition. In their communal writings, the participants often chose to write in the poetic form of *fu* 賦 (poetic expositions). Most of these works are preserved topically in *leishu* 類書 (literary compendia) compiled in the Sui, Tang and Song. For example, in the category of “rosemary” (*midie* 迷迭) in the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, we find *fu* on rosemary by Cao Pi, Cao Zhi, Wang Can, Ying Yang 應瑒 (d. 217) and Chen Lin 陳琳 (d. 217),¹⁴ all of whom were Jian’an writers.

Some scholars have identified Jian’an *fu* on a common theme or topic. For example,

¹⁰ Hans H. Frankel, “Fifteen Poems by Ts’ao Chih,” 14.

¹¹ Christopher Leigh Connery, “Jian’an Poetic Discourse” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1991).

¹² For a work in which Christopher Leigh Connery develops his observations, see his *The Empire of the Text: Writing and Authority in Early Imperial China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998).

¹³ Hu Dalei 胡大雷, *Zhonggu wenxue jituan* 中古文學集團 (Nanning: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1996). Ruan Zhong 阮忠, *Zhonggu shiren: qunti ji qi shifeng yanhua* 中古詩人：群體及其詩風演化 (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 2004).

¹⁴ Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 et al. comps.; Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, ed., *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1965; rpt. 1999), 81.1394-95.

Cheng Liang-shu 鄭良樹 has dated these *fu* and arranged them chronologically in his article “Chu ti feng zuo—Cao Wei jituan de fuzuo huodong” 出題奉作——曹魏集團的賦作活動。¹⁵ Liao Guodong 廖國棟 has grouped these *fu* by topic and surveyed them in his *Jian'an cifu zhi chuancheng yu tuoxin* 建安辭賦之傳承與拓新。¹⁶ Cheng Zhangcan 程章燦 has compiled a list of the titles and authors of these *fu* in his *Wei Jin Nanbeichao fu shi* 魏晉南北朝賦史. He has further collected the lines of pre-Tang *fu* (including Jian'an *fu*) that are missed by previous compilers or preserved in previously unknown sources.¹⁷ With these studies as his basis, Professor David R. Knechtges has written an unpublished article “Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han.”

Aside from *fu*, Jian'an writers also wrote *shi* 詩 (literary verses) on a common theme or topic. Some are preserved in a *leishu* or the *Wen xuan* 文選. For example, Liu Zhen 劉楨 (d. 217), Cao Zhi and Ying Yang's “*Shi* on Cockfight” are preserved in the category of “rooster” (*ji* 雞) in the *Yiwen leiju*.¹⁸ Cao Zhi and Liu Zhen's “Gongyan *shi*” 公讌詩 (*Shi* on the Lord's Feast) are preserved in the category of “banquet” (*yanhui* 燕會) in the *Yiwen leiju* as well as in the category of “lord's feast” (*gong yan* 公讌) in the *Wen xuan*.¹⁹ Others, although written on a common theme or topic, are preserved in separate sources. For example, Cao Zhi, Wang Can and Ruan Yu 阮瑀 (d. 212) all wrote a *shi* on the “Three Good Men” (Sanliang 三良), who were

¹⁵ Cheng Liang-shu 鄭良樹, “Chu ti feng zuo—Cao Wei jituan de fuzuo huodong” 出題奉作——曹魏集團的賦作活動, in *Wei Jin Nanbeichao wenxue lunji* 魏晉南北朝文學論集, ed. Xianggang zhongwen daxue Zhongguo yuyan wenxue xi, 181-209 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1994).

¹⁶ Liao Guodong 廖國棟, *Jian'an cifu zhi chuancheng yu tuoxin: yi tical ji zhuti wei fanwei* 建安辭賦之傳承與拓新：以題材及主題為範圍 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2000).

¹⁷ For the table of the group composition *fu*, see Cheng Zhangcan 程章燦, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao fu shi* 魏晉南北朝賦史 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001), 46. For his collections of the lines, see appendix 1.

¹⁸ *Yiwen leiju*, 91.1585.

¹⁹ *Yiwen leiju*, 39.712-13. Xiao Tong 蕭統, comp.; Li Shan 李善, comm., *Wen xuan* 文選 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 20.942-46.

interred alive with Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659-621 B.C.). Cao Zhi and Wang Can's *shi* are preserved in the *Wen xuan*, respectively titled "Sanliang shi" 三良詩 (*Shi* on the Three Good Men) and "Yong shi shi" 詠史詩 (*Shi* on History),²⁰ whereas Ruan Yu's *shi* is preserved in the *Yiwen leiju* without a title.²¹

Among these *shi*, the "lord's feast" poems have attracted scholars' attention. Two scholarly works on these poems are listed as follows:

- Cheng Yu-yu 鄭毓瑜. "Shilun gongyan shi zhiyu Yexia wenshi jituan de xiangzheng yiyi" 試論公讌詩之於鄴下文士集團的象徵意義. In her *Liuchao qingjing meixue zonglun* 六朝情境美學綜論, 171-218. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996.
- Huang Yazhuo 黃亞卓. *Han Wei Liuchao gongyan shi yanjiu* 漢魏六朝公宴詩研究. Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007.

The latter is a survey of the "lord's feast" poems from Han times to the Six Dynasties. The former re-examines the significance of these poems, which I will come back later.

Professor Robert Joe Cutter has written the following articles and book on the *shi* pieces mentioned previously:

- "Cao Zhi's (192-232) Symposium Poems." *CLEAR* 6 (1984): 1-32.
- "On Reading Cao Zhi's "Three Good Men": *Yong shi shi* or *Deng lin shi*?" *CLEAR* 11 (Dec. 1989): 1-11.
- "Brocade and Blood: The Cockfight in Chinese and English Poetry." *JAOS* 109.1 (Jan.-Mar. 1989): 1-16.
- *The Brush and the Spur: Chinese Culture and the Cockfight*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1989.

In these studies, Professor Robert Joe Cutter crosses the boundaries between genres, between

²⁰ *Wen xuan*, 21.985-87.

²¹ *Yiwen leiju*, 55.992.

individual writers, and between cultures. For example, on Cao Zhi's symposium poems and cockfight cultures, he cites not only *shi* but also *fu* and *yuefu* 樂府 (a later term for *geshi* 歌詩 or "song verses"). On Cao Zhi's "Shi on the Three Good Men" and cockfight cultures, he reads not only Cao Zhi's works but also his contemporaries' works. On cockfight culture, he further compares Chinese poems with English poems. By taking these approaches, he is able to observe details of a poem, a writer and a culture, details that could be hard to see if one does not cross the boundaries between genres, between individual writers, or between cultures.

Although Professor Robert Joe Cutter's 1984 article "Cao Zhi's (192-232) Symposium Poems" is not about group composition, it describes the main occasions for Jian'an group composition: symposia. As early as in the sixth century, the literary critic Liu Xie 劉勰 observed the importance of symposia when he paid tribute to Jian'an *shi* in five-syllable lines:²²

At the beginning of the Jian'an period, [*shi* in] five-syllable lines burgeoned and flourished. Emperor Wen [i.e. Cao Pi] and Prince Si of Chen [i.e. Cao Zhi] let the reins go and set a galloping pace, while Wang Can, Xu Gan, Ying Yang, and Liu Zhen fixed their eyes on the road and raced each other. Together they delighted in the wind and the moon, took excursions to ponds and parks, gave account of the glories of enjoying favor, told of festively tipsy banquets. Impassioned, they gave free rein to their vitality. Openhearted, they employed their talent. When they expressed their feelings and related things, they never resorted to petty cleverness. When they drove the vehicle of words to catch the appearances of things, they only valued the capability of being lucid. These are what they shared in common.

暨建安之初，五言騰踴，文帝陳思，縱轡以騁節；王徐應劉，望路而爭驅；并憐風月，狎池苑，述恩榮，敘酣宴，慷慨以任氣，磊落以使才；造懷指事，不求纖密之巧，驅辭逐貌，唯取昭晰之能：此其所同也。

By using kinetic imagery and verbs of motion, Liu Xie vividly conveyed the vitality of Jian'an poems and gatherings. Following this observation of Liu Xie, Professor Cheng Yu-yu re-

²² Liu Xie 劉勰; Zhan Ying 詹瑛, ed. and comm., *Wenxin diaolong yizheng* 文心雕龍義證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 196. The translation is based on Liu Xie; Vincent Yu-chung Shih, trans., *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons by Liu Hsieh: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (Taipei: Dunhuang shuju, 1969), 35; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 50.

examines the significance of Jian'an "lord's feast" poems in her study mentioned previously. Lacking melancholy, which according to Hans H. Frankel was considered the noblest mode of Chinese lyric poetry, the "lord's feast" poems have been considered by some scholars unworthy products of entertainment or adulation. On the other hand, Professor Cheng Yu-yu observes the confidence and passion that Jian'an writers shared and expressed at the banquets in the "lord's feast" poems. She points out that the banquets were the writers' stage. They revealed their passions especially when they drank and composed poems together. Her analysis gives us a basis for another approach to Jian'an poetry: to read at least some of their poems in a banquet setting—rather than to read the poems simply against their biographies, or to read the poems purely as products of their imagination.

In fact, one century before Liu Xie, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433) used this approach in a set of his poems titled "Ni Wei taizi Ye zhong ji shi" 擬魏太子鄴中集詩 (*Shi* on the Gathering at Ye [Hosted by] the Heir Designate of Wei: An Impersonation).²³ He first wrote a preface in the voice of Cao Pi, who feels nostalgia for their gathering in the Ye palace. He then followed with eight poems, each written in the voice of a Jian'an writer: Cao Pi, Wang Can, Chen Lin, Xu Gan 徐幹 (171-218), Liu Zhen, Ying Yang, Ruan Yu, and Cao Zhi. In these poems, Cao Pi as the heir designate of Wei greets the guests, and the guests convey their gratitude for being granted the privilege to participate in the gathering. The structure of this set of poems can be shown in the following outline:

²³ Lu Qinli 遼欽立, ed., "Song shi" 宋詩, in his *Xian-Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 3.1181-85.

Mei Chia-ling and Stephen Owen read *ji* 集 in the title as a certain "collection" of Jian'an poems. For their notes, see Mei Chia-ling 梅家玲, *Han Wei Liuchao wenxue xinlun: nidai yu zengda pian* 漢魏六朝文學新論：擬代與贈答篇 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 1997), 11; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 34.

Based on the received corpus of Jian'an poems, we see that Xie Lingyun not only "imitated" their poems, but also used their letters and biographies to "impersonate" the poets at a "gathering" in the Ye palace.

Preface to all the poems (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem I (in the voice of Cao Pi)

Preface to poem II (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem II (in the voice of Wang Can)

Preface to poem III (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem III (in the voice of Chen Lin)

Preface to poem IV (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem IV (in the voice of Xu Gan)

Preface to poem V (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem V (in the voice of Liu Zhen)

Preface to poem VI (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem VI (in the voice of Ying Yang)

Preface to poem VII (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem VII (in the voice of Ruan Yu)

Preface to poem VIII (in the voice of Cao Pi)
Poem VIII (in the voice of Cao Zhi)

There are noticeable differences between Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation and the received corpus of Jian'an poems. First of all, in Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation, the poems are all *shi* in the metrical form of five-syllable lines, but in the received corpus of Jian'an poems, there are *shi* in four, five, and six-syllable lines, as well as *yuefu* and *fu*. Second, Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation takes place at one single banquet, but in the received corpus of Jian'an poems, the poems were written for a banquet, or to someone at a distant place, or on an old topic. In other words, Jian'an writers could have responded to one another at a banquet or across time and space. Third, in Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation, many writers tell of their lives and feelings from their youth to the putative time of the banquet, but in the received corpus of Jian'an poems, the writers only write about one or two special moments in one poem. Since Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation are different from the received corpus of Jian'an poems in these aspects, is there another approach that will provide a more concrete understanding of the latter?

In this dissertation I propose 1) to study Jian'an poems in all forms, 2) to read the poems as the authors' poetic dialogues with their contemporaries at a banquet or across time and space, and 3) to read the poems as their poetic dialogues on four general topics: incessant travel, official careers, military expeditions, and lighthearted merriment.

As mentioned previously, Jian'an poetry is not limited to *shi* in five-syllable lines. *Shi* in the five-syllable line at this time was still in a formative stage. The more established form of poetry was *fu*, the favored form of court composition during much of the Han dynasty. In addition, *yuefu* poems, which were designated as song verses in Han times and were sung to music, were also very popular in the Jian'an period. Although most scholars focus mainly on *shi* in five-syllable lines in this period, poetry is much broader than this poetic form. That is why I shall include in my study *shi* in all metrical forms as well as *yuefu* and *fu*. I shall also try to determine the possible reasons why a particular form is chosen for a poem.

Further, I read many of these poems as the authors' poetic dialogues with their contemporaries at a banquet or across time and space. On this point, I agree with Xie Lingyun but need to modify his approach. I agree with him because at least some of their poems were exchanged at a banquet. These poems were written to impress, persuade, entertain or even challenge the audience at the banquet. Since they were written for the banquet participants, they can be understood and appreciated if we read them in a banquet setting and take the audience into consideration.

However, I could not place all of their poems in one single banquet setting. Some of their poems on a common theme or topic were not written at the same time or place. For example, what Christopher Leigh Connery translates as "epistolary verses" (*zengda shi* 贈答詩, literally "shi presented or replying to someone") were exchanged between the writers in different

locations.²⁴ There are also poems that have a common topic but very likely were composed at different times. To include these poems in my discussion, I use the word “dialogue” in place of the word “symposium.” A “symposium” takes place at a set time and place, but a dialogue does not have these limitations. Persons who live apart can engage in a dialogue by writing to each other. Persons who become interested in a topic can contribute their thoughts to it anytime, thoughts that constitute a dialogue in its abstract sense. Indeed, whether drinking together or living apart, Jian’an writers often engaged in a dialogue on a common topic through the medium of writing. Having this context in mind, I explore how Jian’an poems can be better understood and how the individual writers together established a literary tradition of their own.

Finally, in order to reflect the fact that each dialogue is limited to one or two topics rather than all-topic-inclusive, I group Jian’an poems into dialogues on four general topics: incessant travel, official careers, military expeditions, and lighthearted merriment. The poems that seem to be isolated from the others can thus be read in a common context.

Chapters—Comparisons—Rhymes—Sources

In the even-numbered chapters, I give examples of Jian’an poetic dialogues on incessant travel, official careers, military expeditions, and lighthearted merriment. In odd-numbered chapters, I provide the poetic dialogues with historical backgrounds:

Part I Warlords and Travelers

Chapter 1. Going Through the Rise and Fall

Chapter 2. Poetic Dialogues on Incessant Travel

Part II Lords and Retainers

Chapter 3. Taking a Position at Thriving Courts

²⁴ Christopher Leigh Connery, “Jian’an Poetic Discourse,” 228. For a study on Jian’an *zengda shi*, see Mei Chia-ling, *Han Wei Liuchao wenxue xinlun: nidai yu zengda pian*, 151-234.

Chapter 4. Poetic Dialogues on Official Careers

Part III Commanders and Aides

Chapter 5. Carrying Writing Brushes to Accompany the Army

Chapter 6. Poetic Dialogues on Military Expeditions

Part IV Hosts and Guests

Chapter 7. Writing about Symposia in Letters

Chapter 8. Poetic Dialogues on Lighthearted Merriment

The title of each part indicates the major roles that Jian'an writers played in each kind of historical circumstance and poetic dialogue. I said "major" because the writers could have played two or more roles at the same time. For example, when Ying Yang told of travel in his symposium poem to offer tribute to his lord, he played the role of a traveler as well that of a guest and a retainer. Interestingly, the word *ke* 客 in Chinese has these three connotations: traveler, guest, and retainer. In fact, the word "guest" in English also has multiple connotations. For convenience we use it in the sense of "someone who is invited to a banquet." Note that "traveler" in Chinese refers to someone away from his hometown. Even though he has settled down in a city for a long time, he can call himself a "traveler." Besides leaving their hometowns, the literary men at the court of Cao Cao also often left the city of Ye 鄴 (southwest of modern Linzhang 臨漳, Hebei) on military expeditions.²⁵ In the army, they played the role of an aide in addition to the roles of a *ke*. By differentiating the major roles that they played in their lives, we can obtain a full picture of their diverse activities and read their poetry in a variety of contexts.

For comparison and inspiration, I rely on the following works:

1. Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans. *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*. 1986. Trans. New York: The Overlook Press, 2000.
2. Plato; Seth Benardete, trans. *Plato's "Symposium."* Chicago: The University of

²⁵ For identification of ancient place names (including this one), see Dai Junliang 戴均良 et al. comps., *Zhongguo gujin diming dacidian* 中國古今地名大詞典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005).

- Chicago Press, 1993.
3. Allan Bloom. "The Ladder of Love." In *Plato's "Symposium,"* Plato; trans. Seth Benardete. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.
 4. C. H. Wang. "Heroism." In his *From Ritual to Allegory: Seven Essays in Early Chinese Poetry*, 53-72. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988.
 5. Yang Mu 楊牧. *Yinyu yu shixian 隱喻與實現*. Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 2001.
 6. Homer; Richmond Lattimore, trans. *The Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951.
 7. Plato; G. M. A. Grube, trans.; John M. Cooper, ed. *Five Dialogues*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002.

In the first work, Joachim Bumke writes about court culture in medieval Germany. This work is not only a classic in the field of the Western history, but also provides insights into court culture in general. Thus I often cite it in my odd-numbered chapters on historical backgrounds. The second work, Plato's "Symposium," is a vivid representation of an Athenian drinking party and the participants' dialogue on the nature of love. The third work is Allan Bloom's analysis of it. Whenever I need a way to imagine a poetic dialogue in the Jian'an period, I draw inspiration from Plato's representation and Allan Bloom's analysis. The last four works are cited in Chapter 6, which contains discussions of Jian'an poetic dialogues on military expeditions. Because Plato's "Symposium" is less relevant to this martial setting, I turn to Professor C. H. Wang's analysis of a type of heroism highly regarded in the Chinese tradition. Following his comparative approach, I cite Homer's *Iliad* in which Achilles was the battle hero, and Plato's "Apology" and "Crito" in which Socrates alluded to Achilles when he faced death.

In my translations of the poems, I also pay attention to their rhymes because a change of rhyme often indicates a change of subject or mood. I underline the rhyming words and leave a space between the lines to signify a rhyme change. To identify the rhyming words of *Shi jing*,

Chu ci, and Wei-Jin poems, I consult the following works:

- William H. Baxter. *A Handbook of Chinese Phonology*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992. Appendix b.
- Wang Li 王力. *Chu ci yundu 楚辭韻讀*. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980.
- Ting Pang-hsin. *Chinese Phonology of the Wei-Chin Period: Reconstruction of Finals as Reflected in Poetry*. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1975. Chapter 3.

I seldom reconstruct the initials and finals. When I do, I follow Li Fang-kuei 李方桂 to reconstruct Old Chinese and Ting Pang-hsin to reconstruct Wei-Jin finals:

- Li Fang-kuei 李方桂. *Shangguyin yanjiu 上古音研究*. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1980.
- Ting Pang-hsin. *Chinese Phonology of the Wei-Chin Period: Reconstruction of Finals as Reflected in Poetry*. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1975. Chapter 4.

I follow them because I can locate reconstructions of Wei-Jin finals easily from Ting Pang-hsin's work. When he reconstructed Wei-Jin finals, Ting Pang-hsin adopted Li Fang-kuei's reconstruction of Old Chinese. For consistency I use Li Fang-kuei's reconstruction of Old Chinese rather than William H Baxter's.

Finally, I would like to introduce the sources of Jian'an works. The received corpus is a collection from various sources. As mentioned previously, many poems are preserved in *leishu*, which rarely preserve complete texts of anything; others are included in the *Wen xuan*, which in contrast preserve the complete and standard versions. Still others are cited—sometimes completely—in the standard histories: Chen Shou's 陳壽 (233-297) *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (372-451) commentary to it, Fan Ye's 范曄 (398-445) *Hou Han shu* 後漢書,

and the “Yue zhi” 樂志 (Monograph on Music) in Shen Yue’s 沈約 (441-513) *Song shu* 宋書. Three more major sources for complete texts are the *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 compiled in the Liang, the *Wenguan cilin* 文館詞林 compiled in the early Tang and partly preserved in Japan, and the *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 compiled in the Song. There are also sources that cite a few lines, such as Li Shan’s 李善 (d. 689) commentary to the *Wen xuan* and Wu Yu’s 吳棫 (1118 *jinshi*) rhyme book *Yu bu* 韻補.

Although Jian’an works could have been compiled before or soon after the authors’ deaths, none of those compilations is extant. The received collections of individual Jian’an writers are all reconstructions from various sources.²⁶ Some of these reconstructions are well edited such as Ding Yan’s 丁晏 (1794-1875) *Cao ji quanping* 曹集詮評 and Yu Shaochu’s 俞紹初 *Jian’an qizi ji* 建安七子集. Thus I cite Cao Zhi’s works from the former, and those of the “Seven Masters of Jian’an” (Jian’an *qizi* 建安七子)—Kong Rong 孔融 (153-208), Chen Lin, Wang Can, Xu Gan, Ruan Yu, Ying Yang, Liu Zhen—from the latter:

- Cao Zhi 曹植; Ding Yan 丁晏, ed. and comm., *Cao ji quanping* 曹集詮評 (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanxingshe, 1957).
- Yu Shaochu 俞紹初, ed. *Jian’an qizi ji* 建安七子集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005.

Zhao Youwen’s 趙幼文 *Cao Zhi ji jiaozhu* 曹植集校注 is also a good edition of Cao Zhi’s works,²⁷ but because Zhao Youwen arranges the works chronologically and the dates are disputable, it is not easy to locate the works. For example, I do not find Cao Zhi’s “Qing shi” 情

²⁶ For a list of works that Yu Shaochu used to edit a collection of the “Seven Masters of Jian’an,” see Yu Shaochu 俞紹初, ed., *Jian’an qizi ji* 建安七子集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), preface 12-15.

²⁷ Zhao Youwen 趙幼文, ed. and comm., *Cao Zhi ji jiaozhu* 曹植集校注 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1984).

詩 (*Shi* on Feelings) in his edition. Thus I do not use it as the basis of my citation.

Yu Shaochu includes Xu Gan's treatise *Zhong lun* 中論 (Balanced Discourses) in the *Jian'an qizi ji*, but he does not include the preface written by Xu Gan's near contemporary,²⁸ which is an important account of Xu Gan. Thus I cite the preface and Xu Gan's *Zhong lun* from this edition instead:

- Xu Gan 徐幹. *Zhong lun* 中論. In *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, first series. Photo-reproduction of the woodblock edition prepared at Qingzhou 青州 in Ming Jiaping *yichou* 明嘉靖乙丑, i.e. 1565. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1919. Rpt. 1929.

As for other Jian'an writers' works, I may know them from various editions of reconstructions, but I use more direct sources as the basis of my citation. First of all, I cite their *shi* and *yuefu* from Lu Qinli's 逯欽立 (1910-1973) compilation of *shi* and *yuefu* from Pre-Qin times to Southern Dynasties:

- Lu Qinli 逯欽立, ed. *Xian-Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.

Second, I cite works other than *shi* and *yuefu* from the *Wen xuan*, the *Sanguo zhi*, or Pei Songzhi's commentary:

- Xiao Tong 蕭統, comp.; Li Shan 李善, comm. *Wen xuan* 文選. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986.
- Chen Shou 陳壽, comp.; Pei Songzhi 裴松之, comm. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959. Rpt. 1982.
- Chen Shou 陳壽, comp.; Pei Songzhi 裴松之, comm.; Lu Bi 盧弼, ed. and comm.

²⁸ For Yu Shaochu's note on the author of the preface to Xu Gan's *Zhong lun*, who is probably Xu Gan's contemporary Ren Gu 任嘏, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 343.

Sanguo zhi jijie 三國志集解. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009.²⁹

If they are not included in these sources, I cite them from *leishu*:

- Yu Shinan 虞世南, comp. *Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔. Woodblock edition prepared by Kong Guangtao 孔廣陶 in Guangxu 光緒 14, i.e. 1888.
- Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 et al. comps.; Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, ed. *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1965. Rpt. 1999.
- Xu Jian 徐堅, comp. *Chuxue ji* 初學記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962.
- Li Fang 李昉 et al. comps. *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽. In *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, third series. Photo-reproduction of the Song woodblock edition preserved in Japan. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935.

Having these various sources, students of Jian'an literature tend to approach them by discussing Cao Cao's works first, Cao Pi's works second, Cao Zhi's works third and so on, or by discussing their *shi* first, their *fu* second, their *yuefu* third, and so on. This approach has the virtue of simplicity and clarity, but fails to provide an analysis of the dynamics of the group and the poetry as a whole. Thus I feel there is a need to go beyond the boundaries between individual writers and between genres. In this dissertation, I read Jian'an poems in all forms as their poetic dialogues. Further, I compare their poetic dialogues with the dialogue in Plato's "Symposium." Taking these approaches, I revisit Jian'an literature and hope to provide a different picture of it.

²⁹ In my chapter footnotes, the *juan* and page numbers of the Shanghai guji chubanshe edition are put in parentheses after the *juan* and page numbers of the Zhonghua shuju edition.

播萬里而遙植
列銅爵之園庭

Having been transmitted a myriad *li* and planted afar,
It is arrayed in the courtyard of the Bronze Bird Park.

—Cao Zhi, “*Fu* on the Orange”

Chapter 1. Going Through the Rise and Fall

From Inspectors to Governors (106 B.C.-A.D. 220): Emergence of Provincial Powers

In his study on court culture in medieval Germany, Joachim Bumke observes the cultural roles of permanent territorial capitals, which emerged in the fourteenth century:³⁰

In the Middle Ages Germany was a kingdom without a capital. The king began his reign by riding through the various parts of his realm to receive the homage of the magnates and to hold court. And thereafter he and his court were constantly on the road. [...] Permanent territorial capitals emerged only in the fourteenth century. [...] The emergence of permanent seats of power was an important step in the creation of territorial states. Only after the court had become stationary could a larger administrative apparatus develop, which in turn was the prerequisite for spreading the authority of the state throughout the land. Permanent residences were also of great significance for literary culture, since a permanent princely court became a great magnet as a social and cultural center.

The emergence of territorial capitals in the medieval Germany reminds us of the emergence of regional powers at the end of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). At the beginning of the Han dynasty, *zhou* 州 (provinces) did not have permanent seats. When touring inspectors of *zhou* became regional governors, their territorial seats became not only political centers but also cultural centers.

This dissertation is mainly concerned with the cultural center established by the Cao

³⁰ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courty Culture*, 52-55.

family in the last three decades of the Han dynasty. It became the most important one, but it had been not as powerful as other provincial cultural centers. Many of its best writers, scholars and musicians had served on the staffs of other provincial powers—or at least had observed their rise and fall—before they joined Cao Cao’s court.

To illustrate the time and space that the writers represented in their poetry, in this chapter I will first trace the emergence of provincial powers in the Han empire, and then delineate how the writers—as well as important scholars and musicians—traveled around the realm during the establishment of southern courts, the downfall of the capitals, and the competition between cities.

Except for the early stage and the time of turmoil, the Han empire was ruled by the imperial court. According to the “Dili zhi” 地理志 (Monograph on [Administrative] Geography) in the *Han shu* 漢書, the imperial court of the Western Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 9) controlled 103 regional units. Three were Sanfu 三輔 (Three Capital Districts of Chang’an), eighty were *jun* 郡 (commanderies), and twenty were *guo* 國 (kingdoms or princedoms, which became *jun*-level units when the imperial control over them was restored during early Western Han).³¹

Between the imperial court and these regional units evolved intermediary units called *zhou*. The administrative nature of *zhou* varied throughout Han times, and each variation signified a political or social change. Lao Kan 勞幹 locates in the *Han shu* one of the possible reasons for the establishment of *zhou*.³²

[Wei] Qing, the General-in-chief and Commander-in-chief, passed away. For the first

³¹ Ban Gu 班固, comp.; Yan Shigu 顏師古, comm., *Han shu* 漢書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1986), 28b.1640. For studies on the weakening power of Han kingdoms, see Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望, *Zhongguo difang xingzheng zhidu shi* 中國地方行政制度史, vol. 1 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1961), 20-30; Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 106-7.

³² Lao Kan 勞幹, “Liang Han cishi zhidu kao” 兩漢刺史制度考, in *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 歷史語言研究所集刊, vol. 11 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 35. *Han shu*, 6.197. The translation is based on Ban Gu, comp.; Homer H. Dubs, trans., *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1944), 96-97.

time the thirteen *zhou* as inspectorial regions were established. Because famous civil and military subjects had nearly all passed away, an imperial edict was issued, which said: “Verily, if any unusual feat is to be accomplished, it must wait for an unusual person [to accomplish it]. Hence a horse may bolt and kick, but may yet travel a thousand *li*; a man may have got into trouble by violating conventions, but may yet accomplish feat and fame. It depends entirely upon how one rides a horse that may upset the carriage, and how one uses a man who is self-willed and wild. May it be ordered that *zhou* and *jun* shall investigate among their officials and common people whether there are any persons of unusual degree of accomplished talent who may be made commanders or chancellors, or sent as envoys to remote states.”

大司馬大將軍青薨。初置刺史部十三州。名臣文武欲盡，詔曰：「蓋有非常之功，必待非常之人，故馬或奔蹏而致千里，士或有負俗之累而立功名。夫泛駕之馬，跡弛之士，亦在御之而已。其令州郡察吏民有茂材異等可為將相及使絕國者。」

This event occurred in 106 B.C. in the fourth decade of the reign of Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 141-87 B.C.). During the third and fourth decades of his reign, the emperor extensively expanded his empire, but important subjects like Wei Qing 衛青 (d. 106 B.C.) passed away in those two decades. To oversee inspection of the *jun* and *guo* of the expanded territory and to recruit capable men, an institutionalized staff was needed. Therefore, the empire was divided into thirteen *zhou*. Each was assigned an inspector, whose salary and major duties are recorded in the “Beiguan zhi” 百官志 (Monograph on the Bureaucracy) in the *Hou Han shu*:³³

Filial Emperor Wu first established thirteen inspectors. Their salary was 600 bushels [of grain]. [...] The many *zhou* [inspectors] usually toured the *jun* and *guo* assigned to them in the eighth month, making records of the prisoners and examining [the performance of officials] from top to bottom. In early years they all visited the capital to present reports of such matters. Since the restoration of the imperial house [i.e. the establishment of the Eastern Han], they just entrusted the task to their accounts clerks.

孝武帝初置刺史十三人，秩六百石。[...]諸州常以八月巡行所部郡國，錄囚徒，考殿最。初歲盡詣京都奏事，中興但因計吏。

Whereas governors of *jun* and *guo* were high 2,000-bushels posts, inspectors were relatively low 600-bushel posts. Moreover, in that they were inspectorial rather than administrative officials,

³³ Fan Ye 范曄, comp.; Li Xian 李賢, comm., *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, with monographs compiled by Sima Biao 司馬彪 and commented by Liu Zhao 劉昭 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), *zhi* 28.3617.

they had to tour their inspectorial areas and return to the imperial capital to make their reports. In other words, they were touring inspectors without a permanent seat of government.

However, the inspectors of *zhou* gradually began to intrude themselves into the administration of *jun* and *guo* and became regional governors. In the Three States period (220-280), Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209-254) further suggested that the regional units of *jun* and *guo* be eliminated while retaining *zhou*. In reply to Xiahou Xuan's suggestion, Sima Yi 司馬懿 (179-251) retraced the initial duties of an inspector and the evolution of the position.³⁴

In Qin times there were no inspectors but governors of *jun* and their senior sub-officials. Although the Han imperial house had inspectors, they only tended six regulations. Thus inspectors were called “post-chaise,” and their sub-officials were called “taking part in the work.” They did not have a regular seat for administrators to occupy, and their sub-officials were unranked in the government. It was only in later times that they became governors.

秦時無刺史，但有郡守長吏。漢家雖有刺史，奉六條而已，故刺史稱傳車，其吏言從事，居無常治，吏不成臣，其後轉更為官司耳。

Sima Yi noted that when the inspectors of *zhou* were first institutionalized in Han times, their administrative power was limited. First of all, they only carried out six regulations (which are listed in Liu Zhao's 劉昭 commentary to the “Monograph on the Bureaucracy” in the *Hou Han shu*).³⁵ Second, they did not have a permanent territorial seat of government but were constantly on the road. Thus the inspectors were also called “post-chaise.” Third, they did not have a regular staff but needed local officials to assist them. Thus their staff members were called “taking part in the work.”

All but one of the six regulations tended by them was directed at governors of 2,000-bushel rank—that is, governors of *jun* and *guo*. If any governor violated the regulations, the

³⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 9.298 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 9.977).

³⁵ For a translation of the six regulations, see Wang Yü-ch'üan 王毓銓, “An Outline of the Central Government of the Former Han Dynasty,” *HJAS* 12.1-2 (June 1949): 159-60.

inspector could impeach him and have him removed from office. With this very power, the inspectors could easily interfere with the operations of the regional administration. Xue Xuan 薛宣, who supervised the inspectors of *zhou* during the reign of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33-7 B.C.), commented on this problem:³⁶

Some of the inspectors of *bu* [i.e. *zhou*] did not observe their assigned duties. They acted according to their own will, and most of them involved themselves with the administration of *jun* and *xian* [prefectures, the regional units under *jun* and *guo*].
[...]部刺史，或不循守條職，舉錯各以其意，多與郡縣事。

After they began to involve themselves with regional administration as mentioned by Xue Xuan, the inspectors also started to set up their own territorial seats of government and finally became regional governors as mentioned by Sima Yi. In 8 B.C. their title was changed from *cishi* 刺史 or “inspector” (literally, a secretary who reports offenses) into *mu* 牧 or “governor” (literally, a herdsman or pastor), and their rank was raised to 2,000 bushels equal to that of a governor of *jun* or *guo*. In the Eastern Han (A.D. 25-220) their title was changed back to *cishi*, but according to Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望, their power actually expanded. They did not personally go to the capital themselves but sent accounts clerks to make reports for them. They also began to lead armies on large-scale military campaigns and establish their own headquarters. At the end of the Eastern Han, the title of *mu* was revived, and men who held this position often also were given a military position and a noble rank as a prestigious honor. In addition, the rank of their staff members, who were called *congshi* (literally, “taking part in the work”), was now higher than the rank of a governor of *jun* or *guo*.³⁷

Now that they had both military and administrative authority, some *zhou* leaders were

³⁶ *Han shu*, 83.3386.

³⁷ Yan Gengwang, *Zhongguo difang xingzheng zhidu shi*, vol. 1, 290-92.

ambitious to gain a share of the imperial power. Among the most powerful and ambitious of these men, Liu Yan 劉焉 (d. 194), Yuan Shao 袁紹 (d. 202), Liu Biao 劉表 (d. 208), and Cao Cao established courts that rivaled the imperial court. Liu Zhao, the commentator to the monographs in the *Hou Han shu*, thus blamed them for the downfall of Han:³⁸

Therefore, when [Liu] Yan was *mu* of the Yizhou territory, he created imperial vestments in [the area of] Mount Min and Mount E[’mei]. When Yuan Shao took Jizhou, he issued imperial decrees in the northern area of the old Yan state. When Liu Biao was in Jingzhou in the south, he offered sacrifices to Heaven and Earth [in the manner of an emperor]. When [Tai]zu of Wei [i.e. Cao Cao] seized Yanzhou, he began the task of creating an imperial dynasty. The disaster of the downfall of Han had its origins in this. 故焉牧益土，造帝服於岷峨；袁紹取冀，下制書於燕朔；劉表荆南，郊天祀地；魏祖據兗，遂構皇業：漢之殄滅，禍源乎此。

Although these warlords overstepped their authority, some of them were also important patrons of scholarship, literature and music: Liu Biao was the leading patron of scholarship in the early years of this period, whereas Cao Cao and his sons established the most celebrated literary salon among the last three provincial powers that turned into the Three States.

Yizhou (188-214), Jingzhou (190-208) and Jiangdong (194-280): Northerners’ Shelters

In 188 Liu Yan, a family member of the Han imperial house, had a private conversation with the palace attendant Dong Fu 董扶.³⁹ As an expert in prognostication texts and a native of Mianzhu 綿竹 (north of modern Deyang 德陽, Sichuan), Dong Fu told Liu Yan that the capital Luoyang 洛陽 (northeast of modern Luoyang, Henan) would soon be in turmoil while Yizhou 益州

³⁸ *Hou Han shu*, *zhi* 28.3620 note 1.

³⁹ Chen Shou’s *Yibu qijiu zhuan* 益部耆舊傳 writes that Emperor Ling of Han 漢靈帝 (r. 168-189) died one year after Dong Fu left Luoyang. For the passage, see *Sanguo zhi*, 31.865 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 31.2302). Dong Fu presumably talked to Liu Yan in the same year when he left Luoyang. Thus they probably had the conversation in 188.

showed signs that it would become the seat of the imperial court.⁴⁰ Liu Yan was going to Jiaozhi 交趾 to flee the conflict in the capital city.⁴¹ Upon hearing Dong Fu's words, Liu Yan asked to be appointed governor of Yizhou instead. He and his son Liu Zhang 劉璋 established a court at Mianzhu—and later at Chengdu 成都 (modern Chengdu, Sichuan)—until Liu Bei 劉備 (161-223), who proclaimed himself emperor of Han in 221, seized this southwestern territory in 214.

In 189, one year after Liu Yan and Dong Fu left Luoyang, Emperor Ling 靈帝 (r. 168-189) died and Dong Zhuo 董卓 (d. 192) captured the capital city. When leading an expedition against Dong Zhuo, Sun Jian 孫堅 (155-191) killed the *cishi* of Jingzhou 荊州,⁴² and was recommended for the post of the *cishi* of Yuzhou 豫州 by his ally Yuan Shu 袁術 (d. 199).⁴³ In 191 when Sun Jian forced Dong Zhuo to retreat from Luoyang to Chang'an 長安 (northwest of modern Xi'an 西安, Shaanxi), Liu Biao, who was the new *cishi* of Jingzhou, successfully subdued local bandits in Jingzhou and resisted the invasion of Yuan Shu and Sun Jian. Sun Jian was killed by an arrow shot from an ambush. Having been granted the title *mu* of Jingzhou, Liu Biao established a court at Xiangyang 襄陽 (Xiangyang area of modern Xiangfan 襄樊, Hubei) and extended his dominion from the Han River basin to the Yangzi River basin. The area he controlled was reported as large as thousands of square *li* with one hundred thousand armed men. When Cao Cao and Yuan Shao battled against each other in the north, Liu Biao was able to occupy in this southern land until Cao Cao defeated Yuan Shao and launched a southern expedition in 208. Liu Biao died of illness before Cao Cao arrived, and his son Liu Cong 劉琮

⁴⁰ Yizhou covered modern Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan. For Dong Fu's words, see *Sanguo zhi*, 31.865 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 31.2301-2).

⁴¹ Jiaozhi covered modern Guangdong, Guangxi and northern Vietnam.

⁴² Jingzhou covered modern southwestern Henan, Hubei and Hunan.

⁴³ *Sanguo zhi*, 46.1096 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 46.2834-36). Yuzhou covered modern southeastern Henan and northwestern Anhui.

surrendered to him.⁴⁴

As *cishi* and later as *mu* of Yangzhou 揚州,⁴⁵ Liu You 劉繇 was not as fortunate as Liu Biao. The seat of the Yangzhou administration was already occupied by Yuan Shu.⁴⁶ In addition, Sun Jian's first son Sun Ce 孫策 (175-200), who was as skilled a military man as his father, longed to seize the southeastern bank of the Yangzi River called Jiangdong 江東 as his own base. Leading his men southeastward across the Yangzi River, Sun Ce defeated Liu You in 194. This marks beginning of the Sun family's activities in Jiangdong.⁴⁷ In 200, when Cao Cao and Yuan Shao battled at the southern bank of the Yellow River, Sun Ce even planned to attack Cao Cao's base in the city of Xu 許 (east of modern Xuchang 許昌, Henan) and abduct Emperor Xian. Before he set out, however, he was severely wounded by an assassin. On his deathbed he entrusted the area of Jiangdong to his younger brother Sun Quan 孫權 (182-252), who proved himself a capable successor.⁴⁸

To flee the political upheavals triggered by Dong Zhou in 189, and the famines caused by locusts and a drought in 194,⁴⁹ numerous people left the Central Plain and migrated to the south. A large number of people went to Liu Biao's Jingzhou. Wei Ji 衛覬 (d. 229), who arrived in Chang'an around A.D. 200, reported that more than 100,000 households had left Chang'an area for Jingzhou. They yearned to return home, but once home they found no way to make a living except to join the armies of the warlords.⁵⁰ According to the *Hou Han shu*, there were also

⁴⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 6. 210-14, 46.1100 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.747-60, 46.2845).

⁴⁵ Yangzhou covered modern Jiangsu south of the Yangzi River, Angui south of the Huai River, Zhejiang, Fujian and Jiangxi.

⁴⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 46.1102 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 46.2850).

⁴⁷ For a note on the date when Sun Ce crossed the Yangzi River, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 46.2856 note 39. For an account of Sun Ce's first victory across the river, see *Sanguo zhi*, 50.1197 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 50.3112; 50.3113 note 6).

⁴⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 46.1109-11 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 46.2873-77).

⁴⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.12, 6.186 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.52-53, 6.665); *Hou Han shu*, 9.376.

⁵⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.610 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1696).

thousands of scholars (*xueshi* 學士) that moved from the Guanxi 關西 area,⁵¹ Yanzhou 兗州,⁵² and Yuzhou to Jingzhou. With Liu Biao's financial support, they settled in the south.⁵³

Some people went as far as Yizhou, which was west of Jingzhou and controlled by Liu Yan and his son Liu Zhang. The *Yingxiong ji* 英雄記 (Notes on Outstanding Men) attributed to Wang Can writes that tens of thousands of households moved from Nanyang 南陽 commandery in modern southwestern Henan and from Sanfu to Yizhou. There the people were organized into the Eastern Provincial Troops (Dongzhou bing 東州兵).⁵⁴ In his *Huayang guo zhi* 華陽國志, the Eastern Jin scholar Chang Qu 常璩 also writes that tens of thousands of households who had moved from Nanyang and Sanfu were recruited by Liu Yan as retainers and were called Eastern Provincial Men (Dongzhou shi 東州士).⁵⁵

Still others went to Xuzhou 徐州 and Yangzhou on the eastern coast.⁵⁶ The *Sanguo zhi* mentions that Xuzhou was prosperous and provided shelter for many refugees, including Cao Cao's father during the Dong Zhuo insurrection. However, his father was murdered. Cao Cao took revenge on Tao Qian 陶謙 (132-194), who was *mu* of Xuzhou. As a result, ten thousands of Xuzhou people were slaughtered by Cao Cao in 193 and 194.⁵⁷ To the south of Xuzhou was Yangzhou. There hundreds of scholar-officials (*shiren* 士人) from the Central Plain took refuge

⁵¹ Guanxi literally means the area west of the Hangu Pass 函谷關 (east of modern Xin'an 新安, Henan), including Chang'an area.

⁵² Yanzhou covered modern southwestern Shandong and northeastern Henan.

⁵³ *Hou Han shu*, 74b.2421.

⁵⁴ The *Yingxiong ji* was lost in Song times, and reconstructed in the *Shuo fu* 說郛, *Han Wei congshu* 漢魏叢書 and *Huangshi yishu kao* 黃氏逸書考. For a note on the textual history of the *Yingxiong ji*, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 339. The passage referred here is cited in Pei Songzhi's commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*. For the commentary, see *Sanguo zhi*, 31.868 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 31.2313). For the passage, also see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 254.

⁵⁵ Chang Qu 常璩, comp.; Ren Naiqiang 任乃強, ed. and comm., *Huayang guo zhi jiaobu tuzhu* 華陽國志校補圖注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 5.340. Also see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 31.2309 note 16.

⁵⁶ Xuzhou covered modern southeastern Shandong, Jiangsu north of the Yangzi River, and northeastern Anhui.

⁵⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 8.248-49, 10.310 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 8.842-43, 10.1006).

with Quan Cong 全琮 (d. 249), a local governor's son who was known for his generosity.⁵⁸

When the wars—especially Cao Cao's eastern campaigns—extended to Xuzhou, natives of Xuzhou also went south to Yangzhou.⁵⁹ Prominent figures in Jiangdong such as Zhang Zhao 張昭 (156-236), Zhuge Jin 諸葛瑾 (174-241), Bu Zhi 步騭 (d. 247), Yan Jun 嚴峻 (fl. 200-252), Zhang Hong 張紘 (152-211) and Lu Su 魯肅 (172-217) were all from Xuzhou.

Among the travelers to the south, there were writers, scholars and a musician who later returned to the north and joined the court of Cao Cao. They were Wang Can, Handan Chun 邯鄲淳, Po Qin 繁欽 (d. 218), Liu Yi 劉廙 (180-221), Fu Xun 傅巽, Song Zhong 宋衷 (d. 219) and Du Kui 杜夔. They had all served at the court of Liu Biao in Jingzhou until Liu Biao's son Liu Cong surrendered to Cao Cao in 208.

Wang Can came from a prominent family of Gaoping 高平 (southwest of Zou 鄒, Shandong) in Shanyang 山陽 commandery. His great grandfather Wang Gong 王龔 and grandfather Wang Chang 王暢 (d. 196) served as one of the Three Excellencies (Sangong 三公)—the most exalted positions at the imperial court—of the Eastern Han. Because of their distinguished background, He Jin 何進 (d. 189), who was a brother of the empress and the commander-in-chief, tried to arrange a marriage between his and Wang's families, but Wang Can's father Wang Qian 王謙, who was chief clerk to He Jin, rejected the proposal. Aware of Wang Can's family background and talent, Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) introduced the fourteen-year-old Wang Can to his guests as follows:⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 60.1381 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 60.3527).

⁵⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 52.1219 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 52.3160).

⁶⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.597 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1646-47).

This is a grandson of the nobility [literally, of princes and excellencies]. He is endowed with special talent. I could not compare with him. The books and writings of my household should be all given to him.

此王公孫也，有異才，吾不如也。吾家書籍文章，盡當與之。

In his haste to welcome Wang Can, Cai Yong even left all his guests behind and put on his sandals backwards. This event reputedly took place in Chang'an, which was then under the control of Dong Zhuo. Having moved to Chang'an with the imperial family, Wang Can received appointments from the imperial court. He turned them down, however, because Chang'an area was in turmoil. He chose to rely on Liu Biao, who was also a native of Gaoping and had studied with Wang Can's grandfather. Before Chang'an collapsed in political disturbances, Wang Can fled to Jingzhou in 192.⁶¹

However, Liu Biao did not show Cai Yong's same appreciation for Wang Can.

According to the *Sanguo zhi*, he thought that Wang Can “looked unattractive, frail and casual” (*maoqin er tiruo tongtuo* 貌寢而體弱通佻).⁶² There is no record of Wang Can's position during his sixteen years at Liu Biao's court except for his writing of letters on behalf of Liu Biao and panegyrics on his military and cultural achievements.⁶³

In fact, according to the *Sanguo zhi*, none of the writers, scholars and musicians listed above—except for Song Zhong, a native of Zhangling 章陵 (south of modern Zaoyang 棗陽, Hubei) in Nanyang commandery—seemed to have had a close relationship with Liu Biao. We do

⁶¹ The *Sanguo zhi* writes that when Wang Can left Chang'an he was seventeen years old (in 193). Yu Shaochu argues that he was sixteen (in 192). For his argument, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 388-89.

⁶² *Sanguo zhi*, 21.598 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1647). For an account of his flight to Jingzhou with the Shisun 士孫 family, see Wang Can's “Zeng Shisun Wenshi shi” 贈士孫文始詩 (*Shi Presented to Shisun Wenshi* [i.e. Shisun Meng]) and Li Shan's commentary to the poem in *Wen xuan*, 23.1105.

⁶³ The letters and panegyrics are “Wei Liu Biao jian Yuan Tan shu” 為劉表諫袁譚書, “Wei Liu Biao yu Yuan Shang shu” 為劉表與袁尚書, “Sanfu lun” 三輔論, and “Jingzhou wenxue (ji) guan zhi” 荊州文學(記)官志. For the texts, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.115, 118, 133, 136.

For studies on Wang Can's writings in Jingzhou, see Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 66-78; Andrew Chittick, “The Life and Legacy of Liu Biao: Governor, Warlord, and Imperial Pretender in Late Han China,” *Journal of Asian History*, 37.2 (2003): 169-79.

not know how Handan Chun, an authority on various types of script and a native of Yingchuan 潁川 commandery in modern central Henan, was received at the court of Liu Biao. Even though Po Qin, a talented writer who was also a native of Yingchuan, won Liu Biao's recognition several times, he was warned by his compatriots Du Xi 杜襲 and Zhao Yan 趙儼 (d. 245) that Liu Biao was not someone on whom he should depend. In private, Wang Can was also told by a close friend Pei Qian 裴潛 (d. 244) that Liu Biao was incapable of becoming a sovereign. Du Xi, Zhao Yan and Pei Qian thus left his court early.⁶⁴ Liu Yi, a scholar from Anzhong 安眾 (northeast of modern Dengzhou 鄧州, Henan) in Nanyang commandery, fled to Yangzhou because his brother Liu Wangzhi 劉望之 was killed by Liu Biao.

Fu Xuan 傅玄 (217-278), who came from the Fu family of Niyang 泥陽 (southeast of modern Ning 寧, Gansu) in Beidi 北地 commandery, comments on Liu Biao's execution of Liu Wangzhi in his treatise *Fuzi* 傅子. He claimed that the death of Liu Wangzhi not only irritated scholar-officials in Jingzhou, but also revealed Liu Biao's intolerance. It was his intolerance that led to his failure despite the fact that he held sway over Jingzhou, "the whole land of Chu."⁶⁵

Since [Liu] Biao killed [Liu] Wangzhi, scholar-officials in Jingzhou were all worried about their own safety. Originally Biao had rather high regard for Wangzhi. It was because he did not have tolerance for those who were straight and upright that he was offended by straightforward words and that slanders could be accepted by him. This was probably the reason why he occupied the whole land of Chu but did not accomplish any [extraordinary] feats.

表既殺望之，荊州士人皆自危也。夫表之本心，於望之不輕也，以直迕情，而讒言得人者，以無容直之度也。據全楚之地，不能以成功者，未必不由此也。

It is possible that Fu Xuan drew this conclusion in order to justify the "disloyalty" of his uncle Fu Xun, who reputedly persuaded Liu Biao's son Liu Cong to surrender himself to Cao Cao. Liu

⁶⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 23.665, 668, 671 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 23.1821, 1826, 1833-34).

⁶⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.614 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1706).

Cong was planning to resist Cao Cao, but Fu Xun reminded Liu Cong that he was merely a lord of Chu (i.e. Jingzhou), whereas Cao Cao was the sovereign of the whole realm.⁶⁶

To resist a master as a servant is to rebel; to fight against the state with the newly founded Chu, one has no equivalent power.

以人臣而拒人主，逆也；以新造之楚而禦國家，其勢弗當也。

The musician Du Kui, a native of the Henan capital area (Henan *yin* 河南尹) in modern central Henan, also reminded Liu Biao of his subordinate status. At Liu Biao's command, he prepared ceremonial music for the Han emperor. When Liu Biao wanted to observe the performance, Du Kui protested:⁶⁷

General, you do not have the title of the Son of Heaven. To assemble the music and play it at the court—isn't that improper?

今將軍號不為天子，合樂而庭作之，無乃不可乎？

Nevertheless, Liu Biao is known for his patronage of scholarship.⁶⁸ Wang Can writes in the *Notes on Outstanding Men* and the “Jingzhou wenxue guan zhi” 荊州文學官志 (Official Account of Classical Studies in Jingzhou) that Liu Biao founded academies (*xueguan* 學官), invited scholars, and commissioned them to edit the commentaries to the Five Classics as the *Wujing zhangju houding* 五經章句後定 (Later Standard Edition of [Commentaries to] the Chapters and Verses of the Five Classics).⁶⁹ In initiating this project Liu Biao was like Emperor Xuan 宣帝 (r. 74-49 B.C.) of the Western Han and Emperor Zhang 章帝 (r. A.D. 75-88) of the

⁶⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 6.214 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.760).

⁶⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 29.1766 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 29.2133). The translation is based on Andrew Chittick, “The Life and Legacy of Liu Biao,” 167.

⁶⁸ For studies on Liu Biao's patronage of scholarship, see Cheng Yuanmin 程元敏, “Ji-Han Jingzhou jingxue” 季漢荊州經學, *Hanxue yanjiu* 4.1 (1986): 211-64; 5.1 (1987): 229-63; Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫, “Scholarship in Ching-chou at the End of the Later Han Dynasty,” *Acta Asiatica* 60 (1991): 1-24.

⁶⁹ For the account in Wang Can's *Notes on Outstanding Men*, see *Sanguo zhi*, 6.211 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.748); *Jian'an qizi ji*, 252. For Wang Can's “Official Account of Classical Studies in Jingzhou,” see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.136-8.

Eastern Han, who convened the two most important scholarly conferences on the Five Classics in Han times respectively in the Stone Canal Hall (Shiqu ge 石渠閣) and the White Tiger Tower (Bohu guan 白虎觀).⁷⁰

In addition, Song Zhong, who was the scholar in charge of the academy, attracted students such as Yin Mo 尹默 and Li Ren 李仁 from Yizhou. The biography of Yin Mo in the *Sanguo zhi* writes:⁷¹

Yibu [i.e. Yizhou] attached much importance to the scholarship of the New Text School but little to the chapters and verses. Knowing the scholarship there was not broad, [Yin] Mo traveled afar to Jingzhou and studied with Sima Decao [i.e. Sima Hui 司馬徽] and Song Zhongzi [i.e. Song Zhong] to learn the scholarship of the Old Text School. 益部多貴今文而不崇章句，默知其不博，乃遠游荊州，從司馬德操、宋仲子等受古學。

Moreover, Song Zhong's commentary to Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 B.C.-A.D. 18) *Taixuan* 太玄 was taken as a diplomatic gift by Liu Biao's envoy to Sun Quan's courtier Zhang Zhao, and reputedly circulated among scholars in Jiangdong. Based on Song Zhong's work, two Jiangdong local scholars Yu Fan 虞翻 (170-239) and Lu Ji 陸績 (188-219) made further commentaries and treatises.⁷² After Song Zhong returned to the north with Cao Cao, Wang Su 王肅 (195-256) also studied the *Taixuan* with Song Zhong.⁷³ T'ang Yung-t'ung 湯用彤 comments on the Jingzhou scholarship established by Liu Biao and Song Zhong as follows:⁷⁴

⁷⁰ For an account of the conference held in Shiqu ge, see Ban Gu 班固, comp.; Yan Shigu 顏師古, comm.; Wang Xianqian 王先謙, ed. and comm., *Han shu buzhu* 漢書補注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 8.381 note 1. For an account of the conference held in Bohu guan, see *Hou Han shu*, 3.138.

⁷¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 42.1026 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 42.2686).

⁷² *Sanguo zhi*, 57.1322, 1328 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 57.3397, 3420; 57.3422 note 8).

⁷³ *Sanguo zhi*, 13.414 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 13.1252; 13.1253 note 1).

⁷⁴ T'ang Yung-t'ung, "Wang Bi zhi Zhou yi, Lun yu xinyi" 王弼之《周易》、《論語》新義, *Tushu jikan*, new series 4.1-2 (1943); rpt. in his *Wei Jin xuanxue lun gao* 魏晉玄學論稿, 84-102 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), 85-86. The translation is taken from T'ang Yung-t'ung; Walter Lieberthal, trans., "Wang Pi's New Interpretation of the *I Ching* and *Lun-yü*." *HJAS* 10.1 (1947): 130.

[The scholars of Ching-chou...] did not care greatly for tradition but propagated new ideas. Liu Piao's *Revised Edition* [translated as *Later Standard Edition* above] rubbed out the old, and Sung Chung's and Wang Su's teaching built up the new. So we may safely say that if Wang Pi in his *I ching* shows little respect for the older generation, he obeys the voice of his time.

[荊州之士...]守故之習薄，創新之意厚。劉表《後定》，抹殺舊作。宋王之學，亦特立異。而王弼之《易》，不遵前人，自系當時之風尚如此也。

In 224 Cao Pi, who founded the Wei dynasty in 220, reestablished the grand academy (*taixue* 太學) at Luoyang, but few professors (*boshi* 博士) at the new academy were able to teach the classics.⁷⁵ Liu Jing 劉靖 (d. 254) observed that this was because the selection of professors was taken lightly (*boshi xuan qing* 博士選輕). Moreover, it was in order to obtain exemption from labor service that the students attended the academy (*zhusheng bi yi* 諸生避役).⁷⁶ In contrast with Cao Pi's problematic academy at Luoyang, Liu Biao's academy in Jingzhou indeed distinguished itself as a center of classical studies.

Luoyang and Chang'an (189-192): Fallen Capitals

In 189 when Emperor Ling died, two major clashes took place between the eunuchs and the commander-in-chief He Jin in the capital Luoyang. The first clash led to the death of the most powerful eunuch Jian Shuo 蹇碩 (d. 189), but the second resulted in the downfall of Luoyang. The empress, who now became the empress dowager, maintained a close relationship with the

Whereas T'ang Yung-t'ung emphasizes the Jingzhou scholarship's break from the older generation, Yü Ying-shi 余英時 points out the Jingzhou scholarship's relation to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄. For his argument, see Yü Ying-shi 余英時, "Han Jin zhi ji shi zhi xin zijue yu xin sichao" 漢晉之際士之新自覺與新思潮, *Xinya xuebao* 4.1 (1959); rpt. in his *Zhongguo zhishi jiecheng shilun: gudai pian* 中國知識階層史論：古代篇, 205-327 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshiye gongsi, 1980), 278-87. Also see Rudolf G. Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 45-51.

⁷⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 2.84, 13.420, 16.507 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.322, 13.1263, 16.1440).

⁷⁶ For Liu Jing's petition on the grand academy at Luoyang, see *Sanguo zhi*, 15.464 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 15.1354).

eunuchs. Her brother He Jin, on the other hand, was advised by the officials to eliminate the eunuchs before they came to dominate the court as they did during the reign of Emperor Ling. However, both He Jin and his main advisor Yuan Shao failed to take quick action. According to the Qing scholar He Zhuo 何焯 (1661-1722) and the *Sanguo zhi* commentator Lu Bi 盧弼 (1876-1958), in the case of He Jin it was because he was satisfied with the death of his archenemy Jian Shuo, and in the case of Yuan Shao it was because he was afraid of becoming the second Yang Qiu 陽球 (d. 179), on whom the eunuch faction took revenge for killing one of them.⁷⁷ Instead of taking action himself, Yuan Shao advised He Jin to summon warlords to the capital to force the empress dowager to withdraw her support of the eunuchs. Dong Zhuo, a military leader from Liangzhou 涼州,⁷⁸ thus entered Luoyang. Before Dong Zhuo arrived, the eunuchs assassinated He Jin, and Yuan Shao massacred the eunuchs. Dong Zhuo hurried to the capital and installed his puppet emperor, Emperor Xian. Fleeing northeast to Jizhou 冀州,⁷⁹ Yuan Shao planned with the governor of Jizhou Han Fu 韓馥 (d. 191) to install Liu Yu 劉虞 (d. 193)—who was a family member of the imperial house and the governor of Youzhou 幽州—as emperor,⁸⁰ but Liu Yu rejected their plan. Cao Cao and Yuan Shu also fled Luoyang. The former went to Chenliu 陳留 commandery in modern eastern Henan, and the latter went to Nanyang commandery in modern southwestern Henan.

In 190 an alliance against Dong Zhuo was established by the warlords who controlled the area east of Luoyang such as Yuan Shao, Yuan Shu and Cao Cao. Upon knowing of this alliance, Dong Zhuo moved Emperor Xian and millions of Luoyang residents to Chang'an, burned down

⁷⁷ *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.677 note 6.

⁷⁸ Liangzhou covered modern Gansu and Ningxia.

⁷⁹ Jizhou covered modern south central Hebei, western Shandong and northern Henan.

⁸⁰ Youzhou covered modern northern Hebei, Liaoning and northwest Korean Peninsula.

the Luoyang palaces and temples, and slaughtered the Yuan family at Luoyang. When Dong Zhuo was defeated by Sun Jian in 191, he further excavated the imperial tombs at Luoyang for treasure and left for Chang'an.⁸¹ In the next year Dong Zhuo was assassinated by his attendant who collaborated with Chang'an officials, but soon his other men recaptured Chang'an. There were hundreds of thousands of households in the Sanfu area, but because of the chaos it is reported that "the people starved and ate one another until most of them were dead within two years."⁸² Even the emperor, who fled back to Luoyang in 196, had to have his courtiers gather kindling and food. It is said that "some of them starved between the walls."⁸³

Two capital cities thus fell within four years. During this time, many writers who later joined Cao Cao's court left traces of their early lives. They were Chen Lin, Ruan Yu, Cai Yan 蔡琰, Wang Can, Lu Cui 路粹 (d. 215), Kong Rong, Xu Gan, and Cao Cao's second and fourth sons, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi.

Chen Lin was a native of Sheyang 射陽 (east of modern Baoying 寶應, Jiangsu) in Guangling 廣陵 commandery. He served on He Jin's staff as recorder, and was known for remonstrating against He Jin's summoning the warlords to the capital Luoyang. He Jin did not take his advice. Chen Lin fled to Jizhou and joined Yuan Shao's staff until Cao Cao captured Jizhou in 204.⁸⁴

Having seized Luoyang, Dong Zhuo forced Cai Yong, who was a native of Yu 圉 (south of modern Qi 杞, Henan) in Chenliu commandery, to return to the imperial court.⁸⁵ Ruan Yu, who was also a native of Chenliu commandery (although from a different prefecture: Weishi 尉

⁸¹ For details that are sometimes self-contradictory, see *Hou Han shu*, 9.369-71, 72.2327-29.

⁸² *Sanguo zhi*, 6.182 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.656).

⁸³ *Sanguo zhi*, 6.186 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.666).

⁸⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.600 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1657).

⁸⁵ *Hou Han shu*, 60b.2003.

氏, modern Weishi, Henan), was one of the students who saw him off to Luoyang. Upon hearing that Cai Yong died during the political upheavals in Chang'an, they built a temple in his memory.⁸⁶ Ruan Yu did not join Cao Cao's court until Cao Cao moved the emperor to the city of Xu and summoned him to serve as his aide.

According to the first of the two "Bei fen shi" 悲憤詩 (*Shi* of Grief and Indignation) attributed to Cai Yong's daughter Cai Yan, it was during the Dong Zhuo insurrection that she was abducted by the northwestern non-Han peoples in Dong Zhuo's army.⁸⁷ She eventually fell into the hands of the Southern Xiongnu 南匈奴, who resided in the Fen River 汾水 valley of southern Shanxi, and stayed there for twelve years until Cao Cao, who had been on good terms with Cai Yong, ransomed her. Both Cao Pi and Ding Yi 丁廙 (d. 220) wrote "Cai Bojie nü fu" 蔡伯喈女賦 (*Fu* on the Daughter of Cai Bojie [i.e. Cai Yong]) to show their sympathy for her.⁸⁸

It was also around this time that Cai Yong met Wang Can in Chang'an. While Wang Can managed to flee the city before it was recaptured, Cai Yong was put to death by officials who were displeased with Cai Yong's relationship with Dong Zhuo.⁸⁹ Lu Cui, another student of Cai Yong from Chenliu commandery, also followed the emperor to the Sanfu area. His official career seemed not to have begun until the emperor moved to the city of Xu.⁹⁰

Kong Rong, a descendant of Confucius from Lu 魯 principedom (whose seat was at

⁸⁶ This is based on a stele inscription cited in the local gazetteer of Weishi prefecture (i.e. Ruan Yu's native place) compiled in the Jiajing 嘉靖 period (1522-1566). For the inscription cited in the gazetteer, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 387.

⁸⁷ The biography of Cai Yan in the *Hou Han shu* (84.2800) writes that Cai Yan was abducted during the Xingping 興平 period (194-195), which was after the Dong Zhuo insurrection. However, the "Bei fen shi" cited in the same biography suggests the tragedy took place during the Dong Zhuo insurrection. For a note on this problem, see Fan Ye 范曄, comp.; Li Xian 李賢, comm.; Wang Xianqian 王先謙, ed. and comm., *Hou Han shu jijie* 後漢書集解 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1955), 84.14a, columns 1-6. For a study on the poems attributed to Cai Yan, see Hans H. Frankel, "Cai Yan and the Poems Attributed to Her," *CLEAR* 5.1-2 (1983): 133-56.

⁸⁸ For the extant preface of Cao Pi's *fu*, see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 112, 806.9b. For the extant lines of Ding Yi's *fu*, see *Yiwen leiju*, 30.542.

⁸⁹ For accounts of Cai Yong's death and notes on it, see *Sanguo zhi*, 6.180 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.645-46); *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.648-49 notes 16, 18; *Hou Han shu*, 60b.2006-8; *Hou Han shu jijie*, 60b.19a-21b.

⁹⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.603 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1668).

modern Qufu 曲阜, Shandong), had been on good terms with Cai Yong and also enjoyed a reputation at that time. However, because of his disobedience to Dong Zhuo, Kong Rong was sent to serve in the precarious position of governor of Beihai 北海. Beihai was a *jun*-level principedom in Qingzhou 青州.⁹¹ Bordering Xuzhou, it was a place where the Yellow Turbans crossed when they moved from Qingzhou to Xuzhou.

In 192 when Dong Zhuo was assassinated, Cao Pi was six years old. According to his “*Dian lun zixu*” 典論自敘 (Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*), Cao Cao had him learn archery at this time.⁹² In this same year his brother Cao Zhi was born. Cao Cao was then the governor of Yanzhou and organized the surrendered Qingzhou Yellow Turbans into the strong Qingzhou Troops (Qingzhou bing 青州兵). Their ancestral home was at Qiao 譙 (modern Bozhou 亳州, Anhui) in Pei 沛 principedom, but accompanying their father on military expeditions, they were constantly on the move like the traveling writers, scholars and musicians.

Beihai (190-196): Regional and Private Academies

Before Cao Cao took Emperor Xian under his control in 196, there were other warlords who aspired to enhance their status by seizing the emperor. One of them was Tao Qian, the governor of Xuzhou. In 192 Tao Qian issued a war proclamation to other *zhou* leaders, asking them jointly to do battle with Dong Zhuo’s remaining power in Chang’an and rescue the emperor from there.⁹³ Two of the cosigners of the proclamation resided in Beihai: Kong Rong and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200).

⁹¹ Qingzhou covered modern northern Shandong.

⁹² *Sanguo zhi*, 2.89 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.342).

⁹³ *Hou Han shu*, 71.2312-13.

Kong Rong began to serve as governor of Beihai in 190. Lacking military prowess, he was advised to join the most powerful warlords Yuan Shao and Cao Cao. He refused—and even killed the advisor—because he considered neither of them loyal to the imperial house.⁹⁴ Kong Rong had his own aspirations. He established academies, promoted Confucian studies, and recommended the local scholars Zheng Xuan and Bing Yuan 邴原.⁹⁵ Unable to defend Beihai, Kong Rong once fled to Xuzhou to join Tao Qian.⁹⁶ According to the *Hou Han shu*, in 192 Tao Qian, together with Kong Rong, Zheng Xuan and other eight governors, tried to establish an alliance with various forces to rescue the emperor from Chang’an. According to Yuan Hong’s 袁宏 (328-476) *Hou Han ji* 後漢紀, in 194 Tao Qian and Kong Rong planned to move the emperor back to Luoyang, but the plan was also aborted because of Cao Cao’s invasion of Xuzhou.⁹⁷

At that time, Zheng Xuan and Bing Yuan were the best-known scholars in the northeast as Zheng Tai 鄭泰 mentioned to Dong Zhuo.⁹⁸ The *Bing Yuan biezhuàn* 邴原別傳, which is cited in Pei Songzhi’s commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*, vividly compares these two scholars:⁹⁹

At that time, Zheng Xuan, a man of great learning, wrote commentaries and exegeses to the classics. Thus learned and urbane literati gathered around him. Bing Yuan, by virtue of high-minded detachment and unsullied purity, nurtured his true aim and led a plain, simple existence. He did not utter unseemly words or do unseemly deeds. Thus literati of outstanding greatness gravitated to him. At that time, a comment circulated in the “pure stream” circle: Qingzhou had the scholarship of Bing Yuan and the scholarship of Zheng Xuan.

時鄭玄博學洽聞，註解典籍，故儒雅之士集焉。原亦自以高遠清白，頤志澹泊，口無擇言，身無擇行，故英偉之士向焉。是時海內清議，云青州有邴、鄭之學。

Both Zheng Xuan and Bing Yuan were from Beihai principedom. The former was a native of

⁹⁴ *Hou Han shu*, 70.2264.

⁹⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 11.352 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 11.1106); *Hou Han shu*, 70.2263.

⁹⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 12.371 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 12.1153).

⁹⁷ Yuan Hong 袁宏, comp.; Zhou Tianyou 周天游, comm., *Hou Han ji jiaozhu* 後漢紀校注 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1987), 27.774. Also see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 12.1159 note 27.

⁹⁸ *Hou Han shu*, 70.2259.

⁹⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 11.353 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 11.1107).

Gaomi 高密 (modern Gaomi, Shandong), and the latter was a native of Zhuxu 朱虛 (southeast of modern Linq 臨朐, Shandong). In his native place Kong Rong established a private academy with thousands of students.¹⁰⁰ When bandits occupied the area, he once had to send away his students and flee to Xuzhou.¹⁰¹ Bing Yuan even fled to the sea and then to the Liaodong Peninsula, where members of hundreds of households became his followers and traveling scholars came to study with him.¹⁰²

In 195 Kong Rong returned to Beihai and was recommended for the post of the *cishi* of Qingzhou by Liu Bei (who had been persuaded by Kong Rong to take Xuzhou after the death of Tao Qian),¹⁰³ but Yuan Shao also sent his son Yuan Tan 袁譚 (d. 205) to serve as *cishi* of Qingzhou and do battle against Kong Rong.¹⁰⁴ In 196 Zheng Xuan returned to Beihai, but soon Yuan Shao summoned Zheng Xuan to his court at Ye.¹⁰⁵ Both Kong Rong and Zheng Xuan, who hoped to isolate themselves from the warlords and establish their academies in Beihai, had no choice but to be involved in the wars between Yuan Shao and Cao Cao. To Bing Yuan, who planned to return Beihai, Kong Rong graphically described the situation:¹⁰⁶

The steps leading to the turmoil have not been removed. The warlords are like chess players competing for one another's "owl."¹⁰⁷
亂階未已，阻兵之雄，若碁弈爭梟。

Because of this note, Bing Yuan did not return to Beihai until many years later. When he finally

¹⁰⁰ *Hou Han shu*, 35.1208.

¹⁰¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 12.367 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 12.1143); *Hou Han shu*, 35.1209.

¹⁰² *Sanguo zhi*, 11.350 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 11.1103).

¹⁰³ *Sanguo zhi*, 32.873 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 32.2332).

¹⁰⁴ *Hou Han shu*, 70.2264.

¹⁰⁵ *Hou Han shu*, 35.1209, 1211.

¹⁰⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 11.353 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 11.1107).

¹⁰⁷ The "owl" is the leader of the other five chessmen. For studies on "competing for one another's owl," see Lien-sheng Yang, "An Additional Note on the Ancient Game *Liu-po*," *HJAS* 15.1-2 (1952): 124-39, especially 129; Y. Edmund Lien, "Wei Yao's Disquisition on *boyi*," *JAOS* 126.4 (Oct.-Dec. 2006): 567-78, especially 568; Song Huichun 宋會群 and Miao Xuelan 苗雪蘭, *Zhongguo boyi wenhua shi* 中國博奕文化史 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2010), 1-61, especially 36-37.

returned to his homeland, he established a private academy with hundreds of students.

In contrast with Bing Yuan, Xu Gan, who was a native of Ju 劇 (south of modern Shouguang 壽光, Shandong) in Beihai principedom, managed to remain in seclusion around his native place until Cao Cao called him to the court. According to the preface to Xu Gan's treatise *Zhong lun*, Xu Gan “withdrew to an area bordering the sea” (*bi di haibiao* 避地海表)—that is, Qingzhou area in modern northern Shandong—during the Dong Zhuo insurrection. The preface gives reasons for Xu Gan's seclusion:¹⁰⁸

He maintained that it was in an age of plotting and intrigue that the former sage [Confucius] had encountered straitened circumstances. Was it not still more likely that [a similar fate may befall] people like us? He criticized Mencius, who, failing to keep a proper sense of his limited capacities, emulated the sage's putting the Way into practice by traveling among the vassal lords. On the other hand, he deeply admired Yan Yuan and Xun Qing's deeds. For these reasons, he disappeared into the mountains and valleys, lived in a secluded dwelling and investigated the incipience. He directed his mind toward the profound and the subtle, which led to the onset of illness. Hidden away, he managed to prolong his years.

君以為縱橫之世，乃先聖之所厄困也，豈況吾徒哉？有譏孟軻不較其量，擬聖行道，傳食諸侯；深美顏淵荀卿之行，故絕迹山谷，幽居研幾。用思深妙，以發疾疢，潛伏延年。

Xu Gan compares his time to the “age of plotting and intrigue” of the Eastern Zhou (770-256 B.C.). While Mencius chose to emulate Confucius by traveling around, Yan Yuan 顏淵 and Xun Qing 荀卿 chose to live in seclusion. To Xu Gan, “traveling among the vassal lords” (*chuan shi zhuhou* 傳食諸侯) only brought one into straitened circumstances. He would rather follow Yan Yuan and Xun Qing, dedicating himself to scholarship. Xie Lingyun specifies in the “*Shi* on the Gathering at Ye [Hosted by] the Heir Designate of Wei: An Impersonation” that Xu Gan resided at Linzi 臨淄—which was the seat of Qi 齊 principedom west of Beihai (thus he wrote the “Qi du

¹⁰⁸ Xu Gan, *Zhong lun*, preface 3b. The translation is based on Xu Gan; John Makeham, trans., *Balanced Discourses* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2002), xxxiii-iv.

fu” 齊都賦 or “*Fu* on the Capital City of Qi”)—as well as traipsed through Jiaodong 膠東 and Gaomi—which were two marquisesates (*houguo* 侯國, *xian*-level vassal states) in Beihai principedom. He enjoyed his life in seclusion until he was “oppressed by cares and fears all the year round” (*qiong nian po youli* 窮年迫憂慄),¹⁰⁹ which presumably refers to the battles between Kong Rong and Yuan Tan in Qingzhou.

At this time, Cao Cao moved the emperor to the city of Xu and reestablished the imperial court, temples and altars there. In this way Cao Cao differentiated himself from Dong Zhuo, who had destroyed the capital cities, and from Yuan Shao, who was intent on installing another emperor. Men of talent, including Xu Gan, were watching Cao Cao’s next steps. They expected that a new political and cultural center would be born at Xu, and there would be new opportunities waiting for them.

Xu vs. Ye (196-204): Cao Cao and Yuan Shao’s Competition

The city of Xu was a prefecture of Yingchuan commandery in Yuzhou. Cao Cao expelled Yuan Shu from Yuzhou in 193, and further controlled Chen 陳 principedom, Runan 汝南 and Yingchuan commanderies in 196. Thus he expanded his power from Yanzhou to Yuzhou and captured the city of Xu. At that time, the emperor fled to Luoyang. While Yuan Shao hesitated to invite the emperor to join him in the city of Ye in Jizhou, Cao Cao went to Luoyang and moved the emperor to Xu, which became the last capital of the Han dynasty.¹¹⁰

By taking the emperor under his “protection,” Cao Cao was able to attract people to Xu in the name of the imperial court. For example, Hua Xin 華歆 (157-232) and Wang Lang 王朗 (d.

¹⁰⁹ Lu Qinli, ed., “Song shi,” 3.1183.

¹¹⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.10, 13 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.46, 56-57).

228) were members of the Sun family court, but Cao Cao wrote petitions to the emperor summoning them to Xu.¹¹¹ Sun Ce even sent one of his best scholars Zhang Hong 張紘 (152-211) to Xu to present his petition.¹¹² Zhao Yan, who was at the court of Liu Biao, told his fellow compatriot Po Qin that “I know I should return” (*wu zhi gui yi* 吾知歸矣). He then brought his entire family from Jingzhou to Xu. Du Xi, another native of Yingchuan commandery who had taken refuge in Jingzhou, also returned north and received an appointment from Cao Cao.¹¹³

From 196 when the emperor was moved to Xu to 199 when the battles between Cao Cao and Yuan Shao began, many writers and scholars came to Xu. They are introduced below in the following order:

- 1) Mi Heng 禰衡 (173-198), Zhongchang Tong 仲長統 (180-220), Kong Rong, Yang Xiu 楊脩 (175-219), Lu Cui
- 2) Ruan Yu, Liu Zhen, Wu Zhi 吳質 (178-230)¹¹⁴
- 3) Ying Yang and Ying Qu 應璩 (190-252)
- 4) Ding Yi 丁儀 (d. 220) and Ding Yi

Both Mi Heng and Zhongchang Tong were called “eccentrics” (*kuangsheng* 狂生), but they had different careers at Xu. Mi Heng was a native of Ban 般 (northwest of modern Shanghe 商河, Shandong) in Pingyuan 平原 commandery. According to the *Hou Han shu*, he fled to Jingzhou during 194 and 195 (but he did not seem to have met Liu Biao until he was sent back to Jingzhou by Cao Cao in 197). Hearing that the emperor moved to Xu, Mi Heng traveled from Jingzhou to Xu to seek for new opportunities. The energy of the new capital city is reported in the biography

¹¹¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 13.401, 407 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 13.1225, 1239).

¹¹² *Sanguo zhi*, 53.1243 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 53.3222). For a note on people who left Sun Ce’s court for Cao Cao’s, see Tian Yuqing 田餘慶, *Qin Han Wei Jin shi tanwei* 秦漢魏晉史探微 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 279-30.

¹¹³ *Sanguo zhi*, 23.665, 668 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 23.1821, 1826).

¹¹⁴ For Wu Zhi’s dates, see Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 and Shen Yucheng 沈玉成, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao* 中國文學史料叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 84.

of Mi Heng:¹¹⁵

At that time, the capital city of Xu was newly established. Worthy literati gathered here from the four quarters.

是時許都新建，賢士大夫四方來集。

Mi Heng prepared a name card (*ci* 刺) for himself, but even after the characters on the card became blurred, he was not invited to serve at the court. He was advised to ask Cao Cao's advisors such as Chen Qun 陳羣 (d. 237) and Xun Yu 荀彧 (163-212) for help, but he despised them all. In the city of Xu, he recognized only two men: the forty-four-year-old Kong Rong and the twenty-two-year-old Yang Xiu.¹¹⁶

Kong Rong was summoned back to the imperial court when he was defeated by Yuan Tan in Qingzhou.¹¹⁷ Yang Xiu, who came from a prominent family of Huayin 華陰 (southwest of modern Huayin, Shaanxi) in Hongnong 弘農 commandery, probably accompanied his father Yang Biao 楊彪 (142-225) and the emperor back to Luoyang and finally to Xu.¹¹⁸ Because Yang Biao married a sister of Yuan Shu, Cao Cao planned to kill Yang Biao. It was Kong Rong who saved Yang Biao by threatening to leave Cao Cao's court.¹¹⁹ As a nephew of Yuan Shu,¹²⁰ Yang Xiu was eventually killed by Cao Cao in 219.

Aside from Yang Biao, Kong Rong had high regard for Mi Heng. Kong Rong wrote a petition recommending him to the emperor and frequently spoke of him to Cao Cao. In the

¹¹⁵ *Hou Han shu*, 80b.2653.

¹¹⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 10.311 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 10.1009); *Hou Han shu*, 80b.2653.

¹¹⁷ *Hou Han shu*, 70.2264.

¹¹⁸ For a biography of the prominent Yang family of Hongnong in the Eastern Han, see *Hou Han shu*, 54.1759-91. For Yang Biao's accompanying the emperor back to Luoyang, see *Sanguo zhi*, 6.186 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.665); *Hou Han shu*, 54.1787, 72.2340.

¹¹⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 12.372 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 12.1154); *Hou Han shu*, 54.1788.

¹²⁰ For Yang Xiu's relationship to Yuan Shu, see *Hou Han shu*, 54.1789.

petition Kong Rong compared Mi Heng to Lu Cui,¹²¹ who had just been appointed secretarial court gentleman (*shangshu lang* 尚書郎).¹²² However, Cao Cao found Mi Heng offensive and sent him back to Jingzhou, where he was killed by a commandery governor.¹²³ Kong Rong, who also frequently offended Cao Cao with his forthright remarks, could not save himself either. In 208 Cao Cao induced Lu Cui to present a petition to the emperor to attack Kong Rong, saying that he intended to usurp when he served in Beihai. He also accused Kong Rong of challenging the traditional view of the relationship between parents and children. As a result, Kong Rong was executed in the market.¹²⁴

While the eccentric Mi Heng refused to visit Cao Cao's advisors, Zhongchang Tong accepted Xun Yu's recommendation to the imperial court. Zhongchang Tong was a native of Gaoping in Shanyang commandery (like Wang Can). Before coming to Xu, he had traveled through Qingzhou, Xuzhou, Jizhou and Bingzhou 并州.¹²⁵ In Bingzhou he visited the governor Gao Gan 高幹 (d. 206), who was a nephew of Yuan Shao. Considering Gao Gan's lack of "heroic talent," he soon left this northern court and was acclaimed for his wise decision.¹²⁶

Ruan Yu, Liu Zhen and Wu Zhi were known for their literary talent at that time. As mentioned before, Ruan Yu was a student and compatriot of Cai Yong. According to Pei Songzhi's commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*, Ruan Yu refused the invitation from Cao Hong 曹洪 (d. 232), who was a cousin and military officer of Cao Cao, to serve as his secretary. However, when Cao Cao summoned him to be his aide, Ruan Yu "threw away his staff and rose into

¹²¹ *Hou Han shu*, 80b.2653-54

¹²² *Sanguo zhi*, 21.603 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1668).

¹²³ *Hou Han shu*, 80b.2657-58.

¹²⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 12.372-73 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 12.1154); *Hou Han shu*, 70.2278.

¹²⁵ Bingzhou covered modern Shanxi, northern Shaanxi, and the Great Bend of the Yellow River in Inner Mongolia.

¹²⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.620 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1719); *Hou Han shu*, 49.1643-46.

action” (*tou zhang er qi* 投杖而起).¹²⁷ In 199 or 200 he drafted a letter on behalf of Cao Cao to Liu Bei. Only two lines of the letter are extant, which are cited in Li Shan’s commentary to the *Wen xuan*.¹²⁸

Liu Zhen was a native of Ningyang 寧陽 (south of modern Ningyang, Shandong) in Dongping 東平 principedom.¹²⁹ Dongping was located south of the Yellow River in Yanzhou. In the voice of Liu Zhen, Xie Lingyun writes in his “*Shi* on the Gathering at Ye [Hosted by] the Heir Designate of Wei: An Impersonation:”¹³⁰

	貧居晏里閭	Living in poverty I was content in a village lane,
	少小長東平	Since childhood I was raised in Dongping.
	河兗當衝要	The Yellow River and Yanzhou were located right at a
		strategically important crossroad,
4	淪飄薄許京	I was forced into flight until I reached the capital city of Xu.
	廣川無逆流	A broad river does not resist its branches,
	招納廁羣英	He summoned me and placed me among the various worthies.

Although he was a descendant of the Han imperial house, Liu Zhen lived in poverty. According to the *Hou Han shu*, his grandfather Liu Liang 劉梁 had to sell books in the market to make a living. Eventually Liu Liang was appointed governor of Beixincheng 北新城 (southwest of modern Xushui 徐水, Hebei) and devoted to Confucian education.¹³¹ Probably under the influence of his grandfather, Liu Zhen wrote the “Lu du fu” 魯都賦 (*Fu* on the Capital City of Lu) to celebrate Qufu 曲阜 (modern Qufu, Shandong), the political and cultural center of

¹²⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.600 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1658).

¹²⁸ For a note on the letter and its relation to the time when Ruan Yu joined Cao Cao’s court, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 49. For the two lines, see *Wen xuan*, 20.978. Also see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 5.169.

¹²⁹ For a detailed summary of Liu Zhen’s life, see Itō Masafumi 伊藤正文, *Ken’an shijin to sono dentō* 建安詩人とその伝統 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 2002), 115-37. For a note on Liu Zhen’s age when he arrived at Xu, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 63.

¹³⁰ Lu Qinli, ed., “Song shi,” 3.1183. The translation is based on Nicholas Morrow Williams, “The Brocade of Words: Imitation Poetry and Poetics in the Six Dynasties” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2010), 196.

¹³¹ *Hou Han shu*, 80b.2635-39.

Confucius' home state of Lu. In a letter to Yang Xiu, Cao Cao writes that Liu Zhen once "displayed his verbal virtuosity in the coastal area" (*zhen zao yu haiyu* 振藻於海隅).¹³² Liu Zhen's "*Fu* on the Capital City of Lu," which apparently was written in the manner of the ornate epideictic *fu*, was probably one of the literary pieces to which Cao Zhi refers. Upon learning of Liu Zhen's reputation, Cao Cao summoned him to serve as his aide.¹³³

Wu Zhi was a native of Jiyin 濟陰 commandery in modern Shandong. According to Pei Songzhi's commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*, he joined Cao Cao's court before Cao Cao captured Jizhou. His erudition won him the Cao brothers' respect and admiration. Thus he is compared to Lou Hu 樓護, who was on good terms with all five brothers of the Wang consort clan during the reign of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33-7 B.C.).¹³⁴

The Ying brothers came from the prominent family of Nandun 南頓 (west of modern Xiangcheng 項城, Henan) in Runan commandery. Their uncle Ying Shao 應劭, the author of the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義, fled to join Yuan Shao's staff when he failed to protect Cao Cao's father on his way to Taishan 太山 commandery, which Ying Shao governed. On the other hand, their father Ying Xun 應珣, who had been appointed clerk of the minister of works (*sikong yuan* 司空掾), presumably served on Cao Cao's staff when Cao Cao was the minister of works in 196-208, and the Ying brothers probably came to Xu with their father.

¹³² *Cao ji quanping*, 8.145.

¹³³ According to the commentary to the *Hou Han shu* sponsored by Li Xian 李賢 (651-684), the Heir Designate Zhanghuai 章懷太子 of Tang, Liu Zhen was appointed *sikong jun(mou)[shi] jijiu* 司空軍(謀)[師]祭酒 or "aide to the army supervisor under the minister of works," a position established by Cao Cao in 198. For the commentary, see *Hou Han shu*, 80b.2640 note 1. For an account of the establishment of the position, see *Sanguo zhi*, 1.15 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.67).

In Jin times, *shi* 師 was changed to *mou* 謀 to avoid the taboo on the personal name of the Jin emperor Sima Shi 司馬師. For notes on avoiding the taboo in this title, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.68 note 2; 21.1650 note 11; *Jian'an qizi ji*, 402.

¹³⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.607 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1689). For an account of Lou Hu's relationship with the Wang brothers, see *Hou Han shu*, 92.3699, 3707.

The Ding brothers came from Pei principedom, which is also the ancestral home of the Cao family. Their father Ding Chong 丁冲 had been on good terms with Cao Cao and was instrumental in convincing Cao Cao to move the emperor to Xu. Although Ding Chong soon died of overdrinking, Cao Cao thought much of him and, hearing that his older son was quite talented, planned to marry his daughter to the young man. The Ding brothers later served on Cao Cao's staff and became close friends of Cao Zhi.¹³⁵

While Cao Cao recruited young writers and scholars to Xu, Liu Biao commissioned thousands of scholars to edit the commentaries to the Five Classics at Xiangyang. After defeating Gongsun Zan 公孫瓚 (d. 199) in 199, Yuan Shao controlled the vast area of Jizhou, Qingzhou, Youzhou, Bingzhou and some 100,000 well-trained soldiers. He was more powerful than Cao Cao and Liu Biao, but there are few records about cultural activities at his court aside from Chen Lin's writings and Yuan Shao's inviting Zheng Xuan to his court.

After Chen Lin left He Jin's court for Jizhou, he joined Yuan Shao's court at Ye. At Yuan Shao's command, he wrote letters to Zang Hong 臧洪 (d. 196) and Gongsun Zan persuading them to surrender.¹³⁶ He also altered the content of a letter that Gongsun Zan sent to his son,¹³⁷ presented a petition in Yuan Shao's name to the emperor defending his loyalty,¹³⁸ made a non-imperial edict to the kings of the Wuhuan 烏桓 people conferring the title of Chanyu 單于 on them,¹³⁹ and drafted a war proclamation against Cao Cao.¹⁴⁰ In addition, he

¹³⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 19.561-62 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1564-65).

¹³⁶ Zang Hong's letter replying to Chen Lin is preserved in the histories, but Chen Lin's letter is not. For Zang Hong's letter, see *Sanguo zhi*, 7.233-35 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 7.804-39); *Hou Han shu*, 58.1887-91. For the letter to Gongsun Zan presumably written by Chen Lin on behalf of Yuan Shao, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.77-79; *Sanguo zhi*, 8.245-46 note 5 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 8.832-33).

¹³⁷ For Gongsun Zan's letter to his son, see *Sanguo zhi*, 8.246-47 note 7 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 8.834); *Hou Han shu*, 73.2364.

¹³⁸ For the petition presumably written by Chen Lin on behalf of Yuan Shao, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.74-77; *Hou Han shu*, 74a.2384-88.

¹³⁹ For the edict presumably written by Chen Lin on behalf of Yuan Shao, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.79; *Sanguo zhi*,

composed the “Wujun fu” 武軍賦 (*Fu* on the Military Force) to praise the arms used in Yuan Shao’s war against Gongsun Zan,¹⁴¹ and the “Ying ji” 應譏 (Reply to Ridicule) to defend Yuan Shao’s fleeing Chang’an.¹⁴² His compatriot Zhang Hong wrote a letter praising these two *fu*. Chen Lin replied:¹⁴³

Since I came to the area north of the Yellow River [i.e. Jizhou], I was separated from [the other places] under Heaven. Because there were few [people skilled] at writing and it was easy to be the best, I received this lavish compliment. [However, what you said] was not true. Now Jingxing [i.e. Wang Lang] is here [in the north], and you and Zibu [i.e. Zhang Zhao] are there [in the southeast]. [I am like], as the saying goes, a petty sorcerer in the presence of a great one, losing all my spiritual energy.

自僕在河北，與天下隔，此間率少於文章，易為雄伯，故使僕受此過差之譚，非其實也。今景興在此，足下與子布在彼，所謂小巫見大巫，神氣盡矣。

Whether he was exaggerating, Chen Lin found few rivals at Yuan Shao’s court in Jizhou.

Although Yuan Shao tried to win over the eminent scholar Zheng Xuan by recommending him to the imperial court several times, Zheng Xuan did not accept the appointments or join Yuan Shao’s staff. Finally in 200 when Yuan Shao fought against Cao Cao at Guandu 官渡 (northeast of modern Zhongmou 中牟, Henan), Zheng Xuan was forced to accompany Yuan Shao’s army but died of illness on the way. Thousands of students went to offer their condolences.¹⁴⁴

According to Xie Lingyun’s “*Shi* on the Gathering at Ye [Hosted by] the Heir Designate of Wei: An Impersonation,” Liu Zhen and Ying Yang also accompanied Cao Cao’s army on the expedition to Guandu, where Yuan Shao suffered a crushing defeat. It is reported in the *Sanguo*

30.834 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 30.2194).

¹⁴⁰ For the war proclamation, see *Sanguo zhi*, 6.197-9 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 6.703-5); *Hou Han shu*, 74a.2393-99.

¹⁴¹ For the extant lines of this *fu*, see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 2.72-73.

¹⁴² For a note on Chen Lin’s “Reply to Ridicule,” see Y. Edmund Lien, “Zhang Heng, Eastern Han Polymath, His Life and Works” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2011), 153-54.

¹⁴³ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 2.54. Also see *Sanguo zhi*, 53.1246-47 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 53.3228-29).

¹⁴⁴ *Hou Han shu*, 35.1211.

zhi that Cao Cao obtained all the supplies, books, and treasures left by Yuan Shao.¹⁴⁵ Yuan Shao fell ill thereafter and died in 202. Two years later, Cao Cao seized Ye. Chen Lin surrendered, and despite his insults to Cao Cao in the war proclamation,¹⁴⁶ he was appointed aide to the army supervisor along with Ruan Yu and Lu Cui.¹⁴⁷

It was at this point that the competition between Cao Cao and Yuan Shao ended. After Cao Cao moved his court to Ye while the emperor's court remained at Xu, the competition between the two provincial powers became the conflict between the imperial court and Cao Cao's court.

In 206 Cao Cao launched an eastern expedition at Chunyu 淳于 (northeast of modern Anqiu 安丘, Shandong) in Beihai principedom against the pirates who occupied this area.¹⁴⁸ It was probably at this time that Bing Yuan, who finally returned to Beihai from the Liaodong Peninsula, and Xu Gan, who had been living in seclusion around the Beihai area, joined Cao Cao's court.¹⁴⁹ The preface to Xu Gan's *Zhong lun* writes:¹⁵⁰

Just at that time, the exalted lord [i.e. Cao Cao] quelled the upheavals, and only then the kingly way was open up. Thereupon, despite his illness [Xu Gan] forced himself to respond to Cao Cao's summoning, accompanying the army on expeditions.
會上公撥亂，王路始闢。遂力疾應命，從戎征行。

Like Ruan Yu, Liu Zhen, Lu Cui and Chen Lin, Xu Gan was appointed aide to the army

¹⁴⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.21 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.85).

¹⁴⁶ For Cao Cao's question about Chen Lin's insults and Chen Lin's reply, see *Sanguo zhi*, 21.600 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1657) and Li Shan's commentary to *Wen xuan*, 44.1967.

¹⁴⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.600, 603 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1658, 1668).

¹⁴⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.28 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.108).

¹⁴⁹ According to the *Bing Yuan biezhuàn* cited by Pei Songzhi, Bing Yuan joined Cao Cao's court before Cao Cao went on northern expeditions against the Wuhuan people in 207. For Pei Songzhi's citation of the *Bing Yuan biezhuàn*, see *Sanguo zhi*, 11.353 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 11.1107).

¹⁵⁰ Xu Gan, *Zhong lun*, preface 3b. The translation is based on Xu Gan; John Makeham, trans., *Balanced Discourses*, xxxiv.

supervisor.¹⁵¹ One of the earliest military expeditions on which Xu Gan accompanied the army was the southern expedition against Liu Biao in 208. With his sons and many writers accompanying him on the southern expedition against Liu Biao, Cao Cao soon gathered the best writers, scholars and musicians of his cultural center. Related to the imperial court yet located in a separate city, this cultural center distinguished itself from those established by an imperial house as well as those established by the other provincial powers.

¹⁵¹ For Yu Shaochu's note on this appointment, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 418.

Chapter 2. Poetic Dialogues on Incessant Travel

Mini-Drama: Ying Yang, “*Shi* on Attending the Gathering on the Jianzhang Terrace”

The first example of Jian’an writers’ poetic dialogues on incessant travel is Ying Yang’s symposium poem titled “*Shi* Wuguan zhonglang jiang Jianzhang tai ji shi” 侍五官中郎將建章臺集詩 (*Shi* on Attending the Gathering on the Jianzhang Terrace [Hosted by] the Leader of Court Gentlemen for Miscellaneous Uses) in the *Wen xuan*.¹⁵² The leader of court gentlemen for miscellaneous uses was Cao Pi. The location of the Jianzhang Terrace is unknown. We only know from the title that it was the place where Cao Pi hosted a gathering.

	朝雁鳴雲中	A dawn goose cries in the clouds,
	音響一何哀	How mournful the sounds!
	問子遊何鄉	I ask you sir, “Where are you heading?”
4	戢翼正徘徊	You fold your wings, hovering there.
	言我寒門來	You say, “I have come from Cold Gate,
	將就衡陽棲	I shall roost at Hengyang.
	往春翔北土	Last spring I soared to the northern land,
8	今冬客南淮	This winter I will sojourn south of the Huai River.
	遠行蒙霜雪	Traveling afar I am covered in frost and snow,
	毛羽日摧頹	My feathers are daily battered and bruised,
	常恐傷肌骨	I always fear [once my travel causes] harm to my flesh and bones,
12	身隕沉黃泥	My body will fall, sinking into yellow mud.
	簡珠墮沙石	A large pearl drops among sand and stones—
	何能中自諧	How could one feel peace within?
	欲因雲雨會	I hope to avail myself of propitious clouds and rain,
16	濯羽陵高梯	To wash my feathers and ascend the high ladder.
	良遇不可值	If a good opportunity cannot be met with,
	伸眉路何階	How can I feel the pride of arching my eyebrows?”
	公子敬愛客	The young lord honors and esteems his guests,
20	樂飲不知疲	Drinking merrily he does not tire.
	和顏既以暢	Not only does he keep a gentle countenance,

¹⁵² *Jian’an qizi ji*, 6.172. Also see *Wen xuan*, 20.946-47.

	乃肯顧細微	He even deigns to cast a kind regard on this humble person.
	贈詩見存慰	He presents me a poem to reveal his solicitude—
24	小子非所宜	This is not something that this minor person deserves.
	為且極歡情	Let us for now enjoy ourselves to the full,
	不醉其無歸	Unless drunk, let us not go home.
	凡百敬爾位	Let all in office respectfully attend to your positions,
28	以副饑渴懷	So that you gratify his hunger for the talented.

In Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation, the poem in the voice of Ying Yang is apparently inspired by this symposium poem of Ying Yang:¹⁵³

	嗷嗷雲中鴈	<i>Ngau-ngau</i> cries a goose in the clouds,
	舉翮自委羽	Lifting its wings from Mount Weiyu.
	求涼弱水湄	It seeks the cool at the Ruo River shores,
4	違寒長沙渚	Escapes the cold on Changsha's isles.
	顧我梁川時	Recollecting the time when I was in Liang,
	緩步集穎許	Slowly proceeding, I roosted at Ying and Xu.
	一旦逢世難	Suddenly I encountered an age of calamity,
8	淪薄恆羈旅	I was forced into flight, constantly traveling away from home.
	天下昔未定	Before [the realm] under Heaven had been pacified,
	託身早得所	I soon found a place of refuge.
	官渡厠一卒	At Guandu I joined up as a soldier,
12	烏林預艱阻	At Wulin I participated in the adversities.
	晚節值眾賢	In my old age I meet multitudinous fine men,
	會同庇天宇	All gathering here, sheltered by his heavenly roof.
	列坐蔭華榱	We sit in a row under ornate rafters,
16	金樽盈清醕	Bronze goblets are filled with clear fine ale.
	始奏延露曲	They first perform the song of Yanlu,
	繼以(蘭)[闌]夕語	Then we follow with talk into late evening.
	調笑輒酬答	Teasing and twitting, we often respond with a poem;
20	嘲謔無慚沮	Joking and jesting, we are never ashamed or downcast.
	傾軀無遺慮	Committing myself fully, I have no thoughts left untold.
	在心良已敘	What was in my mind truly is expressed.

In this poem, Xie Lingyun captures many aspects of Ying Yang's life and poetry. However, he reduces the dialogic and performative elements in Ying Yang's symposium poem. First of all, in

¹⁵³ Lu Qinli, ed., "Song shi," 3.1184. The variant marked here is based on *Wen xuan*, 30.1437.

Ying Yang's poem, the speaker recounts a dialogue between himself and a traveling goose, but in Xie Lingyun's poem, the traveling goose does not speak and thus the dialogue disappears. Second, in Ying Yang's poem, the speaker asks the guests at the banquet to enjoy themselves and offer their devotion to the host, but in Xie Lingyun's poem, Ying Yang's requests—let us enjoy ourselves, let us not go home unless drunk, and let us attend the lord—disappear and are replaced with an account of a merry gathering. The differences are obvious, but how shall we interpret the differences? If Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation fails to catch some features of a poetic dialogue in the Jian'an period, is there any symposium that can help us identify those?

In formulating my approach to Jian'an poems, I was inspired by none other than Plato's "Symposium," which is full of dialogic and performative elements. As mentioned in the introduction, at the Athenian symposium people gathered to drink and had a dialogue on the nature of love. One of the speechmakers was Socrates. Another was Aristophanes, a comic playwright. Aristophanes' presentation reminds me of Ying Yang's symposium poem. While other speechmakers earnestly praised love, Aristophanes began with funny noises. He hiccuped and then had a big sneeze that stopped the hiccups. His physician friend Eryximachus complained, "My good friend Aristophanes, look at what you are doing. You have made [us] laugh just as you were about to speak."¹⁵⁴

Ying Yang's symposium poem also has an amusing beginning, which is a *yuefu*-style dialogue. In the *yuefu* poem "Yange hechang xing" 豔歌何嘗行 (*Xing* of "When Shall We": A Prelude), there is a dialogue between a pair of white swans.¹⁵⁵ In Ying Yang's symposium poem, a traveling goose replies to the speaker's question. "Where are you heading," he asks. "I have

¹⁵⁴ Plato's "Symposium," 18 (189A).

¹⁵⁵ There are several versions of the poem. For the version that has a dialogue, see Shen Yue 沈約, comp., *Song shu* 宋書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980), 21.618-19. For translations of the *Song shu* version, see Lois Fusek, "The Poetry of Ts'ao P'i (187-226)," 159-60; Anne Birrell, comp. and trans., *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 55; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 92-93.

come from Cold Gate,/ I shall roost at Hengyang,” the goose replies. Cold Gate is a mythical mountain in the extreme north where geese begin their flight,¹⁵⁶ whereas Hengyang in modern Hunan province, is known for the southern ridge of Mount Heng called Returning Goose Peak (Hui yan feng 迴雁峯)¹⁵⁷

In addition, Ying Yang describes the goose folding its wings and hovering about. We can imagine that when Ying Yang recited this poem at the banquet, the audience may have been impressed with this mini-drama. When Ying Yang spoke in the voice of the goose, he may even have paced back and forth with his arms folded behind his back, like a hovering goose with folded wings, to entertain his audience.

After entertaining the audience, both Aristophanes and Ying Yang spoke deep into their hearts, although still in an unconventional way. Aristophanes talked about embrace, the desire and anxiety for lovers to hug each other and become one. He elaborated on this by telling his audience that the original human form was a ball with two faces, four arms and four legs. Because these human spheres were able to tumble around quickly and were awesome in their strength, they became arrogant. It was because of their arrogance that the gods decided to cut each of them in two, whereas love is “the bringer-together of their ancient nature, who tries to make one out of two and to heal their human nature.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ For an account of Cold Gate, see Liu An 劉安, comp.; He Ning 何寧, ed. and comm., *Huainanzi jishi* 淮南子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 4.336.

Hanmen 寒門 (Cold Gate) is written as Saimen 塞門 (Barrier Gate) in Xiao Tong 蕭統, comp.; Li Shan 李善, Lü Yanji 呂延濟, Liu Liang 劉良, Zhang Xian 張銑, Lü Xiang 呂向, Li Zhouhan 李周翰, comm., *Liuchen zhu Wenxuan* 六臣注文選 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 20.17a (371).

Both are possible in the context of a goose: Cold Gate reappears in Chenggong Sui's 成公綏 (231-273) “Hongyan fu” 鴻雁賦 (*Fu* on Wild Geese), and Barrier Gate reappears in a parallel pair of phrases about geese in *Chuxue ji*, 30.735.

¹⁵⁷ For an account of the peak, see Yue Shi 樂史, comp., *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記 (with parts republished in *Guyi congshu* 古逸叢書 by Li Shuchang 黎庶昌 at Riben Dongjing shishu 日本東京使署 in Guangxu 光緒 10, i.e. 1884), 114.9a-b.

¹⁵⁸ Plato's “Symposium,” 20 (191D).

If Aristophanes captured our feeling about love, Ying Yang captures the fear felt by traveling scholars. He expresses this fear in the goose's reply: "I always fear [once my travel causes] harm to my flesh and bones,/ My body will fall, sinking into yellow mud." The goose further compares itself to a large pearl: "A large pearl drops among sand and stones—/ How could one feel peace within?"

This rhetorical question must have been like an arrow piercing the guests' hearts, for not only Ying Yang, but many of his colleagues had traveled a long way before they came to the court of Cao Cao. For example, Wang Can had traveled from his native place Gaoping, Shanyang in modern Shandong to the capital Luoyang, from Luoyang to Chang'an, from Chang'an to Xiangyang in modern Hubei, and finally back to the city of Ye in modern Hebei. By devising a dialogue between the speaker and a traveling goose, Ying Yang not only expresses himself in an indirect way but also begins a dialogue with his audience. He asks them: "Where are you heading?"

Then another sharp question comes. The goose talks about its hopes: "I hope to avail myself of propitious clouds and rain,/ To wash my feathers and ascend the high ladder." However, the goose finds that "If a good opportunity cannot be met with,/ How can I feel the pride of arching my eyebrows?"

As if directing the exhausted goose—as well as the traveling scholars whose hearts are pierced with grief—to a refuge, Ying Yang then introduces the young lord Cao Pi, who not only "honors and esteems his guests" but also presents him a poem "to reveal his solicitude." To repay his kindness, Ying Yang asks the participants to drink to their hearts' content today and to be devoted to their positions in the future.

The fatigued and frustrated goose is interpreted as representing Ying Yang himself not

only in Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation but also in *Wen xuan* commentaries. For example, Li Shan says that Ying Yang "compares himself to the goose" (*yi yan zi yu ye* 以雁自喻也). Zhang Xian 張銑 even says that Ying Yang "compares his humble background to Cold Gate where the goose comes from" (*hanmen...zi yu beiwei* 寒門...自喻卑微).¹⁵⁹

But if we pay attention to the dialogic elements in Ying Yang's poem, we know Ying Yang is not only talking about himself, but also engaging in a dialogue with his audience. In their dialogues on incessant travel, Ying Yang could have read or heard many melancholic verses, such as Wang Can's poems about his flight to the south. Although Ying Yang was travel-weary, he feels there is a need for comic relief at the banquet. Thus, he has a goose speak for all the travelers, and then he directs this worn out traveler to Cao Pi. Finally, he urges all the guests to pay tribute to such a fine lord.

The dialogue involving a bird is a common feature of the early *yuefu*. By integrating a *yuefu*-style dialogue into his *shi*, Ying Yang not only entertained his audience but also had a heart-to-heart talk with all the travelers at the banquet. On the other hand, by removing the *yuefu*-style dialogue, Xie Lingyun created a decorous symposium poem presented to the young lord Cao Pi, but he seemed oblivious of the bold poetic experiment that Ying Yang performed in his dialogue with other guests.

Interruption: Chen Lin, "*Shi* on Excursions" (I of two)

The second example of Jian'an writers' poetic dialogues on incessant travel is the first of Chen Lin's two "You lan shi" 遊覽詩 (*Shi* on an Excursion), which is quite different from Ying

¹⁵⁹ *Liuchen zhu Wen xuan*, 20.17a (371).

Yang's symposium poem:¹⁶⁰

	高會時不娛	At a grand gathering for a moment I was not happy,
	羈客難為心	A traveler constantly away from home could not feel at ease.
	愜懷從中發	Mournful thoughts came from within,
4	悲感激清音	Sad feelings stirred up clear sounds.
	投觴罷歡坐	I put down my bowl of ale and quit the merry feast,
	逍遙步長林	Roaming and rambling, I paced through a deep forest.
	蕭蕭山谷風	Soughing and sighing was the wind in the mountain valley,
8	黯黯天路陰	Dark and dusky, Heaven's path lay in shadows.
	惆悵忘旋反	Sad and sorrowful, I forgot to turn back,
	歔歔涕霑襟	Sobbing and moaning, tears soaked the collar.

This poem reminds me of another scene in Plato's "Symposium." Toward the end of the Athenian banquet, a crowd of revelers walked straight in among the guests and interrupted their dialogue because someone had gone out and left the door open. At a Jian'an banquet, Chen Lin was the one who left early. With this poem, however, Chen Lin contributed to Jian'an writers' dialogues on incessant travel, whereas the one leaving the door open in Plato's "Symposium" was silent in the Athenians' dialogue on the nature of love.

Chen Lin begins with an explanation of his early departure from the feast:

	高會時不娛	At a grand gathering for a moment I was not happy,
	羈客難為心	A traveler constantly away from home could not feel at ease.
	愜懷從中發	Mournful thoughts came from within,
4	悲感激清音	Sad feelings stirred up clear sounds.

I render the fourth line into "Sad feelings stirred up clear sounds" rather than "Sad feelings were stirred up by clear sound" as Stephen Owen suggests.¹⁶¹ This is because the transitive verb *ji* 激 "to stir up" in Jian'an poems and letters constantly takes an object of music or sound rather than

¹⁶⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.34. The translation is based on Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 194.

¹⁶¹ Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 194.

an object of feeling. Examples can be found in the following excerpts:

Cao Pi, “Shanzai xing” 善哉行 (*Xing* of “Excellent!”)¹⁶²

- 4 悲絃激新聲 Sad strings stir up new music,
 長笛吐清氣 Long flutes send forth clear air.

Po Qin, “Yu Wei Wendi jian” 與魏文帝牋 (Memorandum to Emperor Wen of Wei)¹⁶³

Then he stirred up clear sounds and intoned sad songs, adding to them grievance and longing. He sang about the Northern Di’s distant campaigns, and performed Tartar horses’ long yearnings. The sadness entered our livers and spleens. The laments moved the dull and the bright.

暨其清激悲吟，雜以怨慕，詠北狄之遐征，奏胡馬之長思，悽入肝脾，哀感頑豔。

Cao Zhi, “Yuanyou pian” 遠遊篇 (*Pian* on Far-roaming)¹⁶⁴

- 12 崑崙本吾宅 Mount Kunlun was originally my abode,
 中州非我家 The central realm is not my home.
 將歸謁東父 I’ll return to visit the Father of the East,
 一舉超流沙 All at once flying across the Flowing Sands.
 鼓翼舞時風 Beating my wings I dance on the timely wind,
 長嘯激清歌 Giving a long whistle I stir up a clear song.

In these three examples, the objects of the verb *ji* “to stir up” are new music, clear sounds, and a clear song, and the subjects of the same verb are a stringed instrument, a singer, and a poet. Thus we are quite confident that Jian’an readers would have understood the fourth line of Chen Lin’s excursion poem as “Sad feelings stirred up clear sounds” rather than “Sad feelings were stirred up by clear sound,”¹⁶⁵ and the clear sounds could have been a song that he sang or a song played

¹⁶² Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi” 魏詩, 4.393.

¹⁶³ *Wen xuan*, 40.1821.

¹⁶⁴ *Cao ji quanping*, 5.67-68. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 298.

¹⁶⁵ This connotation of the verb *ji*—a stringed instrument, a singer, or a poet “stirs up” sounds—could have come from another connotation of it: a river “stirs up” sounds, as in a line of Cao Pi, “Flowing water stirs up sad sounds” (*liubo ji beisheng* 流波激悲聲), and a similar line of Wang Can “Flowing water stirs up clear sounds” (*liubo ji qingxiang* 流波激清響).

at the feast. Thus Chen Lin, like Ying Yang in his symposium poem, could have performed at a feast. However, Chen Lin composed a poem very different from Ying Yang's symposium poem and Xie Lingyun's poetic impersonation. While the latter two first mention a voyage and then tell of a feast, Chen Lin first mentions a feast (and denies the possibility that it can bring true comfort to a traveler) and then tells of a trip into the forest on which sorrow was the only companion. If we ignore this difference, we would think that Jian'an writers followed a single pattern when they wrote about travel and feasts.

Along with his steps into the forest, Chen Lin continuously uses alliterative, rhyming, or reduplicative binomes—*xiaoyao* 逍遙, *xiaoxiao* 蕭蕭, *an'an* 黯黯, *chouchang* 惆悵, *xuxi* 歔歔—to begin his last few lines. One after another, they link up the last few lines. When we read these lines we cannot slacken our pace but listen to the whistling winds, look at the darkening sky, share Chen Lin's lasting sorrow, and find him bursting into tears as if we are accompanying him on his walk through the deep forest.

His contemporaries may have felt the same when they read this poem, which could have been circulated later among them. Although Chen Lin could have startled and perplexed his audience at the feast with his sudden departure, he explained himself to them in this poem. From confusion to clarification, Chen Lin's poetic dialogue with his contemporaries on incessant travel was thus complete. He not only excused himself for leaving a feast early, but also revealed to them a deep sorrow that stayed with a traveler, separated him from the symposiasts, and induced him to compose this poem.

Newcomer: Wang Can, “*Shi* of Seven Laments” (I-II of three), “*Fu* on Climbing the Tower,”
“*Fu* on the First Expedition”

Wang Can was one of the last writers to join Cao Cao's court. He had served on Liu Biao's staff in Jingzhou and surrendered to Cao Cao in 208. To celebrate his conquest of Jingzhou, Cao Cao held a banquet to which Wang Can was invited.¹⁶⁶ At the banquet, Wang Can proposed a toast to Cao Cao and congratulated him:¹⁶⁷

Recently, when Yuan Shao arose north of the Yellow River, he relied on a large following and aspired to annex [the lands] under Heaven. However, although he was fond of worthy men he was unable to put them to use, and thus eminent men deserted him. Poised and composed in Jing-Chu [i.e. Jingzhou], Liu Biao sat by and watched the trends of the times, believing that he should emulate the example of the Western Lord [i.e. King Wen of Zhou]. The literati who fled to Jingzhou were all outstanding men within the Four Seas. Liu Biao did not know on whom to rely, and thus the state was endangered and rendered without proper support.

方今袁紹起河北，仗大眾，志兼天下，然好賢而不能用，故奇士去之。劉表雍容荊楚，坐觀時變，自以為西伯可規。士之避亂荊州者，皆海內之雋傑也；表不知所任，故國危而無輔。

On the day that you, my enlightened lord, pacified Jizhou, you alit from your carriage and forthwith took command of their troops, gathered their outstanding men and put them to use. By doing so you advanced at will. When you brought peace to the Jiang-Han area [i.e. Jingzhou], you drew the worthy and outstanding men to you and gave them high positions. Thus [people] within the Four Seas turned their hearts [unto you], admire your regal bearing and hope for your good rule. Civil and military talents are both put to use. Outstanding men all render their service. This is [comparable to] the remarkable feat that the Three Kings had performed.¹⁶⁸

明公定冀州之日，下車即繕其甲卒，收其豪傑而用之，以橫行天下。及平江、漢，

¹⁶⁶ It is debated when and where Cao Cao held the banquet and Wang Can proposed the toast. According to the *Sanguo zhi*, Cao Cao held the banquet by the Han River (*zhi jiu Han bin* 置酒漢濱). However, the “*Zizhi tongjian kaoyi*” 資治通鑑考異, which is cited by Lu Bi in his commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*, doubts that Cao Cao, who was hastening to Jiangling 江陵 (modern Jiangling, Hubei), had time to hold a banquet by the Han River. For Lu Bi's citation, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1650.

Accordingly, Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng argue that Cao Cao held the banquet by the Yangzi River. For their note on this issue, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 66-67.

Yu Shaochu argues that the banquet was held in the next year when Cao Cao was returning to the north. For his note on this issue, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 427-28.

On the other hand, Cheng Liang-shu argues that it is more likely that they enjoyed themselves before they were defeated and returned to the north. For his note on this issue, see Cheng Liang-shu, “Chu ti feng zuo—Cao Wei jituan de fuzuo huodong,” 186.

¹⁶⁷ *Sanguo zhi* 21.598 (*Sanguo zhi jijie* 21.1647-48). The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 79-80.

¹⁶⁸ Zhao Qi 趙歧 (109-201) identifies the Three Kings as Yu of Xia 夏禹, Tang of Shang 商湯, and King Wen of Zhou 周文王. For his identification of the Three Kings, see Zhao Qi 趙歧, comm.; Sun Shi 孫奭, subcomm., *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 12b.1a (218-1).

引其賢儁而置之列位，使海內回心，望風而願治。文武並用，英雄畢力，此三王之舉也。

This was probably the first speech that Wang Can gave at Cao Cao's court. Since he was one of the last writers to join the court, he must have considered the best way to please and impress his new lord and senior colleagues. In Plato's "Symposium," Alcibiades joined the Athenians' dialogue late. He was commanded by Eryximachus to follow their rules to eulogize love, but he ended up talking about love in his own way. Like Alcibiades, Wang Can must have thought of a way by which he could join them yet keep his unique voice. Thus in this speech he eloquently describes Cao Cao as an understanding lord and his followers as worthy men, but further implies that he, who now follows Cao Cao and cares for "the remarkable feat that the Three Kings had performed," is also an outstanding man.

In addition to making this speech, Wang Can could have also had his poems circulated at the new court, especially the following four poems about his sojourn in Jingzhou:¹⁶⁹

“Qi ai shi” 七哀詩 (*Shi* of Seven Laments) (I-II of three)¹⁷⁰

I.

4	西京亂無象 豺虎方邁患 復棄中國去 遠身適荆蠻 親戚對我悲 朋友相追攀 出門無所見	The Western Capital is in lawless turmoil, Dholes and tigers now inflict calamity. Once again I leave the Central Domain, Far away I go to the Jing tribes. My family and kin face me in grief, My friends follow and cling to me. As I leave the gate there is nothing to be seen,
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¹⁶⁹ According to the following works, Wang Can's early poems could have been known to Cao Zhi and Cao Pi:
1) In his "Wang Zhongxuan lei" 王仲宣誄 (Dirge for Wang Zhongxuan), Cao Zhi writes about Wang Can's writing skills in his early days. For Cao Zhi's dirge for Wang Can, see *Cao ji quanping*, 10.186-89.

2) In his "Dian lun lun wen" 典論論文 (On Literature, from *Normative Discourses*), Cao Pi mentions Wang Can's "Fu on Climbing the Tower" and "Fu on the First Expedition." For Cao Pi's essay, see *Wen xuan*, 52.2270-72.

¹⁷⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.86-87. The translation of the first poem is based on Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 130-31. The translation of the second poem is based on Hans H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 28; Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 145.

8	白骨蔽平原 路有飢婦人 抱子棄草間 顧聞號泣聲	White bones cover the plain. On the road there is a starving woman, Hugging her child and abandoning it in the grass. Looking back she hears the sound of wailing and weeping,
12	揮涕獨不還 未知身死處 何能兩相完 驅馬棄之去	Wiping her tears, she goes alone without turning back. “I do not know where I shall die, How can I keep two of us alive?” Spurring on my horse I leave her behind,
16	不忍聽此言 南登霸陵岸 迴首望長安 悟彼下泉人	I cannot bear to listen to these words. South I climb Baling’s slope, Turning my head I gaze at Chang’an. I suddenly understand the singer of the “Falling Spring,”
20	喟然傷心肝	Sighing, my heart is full of pain.

II.

4	荊蠻非我鄉 何為久滯淫 方舟溯大江 日暮愁我心	The Jing tribes are not my home, Why have I been mired here so long? The coupled boat sails up the great Yangzi, The sun sets, saddening my heart.
8	山岡有餘映 巖阿增重陰 狐狸馳赴穴 飛鳥翔故林	On mountain ridges there is lingering light, In craggy nooks grows a layered shadow. Foxes run to their caves, Flying birds hover about their home groves.
12	流波激清響 猴猿臨岸吟 迅風拂裳袂 白露霑衣衿	Flowing waves stir up clear sounds, Gibbons cry on the banks. A swift wind brushes the sleeves of my robe, White dew soaks the collar of my clothes.
16	獨夜不能寐 攝衣起撫琴 絲桐感人情 為我發悲音	Alone at night I cannot sleep, Straightening my clothes I rise to strum my zither. The silk strings and paulownia wood feel human emotions, For me they emit mournful sounds.
	羈旅無終極 憂思壯難任	I have been traveling away from home without an end, My care-filled thoughts become all the more difficult to bear.

“Deng lou fu” 登樓賦 (*Fu* on Climbing the Tower)¹⁷¹

登茲樓以四望兮 聊暇日以銷憂	I climb this tower and gaze in the four directions, Briefly stealing some time to dispel my sorrows.
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¹⁷¹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.104. The translation is taken from Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 236-41.

4	覽斯宇之所處兮 實顯敞而寡仇 挾清漳之通浦兮 倚曲沮之長洲 背墳衍之廣陸兮 8 臨臯隰之沃流 北彌陶牧 西接昭丘 華實蔽野 12 黍稷盈疇 雖信美而非吾土兮 曾何足以少留？	I scan the site on which this building rests: Truly spacious and open, rare is its peer! It hugs the intersecting channel of the clear Zhang, Rests upon the long sandbars of the twisting Ju, Backs upon a broad stretch of hillock and plain, Faces toward the rich flow of river margin and marsh, North extends to Tao's pasturage, West touches Zhao's barrow. Flowers and fruit cover the plain, Millets fill the fields. Though truly beautiful, it is not my home! How can I remain here even briefly?
16	遭紛濁而遷逝兮 漫踰紀以迄今 情眷眷而懷歸兮 孰憂思之可任 憑軒檻以遙望兮 20 向北風而開襟 平原遠而極目兮 蔽荆山之高岑 路逶迤而修迥兮 24 川既漾而濟深 悲舊鄉之壅隔兮 涕橫墜而弗禁 昔尼父之在陳兮 28 有歸歎之歎音 鍾儀幽而楚奏兮 莊烏顯而越吟 人情同於懷土兮 32 豈窮達而異心	Encountering tumult and turmoil, I wandered afar; A long decade has passed until now. With my heart longing and languishing, I cherish a return; Who can bear such anxious thoughts? Leaning on the grilled railing, afar I gaze, Face the north wind and open my collar. The plain distantly stretches as far as the eyes can see, But it is obscured by Jing Mountains' high ridges. Roads sinuously snake, distant and far; Rivers are long, fords are deep. I am sad to be blocked and cut off from my homeland; Tears stream down my face, and I cannot hold them back. Of old, when Father Ni was in Chen, There was his sad cry "Let us return!" When imprisoned, Zhong Yi played a Chu tune; Though eminent, Zhuang Xi intoned the songs of Yue. All men share the emotion of yearning for their lands; How can adversity or success alter the heart?
36	惟日月之逾邁兮 俟河清其未極 冀王道之一平兮 假高衢而騁力 懼匏瓜之徒懸兮 畏井渫之莫食 步棲遲以徙倚兮 40 白日忽其將匿 風蕭瑟而並興兮	Thinking how days and months pass quickly by, I wait for the River to clear, but it does not. I hope for the King's Way at last to be smooth, And to take the high road to try my strength. I fear hanging uselessly like a gourd, Dread being a cleaned well from which no one drinks. Walking slow and sluggish, I pace to and fro; The bright sun suddenly is about to set. The wind, sighing and sighing, rises all around;

	天慘慘而無色	The sky, pale and pallid, has lost all color.
	獸狂顧以求羣兮	Beasts, wildly gazing, seek their herds;
44	鳥相鳴而舉翼	Birds, crying back and forth, raise their wings.
	原野闐其無人兮	The plains and wilds are deserted, unpeopled;
	征夫行而未息	Yet wayfarers march on, never resting.
	心悽愴以感發兮	My heart, sad and sorrowful, bursts with pain;
48	意忉怛而僣側	My mood, somber and sullen, is doleful and drear.
	循墉除而下降兮	As I descend the steps,
	氣交憤於胸臆	I feel my spirit troubled and tormented within my breast.
	夜參半而不寐兮	The night reaches midpoint, yet I do not sleep;
52	悵盤桓以反側	Pensively brooding, I toss and turn.

“Chuzheng fu” 初征賦 (*Fu* on the First Expedition)¹⁷²

	違世難以迴折兮	Fleeing the turmoil of the world I took a sinuous route,
	超遙集乎蠻楚	A long way I went to the tribal Chu.
	逢屯否而底滯兮	Encountering Difficulties and Barriers I was stalled there,
4	忽長幼以羈旅	Deserting the elders and youngers I have been traveling away from home.
	賴皇華之茂功	Thanks to the extraordinary feats of the “Brilliant Flowers,”
	清四海之疆宇	He cleanses the domain within the Four Seas.
	超南荆之北境	Crossing the northern border of the southern Jing,
8	踐周豫之末畿	I tread the marginal domain of Zhou Yu.
	野蕭條而騁望	The wilds are desolate and I gaze afar,
	路周達而平夷	The road is unobstructed and smooth.
	春風穆其和暢兮	The spring wind is balmy and pleasant,
12	庶卉煥以敷蕤	Various flowers are splendid and luxuriant.
	行中國之舊壤	To set foot on the old soil of the Central Domain
	實吾願之所依	Indeed is what I long for.
	當短景之炎陽	Facing the fiery sun, which casts short shadows,
16	犯隆暑之赫曦	I meet with the blaze of high summer.
	薰風溫溫以增熱	Warm and sweltering, a gentle wind increases the heat;
	體燁燁其若焚	Burning and blazing, my body is as on fire.

¹⁷² *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.103.

The title of this *fu* is ambiguous. *Zheng* 征 means a journey, or a military expedition. Thus the title can be translated as “*Fu* on the First Journey,” or “*Fu* on the First Expedition.”

I translate the title as “*Fu* on the First Expedition” because Wang Can had at least traveled from Luoyang to Chang’an and from Chang’an to Jingzhou, but probably had not gone on a military expedition until he joined Cao Cao. Thus this was not his “first journey” but his “first expedition.”

In these poems, Wang Can denies that Jingzhou is his homeland. He even calls Jingzhou “the Jing tribes” (Jing *man* 荆蠻) and “the tribal Chu” (*man* Chu 蠻楚), which are derogatory appellations for Jingzhou. These derogatory appellations sharply contrast with the fact that Jingzhou was the leading center of scholarship at that time. As mentioned previously, Wang Can actually celebrates the cultural establishments in Jingzhou in the “Official Account of Classical Studies in Jingzhou.” Then why does he call such a cultural center *man*?

In Ronald C. Miao’s analysis of the second “*Shi* of Seven Laments,” Wang Can indeed lived among *man* for some time, and it was because “during the sixteen or so years that he spent in Ching-chou Liu Piao failed to give him a post of importance, and even found the poet to be repulsive” that Wang Can did not want to stay there. On the “*Fu* on Climbing the Tower,” he further comments that Wang Can was “a ‘prisoner’ at the court of Liu Piao, a victim of his own voluntary exile.”¹⁷³

Andrew Chittick disagrees with Ronald C. Miao’s analysis—and even with Chen Shou’s claims that Wang Can was ignored by Liu Biao. He observes:¹⁷⁴

As it became apparent that Biao was not going to succeed in engineering a dynastic revival, thereby lifting his supporters’ careers into the imperial stratosphere, Wang naturally might have become restless. But anecdotes about Wang’s restlessness and dissatisfaction cannot count as conclusive proof that he was actively mistreated by Biao. The evidence for that relies on the testimony of the northern émigrés who went over to Cao Cao’s regime, or even on Cao clan members themselves, all of whom had very good reason to paint an unflattering portrait of Biao and the way he had appreciated their talents. Later historians like Chen Shou relied on these accounts, creating a trend in official historiography which will be analyzed further on.

Ronald C. Miao’s analysis is indeed influenced by Chen Shou’s portrait of Wang Can’s relationship with Liu Biao. In fact, in these poems of Wang Can there is no obvious criticism of

¹⁷³ Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 146, 147, 277.

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Chittick, “The Life and Legacy of Liu Biao,” 171-72.

Liu Biao's court. Wang Can even clearly states in the "*Fu* on Climbing the Tower" that "All men share the emotion of yearning for their lands;/ How can adversity or success alter the heart?" If Wang Can no longer confines his poetry to frustration and criticism, what does he try to tell his contemporaries in these poems? I believe it is nostalgia for the homeland and the kingly rule, to both of which all men would like to return. Therefore, in these poems the derogatory appellations for Jingzhou always contrast with "the Central Domain" (*zhongguo* 中國), "my home" (*wo xiang* 我鄉), "my land" (*wu tu* 吾土), and "the domain of Zhou Yu" (Zhou Yu *zhi ji* 周豫之畿, whose cultural connotations will be explained in the discussion of the "*Fu* on the First Expedition" below). Thus I read all these poems as his melancholic yet solemn expressions. They become an integral part of Jian'an writers' dialogues on incessant travel.

"Seven Laments" could have been a popular *yuefu* title, for Cao Zhi and Ruan Yu also have *shi* under this title.¹⁷⁵ Although the true meaning of the title is unknown,¹⁷⁶ we can assume that the song was mournful and considered fit by Wang Can to express his sorrow. In his first "*Shi* of Seven Laments," Wang Can recollects the day on which he left the Western Capital Chang'an. The main figures are no longer a mighty emperor and his grand entourage as often described in the grand *fu*, but dholes and tigers (Dong Zhuo and his men), white bones all over the plain (graves and tombs), friends following and clinging to him, and a starving woman speaking to her child that she is going to abandon. When he climbs Baling 霸陵, which is the tumulus of Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 179-56 B.C.), and looks back at the fallen Chang'an, he

¹⁷⁵ In the *Song shu* and the *Yuefu shiji*, Cao Zhi's "*Shi* of Seven Laments" is listed as a song in the Chu mode but under different titles: under the opening phrase "Mingyue" 明月 (Bright Moon) in the *Song shu* and under "Yuanshi xing" 怨詩行 (*Shi* on Resentment, a *Xing*) in the *Yuefu shiji*. For the poem titles, see *Song shu*, 21.623; Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩, comp., *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 1999), 41.610-11.

¹⁷⁶ For studies of the title, see Ronald C. Miao, "The 'Ch'i ai shih' of the Late Han and Chin Periods (I)," *HJAS* 33 (1973): 183-223; Chu Hsiao-hai 朱曉海, "Qi'ai jietai ji zhonglun" 七哀解題及中論, *Xueshu jilin* 17 (April 2000): 205-31.

suddenly understands the singer of the “Xia quan” 下泉 (Falling Spring, no. 153), which is a *Shi jing* 詩經 poem in the airs of Cao 曹. In the last two stanzas, the Cao poet sings:¹⁷⁷

12	冽彼下泉 浸彼苞蓍 愴我寤歎 念彼京師	Cold is the falling spring, Soaking the clustering yarrow. With a groan I awake and sigh, Thinking of the capital city.
16	芄芄黍苗 陰雨膏之 四國有王 郇伯勞之	Lush and luxuriant grow the millet shoots, Rains from overcast sky enrich them. The states have their sovereign, The Lord of Xun rewards them.

The poet used vegetable images to depict two distinct situations. The state of Cao in turmoil was like the yarrow soaked in a cold spring, whereas the states looked after by the Lord of Xun was like millet shoots enriched by rains. When Wang Can comes to the tumulus of Emperor Wen and looks back at Chang’an, he suddenly understands the Cao poet and feels the same grief: Chang’an is on the verge of downfall as was the state of Cao, but how prosperous it was during the reign of Emperor Wen as were the states under the supervision of the Lord of Xun! Combining his gaze back to the falling capital with a meditation on the past, Wang Can thus lends this mournful *yuefu* song a solemn tone.

The second “*Shi* of Seven Laments” continues the solemn tone with a grand view on the Yangzi River at sunset. With four parallel couplets in the middle, its language is more refined than the language of the first poem. Although their parallelism (for example, in lines 9-10) is not as precise as required in later poetry, they beautifully represent the light, time, sound and

¹⁷⁷ Mao Heng 毛亨, ed. and comm.; Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, comm.; Kong Yingda 孔穎達, subcomm., *Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 7c.10a (272-1, 272-2). The translation is based on James Legge, trans., *The She king or The Book of Poetry*, in his *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 4 (1871; rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 225; Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 118.

temperature of the darkening world in which the traveler goes on a river voyage and, sleepless at night, strums a zither that emits mournful sounds for him.

His “*Fu* on Climbing the Tower” resembles his second “*Shi* of Seven Laments” in many ways—for example, a grand view and a sleepless night—but in the form of *fu* he can further delineate the changing landscape that he, who has resided in Jingzhou for more than a decade (or more literally, longer than a twelve-year cycle, line 16), sees from a tower. The *fu* can be divided into three parts according to the rhyme change. While the rhyme changes from open syllables (-jiǔ) to close syllables with a bilabial nasal ending (-jəm), from syllables with level tone to syllables with entering tone (-jək), the open landscape is also blocked by the Jing Mountains and further fades into darkness.

The only hope for Wang Can to return is to restore “the kingly way” (*wangdao* 王道, line 35). However, the hope is eventually frustrated by the fear of his being useless, which is intensified by the setting sun, rising wind, darkening sky, and agitated animals:

	獸狂顧以求羣兮	Beasts, wildly gazing, seek their herds;
44	鳥相鳴而舉翼	Birds, crying back and forth, raise their wings.
	原野闕其無人兮	The plains and wilds are deserted, unpeopled;
	征夫行而未息	Yet wayfarers march on, never resting.

Compare this with a couplet in the second of his “*Shi* of Seven Laments:”

	狐狸馳赴穴	Foxes run to their caves,
8	飛鳥翔故林	Flying birds hover about their home groves.

While the homeward foxes and birds in the *shi* are a contrast to the traveler Wang Can, the wildly gazing beasts, crying birds and marching wayfarers in the *fu* are exactly like Wang Can, finding no rest in the darkness. Although Wang Can uses birds and animals again in his *fu*, he

carefully selects the images he needs for the final scene of the changing landscape.

Wang Can finally returned to the north. In the spring of 209 after being defeated at the Red Cliff Battle, Cao Cao went north to his hometown Qiao in Yuzhou to prepare boats and practice naval maneuvers. In autumn he led the army south to the Huai River, on which Cao Pi and Wang Can each wrote a eulogistic *fu*, the “Fu Huai fu” 浮淮賦 (*Fu* on Drifting on the Huai River). In 210 they finally returned to the city of Ye.¹⁷⁸ Wang Can may have accompanied Cao Cao’s army all the way from Jingzhou to Yuzhou in spring, to the Huai River in autumn, and finally to Ye, where he wrote a poem on his “first expedition.”

The poem begins with his flight to the “tribal Chu” (Jingzhou), the “Difficulties and Barriers” (titles of two *Yi jing* hexagrams) he suffered, and a eulogy on the extraordinary feats of Cao Cao, whom he calls “Brilliant Flowers” (*huanghua* 皇華).¹⁷⁹ Then he writes: “Crossing the northern border of the southern Jing,/ I set foot on the marginal domain of Zhou Yu.” In contrast with Jing *Man* and *Man* Chu 蠻楚, Zhou Yu 周豫 (Yu of Zhou) was a laudatory appellation for Yuzhou. It corresponded to the royal domain of the Eastern Zhou, and thus was called Zhou Yu. Zheng Xuan confirms the geography in his study on the *Shi jing*:¹⁸⁰

The King’s City [occupied] the land of six hundred square *li* in the royal domain of the King’s City, the eastern capital of Zhou. Its fief was between Mount Taihua and Mount Waifang in Yuzhou [defined] in the “Yu gong” [of the *Shang shu*].

王城者，周東都王城畿內方六百里之地。其封域在禹貢豫州太華、外方之間。

This land once belonged to the royal house of the Eastern Zhou and the imperial house of the Eastern Han. We do not know what Wang Can wrote about the old land, but in the last few lines

¹⁷⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.30-32 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.120-32).

¹⁷⁹ This is an abbreviation of the title of the *Shi jing* poem “Huanghuang zhe hua” 皇皇者華 (Brilliant Are the Flowers, no. 163), which was performed to escort a king’s envoy according to the Mao commentary. For the commentary, see *Mao shi zhengyi*, 9b.8a (318-2). By calling Cao Cao “Brilliant Flowers,” Wang Can implies that Cao Cao led the army in the name of the emperor, like an envoy sent by the royal house.

¹⁸⁰ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 4a.1a (146-1).

of the extant piece,¹⁸¹ we can almost see a homeward road blurred in the burning heat and the glaring sunlight.

These are Wang Can's poems on incessant travel. By combining his personal feelings with a grand view of the landscape and the destiny of the state, he describes for his contemporaries the moments when he looked back at the collapsing capital, stood alone in the darkening foreign land, and finally trod over the old land of Zhou.

Solutions: Cao Pi, "Xing of 'Excellent!'" (I of two); Liu Zhen, "Fu on Realizing My True Aim"

Ying Yang wrote in his symposium poem that Cao Pi presented him a poem to reveal his solicitude (line 23). We do not know which poem it was, but the first of the two "Shanzai xing" 善哉行 (*Xing* of "Excellent!") ascribed to Cao Pi could be a candidate. This *yuefu* poem is divided into six sections (*jie* 解) in the "Monograph on Music" in the *Song shu* and in the *Yuefu shiji*,¹⁸² but according to its rhymes, the poem can be divided into three stanzas, each of which consists of two sections.¹⁸³

	上山採薇	I climb the mountain to pick bracken,	
	薄暮苦飢	At sunset I suffer from hunger.	
	谿谷多風	In the creek valleys is much wind,	
4	霜露沾衣	Frost and dew soak the clothes.	(一解 section 1)
	野雉羣雊	Wild pheasants cry out in their flocks,	
	猴猿相追	Gibbons follow after one another.	
	還望故鄉	I look back at my homeland—	
8	鬱何壘壘	How densely [my cares] pile one upon another!	(二解 section 2)

¹⁸¹ The poem seems incomplete because the last two lines do not read like an ending, and the rhyming word unusually stands by itself. Further, the eighteen lines we have are preserved in the *Yiwen leiju*, which rarely preserves complete texts of anything.

¹⁸² *Song shu*, 21.613-14. *Yuefu shiji*, 36.537.

¹⁸³ Lu Qinli, ed., "Wei shi," 4.390-91. The translation is based on Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 189-90.

	高山有崖	The high mountains have their cliffs,	
	林木有枝	The trees in the woods have their boughs.	
	憂來無方	Cares come from nowhere,	
12	人莫之知	No one knows it.	(三解 section 3)
	人生如寄	Life is like a temporary stay,	
	多憂何為	Why care so much?	
	今我不樂	Today I am not happy,	
16	歲月如馳	Years and months seem to gallop on.	(四解 section 4)
	湯湯川流	Vastly and rapidly the river flows,	
	中有行舟	In it there is a moving boat.	
	隨波轉薄	Along with the waves it turns and berths,	
20	有似客遊	Like the wanderings of a traveler.	(五解 section 5)
	策我良馬	I whip on my fine horse,	
	被我輕裘	Don my light fur.	
	載馳載驅	I go galloping and cantering,	
24	聊以忘憂	For the moment to forget my cares.	(六解 section 6)

If the first stanza is about weight (climbing, hunger, coldness, loneliness and dense piles [of cares]), then the third stanza is about lightness (a light fur and a gallop) that removes weight from one's mind. The second stanza is a transition. It first turns the dense piles in the first stanza into the high mountains, and then describes the galloping time that turns into the flowing river in the third stanza.

In three of its earliest extant sources—the “Monograph on Music” in the *Song shu*, the *Wen xuan*, and the *Yuefu shiji*¹⁸⁴—this *yuefu* poem is written entirely in four-syllable lines. But curiously, in his commentary to another poem in the *Wen xuan*, Li Shan cites two five-syllable lines under the same title as this poem. In the boxes are the additional syllables:¹⁸⁵

谿谷多	悲	風	In the creek valleys is much	sad	wind,
霜露霑	人	衣	Frost and dew soak	one's	clothes.

¹⁸⁴ *Song shu*, 21.613-14. *Wen xuan*, 27.1284-85. *Yuefu shiji*, 36.537.

¹⁸⁵ *Wen xuan*, 13.602 (Li Shan's commentary to the line 微霜沾人衣).

Moreover, in his commentary to still another poem, Li Shan cites a seven-syllable line—which seems to combine line 7 and line 8 of Cao Pi’s poem but omits the second character of the reduplicative word *leilei* 壘壘—under the title of “Gu yuefu shi” 古樂府詩 (Old *Yuefu* Poem):¹⁸⁶

還望故鄉鬱何壘 I look back at my homeland—how densely [my cares] pile!

I suspect the latter case has resulted from a scribal error. There could have been a marker of reduplication following the last character, but the marker could have been dropped in the process of transcription. On the other hand, the former case is typical of a *yuefu* poem, whose line length can be adapted by its performers and later literati according to their needs and tastes.

In his composition under this *yuefu* title, Cao Pi also adapted two songs and integrated them into his new poem. The first song is the “Beige xing” 悲歌行 (*Xing* of “Singing a Sad Song”) ascribed to Han times and preserved in the *Yuefu shiji*:¹⁸⁷

4	悲歌可以當泣 遠望可以當歸 思念故鄉 鬱鬱壘壘	Singing a sad song may substitute for weeping, Gazing afar may substitute for returning. I long for my homeland— Densely and heavily, [my cares] pile one upon another.
8	欲歸家無人 欲渡河無船 心思不能言 腸中車輪轉	I want to return home but no one is there, I want to cross the river but no boat is there. The thoughts in my mind cannot be spoken, In my entrails a cart wheel is rolling.

Lines 3-4 of this short song read similar to lines 7-8 of Cao Pi’s *yuefu*. Those that pile one upon another can be grave mounds (so that line 5 says there is no one at home), or hills that block the homeland (like the Jing Mountains in Wang Can’s “*Fu* on Climbing a Tower”). They can be also

¹⁸⁶ *Wen xuan*, 16.732 (Li Shan’s commentary to the line 墳壘壘而接壘).

¹⁸⁷ *Yuefu shiji*, 62.898. The translation is based on Hans H. Frankel, “*Yüeh-fü* Poetry,” in *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres*, ed. Cyril Birch, 69-107 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 79.

something abstract: the cares that weigh on the traveler's mind.

The second song is the “Yueren ge” 越人歌 (Song of a Native of Yue) preserved in the *Shuo yuan* 說苑 and the *Yuefu shiji*.¹⁸⁸ According to the *Shuo yuan*, when a handsome prince needed someone to help him cross a river, a Chu minister offered to take his hands. The prince felt offended. The minister then asked the prince whether he had heard the following song:

今夕何夕兮搴舟中流	What evening is this evening on which I steer a boat in midstream!
今日何日兮得與王子同舟	What day is today on which I am able to share a boat with the prince!
蒙羞被好兮不訾詬恥	Bashful and lovestruck I did not think of humiliation and shame.
4 心幾頑而不絕兮得知王子	My heart is almost intractable with ceaseless [cares] when I am able to know the prince.
山有木兮木有枝 心說君兮君不知	Mountains have trees and trees have boughs, My heart is attached to you sir but you sir do not know it.

The minister told the prince this song was sung by a native of Yue who rowed a boat for the Chu prince Zixi 子皙 (d. 529 B.C.). Upon hearing this Yue song (which was translated into the Chu language at Zixi's command), Zixi embraced the boatman. Why don't you, said the minister, let me take your hands?

Lines 5-6 of this love song are interesting. First, “trees” (*mu* 木) and “you sir” (*jun* 君) are repeated in the middle of the lines, making the lines sound continuous and thus correspond to the incessant love. Second, the rhyming words “boughs” (*zhi* 枝) and “to know” (*zhi* 知) form a contrast: while the trees have “boughs” (*-jig), you sir does not “know” (*-jig) my heart.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Liu Xiang 劉向, comp.; Xiang Zonglu 向宗魯, ed. and comm., *Shuo yuan jiaozheng* 說苑校證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 11.277-79. *Yuefu shiji*, 83.1169.

¹⁸⁹ Note that their initials were different from one another in Old Chinese and Middle Chinese. For a reconstruction of their initials (and finals), see Li Fang-kuei, *Shangguyin yanjiu*, 68.

The Chu interpreter translated the Yue song into a Chu song. Cao Pi further changed its last two lines into four *Shi-jing*-style lines:

	高山有崖	The high mountains have their cliffs,
	林木有枝	The trees in the woods have their boughs.
	憂來無方	Cares come from nowhere,
12	人莫之知	No one knows it.

The contrast remains in Cao Pi's poem: while the trees have "boughs" (-jiei), no one "knows" (-jiei) where my cares come from. Cao Pi further repeats "cares/to care" (*you* 憂) and "to gallop" (*chi* 馳) to signify his removal of weighty concerns: "Cares" come from nowhere, but why "care" so much? While years and months "gallop" on, I don a light fur and "go galloping" on a fine horse to forget my "cares."

While Cao Pi makes merry with a light fur and a fine horse in his *yuefu*, Liu Zhen dreams of a day when Cao Cao, whom he calls the bright lord (*minghou* 明后), defeats "the Wu tribes at the eastern corner" and "the traitorous vassals in southern Jing," which are derogatory appellations for Sun Quan and Liu Biao (or Liu Bei), in his "Sui zhi fu" 遂志賦 (*Fu* on Realizing My True Aim):¹⁹⁰

	幸遇明后	Fortunately I am favored by the bright lord,
	因志東傾	Kenning my aims he leaned eastward.
	披此豐草	He pushed aside this luxuriant grass,
4	乃命小生	Thereupon he summoned this lowly person.
	生之小矣	I am truly lowly,
	何茲云當	How do I deserve this?
	牧馬于路	I drive a horse on the road,
8	役車低昂	The service cart goes up and down.
	愴恨惻切	Sad and sorrowful, dolorous and doleful,

¹⁹⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 7.203-4.

	我獨西行	I alone go westward.
	去峻溪之鴻洞	Leaving the continuous expanse of a deep gorge,
12	觀日月於朝陽	I view the sun and the moon on the sunny hillside.
	釋叢棘之餘刺	Removing the countless spines of rank jujubes,
	踐檳林之柔芳	I tread on the delicate herbs in catalpa woods.
	皦玉粲以曜目	White jade shines and dazzles the eyes,
16	榮日華以舒光	Glows with sunray and spreads luster.
	信此山之多靈	Truly there is much that is numinous about this mountain,
	何神分之煌煌	How divine and brilliant it is!
	聊且遊觀	For the moment I wander about and look around
20	周歷高岑	All over the high hills.
	仰攀高枝	Above I grasp high branches,
	側身遺陰	Placing myself in lingering shadows.
	磷磷礚礚	Spangling and sparkling, glittering and glistening [is the mountain],
24	以廣其心	[I do so] to broaden my mind.
	伊天皇之樹葉	The Sovereign of Heaven's tree leaves
	必結根於仁方	Must take root at a place of benevolence.
	梢吳夷於東隅	We strike the Wu tribes at the eastern corner,
28	掣畔臣乎南荆	Control traitorous vassals in southern Jing.
	戢干戈於內庫	We store shields and spears in the inner armory,
	我馬繫而不行	Our horses are tied up and do not go [on expeditions].
	揚洪恩於無涯	He spreads immense grace without limit,
32	聽頌聲之洋洋	Hears sounds of praise, grand and glorious.
	四寓尊以無為	Four regions venerate him who governs by non-action,
	玄道穆以普將	The Mysterious Way is majestic and broadly disseminated.
	翼儁又於上列	Assisted by the outstanding and talented of high ranks,
36	退仄陋於下場	He relegates the unworthy to low positions.
	襲初服之蕪蕪	Donning my former attire of rank weeds,
	託蓬廬以遊翔	I lodge in a thatched hut and ramble about.
	豈放言而云爾	Do I merely issue empty words?
40	乃旦夕之可忘	How could I forget them for a moment!

As the hunting park in Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (179-117 B.C.) "*Fu* on the Imperial Park"

stands *pars pro toto* for the Han empire, the numinous mountain in Liu Zhen's *fu* (lines 11-24)

can represent the court of Cao Cao, where the traveler Liu Zhen finds wonder and comfort. There

was a deep gorge of a continuous expanse (*hongtong* 鴻洞),¹⁹¹ but leaving it he rests on the sunny hillside and views the sun and the moon. There were jujube spines catching onto his clothes, but removing them he treads on the delicate herbs in catalpa woods. In the *Mengzi* 孟子, Mencius compares petty men to gardeners who tend jujubes (*erji* 棘棘 or 棘棗) while neglecting parasol trees (*wu* 梧) and catalpa trees (*jia* 欖).¹⁹² Going from rank jujubes to catalpa woods, Liu Zhen implies that Cao Cao is a good gardener, who selects catalpa trees—as well as jade, which represents gentlemen in Chinese culture—for his court. Thus the court is “spangling and sparkling, glittering and glistening” (*linlin lanlan* 磷磷礚礚), a phrase that Sima Xiangru used to describe the imperial park of Emperor Wu.

The traveler does not stop his dreams there. He further sees a place of benevolence where the Sovereign of Heaven makes his trees take root, and the Mysterious Way is broadly disseminated. Wang Can has hoped for the same future, but he ends with fear in his “*Fu* on Climbing the Tower:”

36	惟日月之逾邁兮 俟河清其未極 冀王道之一平兮 假高衢而騁力 懼匏瓜之徒懸兮 畏井渫之莫食 [...]	Thinking how days and months pass quickly by, I wait for the River to clear, but it does not. I hope for the King’s Way at last to be smooth, And to take the high road to try my strength. I fear hanging uselessly like a gourd, Dread being a cleaned well from which no one drinks.
52	夜參半而不寐兮 悵盤桓以反側	The night reaches midpoint, yet I do not sleep; Pensively brooding, I toss and turn.

Liu Zhen, on the other hand, realizes his wish in his poem. He returns home, putting on his “former attire of rank weeds” (*chufu zhi wuhui* 初服之蕪葦) and going back to his thatched hut.

¹⁹¹ For a note on this expression, see Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 2, 12.

¹⁹² *Mengzi zhushu*, 6A/14, 11b.8a (203-2).

While Qu Yuan 屈原 strives to refresh his “former attire” (*chufu* 初服) with herbs and flowers and do battle against rank weeds (*wuhui* 蕪穢) in the “Li sao” 離騷 (Encountering Sorrow), Liu Zhen is comfortable with his “former attire of rank weeds.” Such attire no longer represents vileness, but a humble wish of a traveler—to go home.

Sympathy: Cao Zhi, “*Fu* on the Orange,” “At the Gate There Is a Myriad-*Li* Traveler,” “*Shi* on Feelings”

Plants have long played a special role in Chinese poetry. Perhaps to demonstrate their learning and creativity, Jian’an writers often borrow plant images from Qu Yuan’s poems and alter their meanings in their poetic dialogues with contemporary writers. Liu Zhen, who redefines “rank weeds” as mentioned previously, is an example. In addition, Cao Zhi writes a new account of orange, which grew luxuriantly in Qu Yuan’s “*Ju* song” 橘頌 (Ode on the Orange) but perishes in Cao Zhi’s “*Ju* fu” 橘賦 (*Fu* on the Orange).

Ju, which is translated as orange here, can refer to many varieties of citrus trees—some bear yellow, thick-peel fruits while others produce red, thin-peel ones—but all of them grow south of the Yangzi River.¹⁹³ In traditional analysis, Qu Yuan, whose home state of Chu was also south of the Yangzi River, was inspired by the steadfastness (it never moves to another land) and liveliness (it flowers and fruits in its homeland) of the orange tree. However, when it is transplanted to the Bronze Bird Park, the most celebrated park in the northern land, Cao Zhi finds it withering:¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Pan Fujun 潘富俊, *Chu ci zhiwu tujian* 楚辭植物圖鑑 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2003), 118-19.

¹⁹⁴ *Cao ji quanping*, 3.34. The variants marked here are provided in this edition.

4	有朱橘之珍樹 于鶉火之遐鄉 稟太陽之烈氣 嘉杲日之休光 體天然之素分 不遷徙於殊方	There is a precious tree of vermilion orange In the remote land of the Quail Fire. It bears the fiery air of the great <i>yang</i> force, Delights in the fair light of the bright sun. Embodying its basic nature bestowed by Heaven, It does not move or shift to an alien place.
8	播萬里而遙植 列銅爵之園庭 背(山川)[江州]之暖氣 處玄朔之肅清	Having been transmitted a myriad <i>li</i> and planted afar, It is arrayed in the courtyard of the Bronze Bird Park. Turning its back to the warm air of the Yangzi islets, It is situated in the stern coldness of the dark north.
12	邦換壤別 爰用喪生 處彼不凋 在此先零 朱實不啣	The state changes, the soil differs, And thus it loses its life. Situated there it does not fade, Planted here it prematurely withers. Vermilion fruits are not borne—
16	焉得素瑩	How can we see its pure white blossoms?
20	惜寒暑之不均 嗟華實之永乖 仰凱風以傾葉 冀炎氣之(所)[可]懷 颺鳴條以流響 希越鳥之來栖	I regret the imbalance between cold and heat, Lament its long separation from its flowers and fruit. Gazing upon the balmy wind and inclining its leaves, It hopes for the lovable fiery air. Rustling its sounding twigs, letting sounds flow forth, It yearns for the birds of Yue to come to perch.
24	夫靈德之所感 物無微而不和 神蓋幽而易激 信天道之不訛	Where the Divine Virtue is felt, All beings, no matter how small, are in peace. The spirit is hidden but easy to arouse, Indeed the Way of Heaven is unerring.
28	既萌根而弗榦 諒結葉而不華 漸玄化而弗變 非彰德于邦家	Now its roots have sprouted but its stem has not, Truly, even if it produces leaves it will not bloom. Moistened by profound influence it does not change, This is not displaying virtue in our state.
32	(附)[拊]微條以歎息 哀草木之難化	I stroke its delicate twigs and sigh, Lamenting the difficulty of influencing plants and trees.

The Quail Fire (Chunhuo 鶉火, line 2) is one of the twelve lodges of the Jupiter cycle. In the Chinese tradition, the twelve celestial zones corresponded to twelve terrestrial “apportioned champagnes” (*fenye* 分野) as Edward H. Schafer puts it, and further “represented approximately

the locations of twelve of the more prominent feudal states of the late [Zhou] period.”¹⁹⁵ Strictly speaking, it is not the Quail Fire but the Quail Tail (Chunwei 鶉尾) that represented the state of Chu. The state that the Quail Fire represented was the royal domain of the Eastern Zhou. However, the Quail Fire also stood for the southern sky (whereas the Quail Tail stood for the southeastern sky).¹⁹⁶ Cao Zhi probably uses the Quail Fire to refer to the south in general, where the orange tree enjoys heat and sunlight, bears fruit of the color of the south (*zhu* 朱 in lines 1 and 15), and embodies its basic nature bestowed by Heaven.

Transplanted to an alien state with different soil, climate, and representative color (*xuan* 玄 in line 10), the orange tree withers. Cao Zhi no longer sees its vermilion fruits and pure white blossoms. Fortunately, he can read its subtle language: When the balmy wind comes from the south, the tree greets it with a yearning gesture. When the wind passes through its twigs, it even sends forth sounds to attract birds of Yue, which is another place name that stands for the south.

The alien state, however, is none other than Wei—the state established by the Cao family—and the park is located in Ye—the capital city of Wei. Cao Zhi has believed that moistened by the profound influence (*xuanhua* 玄化) of the sage ruler, the plants in the park must be like the people of the state, finding this land a happy land, blooming and bearing children. This is the Way of Heaven (*tiandao* 天道), but sadly it contradicts the basic nature of the orange tree endowed by Heaven (*tianran zhi sufen* 天然之素分). The tree never ceases its yearning for the south and finally chooses death, like Qu Yuan, who reputedly drowned himself in exile.

The Han poets Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 B.C.) and Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.-A.D. 18)

¹⁹⁵ Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977; first Floating World edition, 2005), 75-78.

¹⁹⁶ Liu An, comp.; He Ning, ed. and comm., *Huainanzi jishi*, 2.182-83.

criticized Qu Yuan for his suicide in their *fu*.¹⁹⁷ Others believed that Qu Yuan could not leave or forget Chu because he was not only a courtier but also a family member of the collapsing house.¹⁹⁸ As a prince of Wei, Cao Zhi blames the orange tree for not displaying virtue in his state. As a sympathetic poet, however, he understands the basic nature of the orange tree. He listens to it and strokes its twigs, sighing that there are things that cannot be changed even by the profound influence of the government of his state.

Perusing collections of Jian'an poetry is like rambling in the Bronze Bird Park. We often find melancholic words of a traveler and sympathetic speeches of a young lord as if there are poetic dialogues between them. However, Jian'an poems have been read separately because they are preserved on separate pages or even in separate collections according to the titles, genres or authors. As a result, when a poet-scholar writes in the voice of a melancholic traveler, his words seem to be private expressions, expecting no response from his young lords. When a lord writes in a sympathetic voice, his words seem to be general or abstract, irrelevant to the poet-scholars around him. This is a pity if we consider the fact that the writers shared the language of poetry and exchanged poems, as the Athenians shared the language of rhetoric and exchanged their views on the nature of love in Plato's "Symposium."

By taking the cultural environment of the Jian'an period into consideration, we re-examine the following two poems of Cao Zhi: the "Men you wanli ke" 門有萬里客 (At the Gate There Is a Myriad-Li Traveler) and the "Qing shi" 情詩 (*Shi* on Feelings).

¹⁹⁷ For a study and translation of Jia Yi's "Diao Qu Yuan" 弔屈原 (Lamenting Qu Yuan) and Yang Xiong's "Fan sao" 反騷 (Refuting Sorrow), see David R. Knechtges, "Two Han Dynasty *Fu* on Ch'ü Yüan: Chia I's *Tiao Ch'ü Yüan* and Yang Hsiung's *Fan-sao*," in his *Parerga 1: Two Studies on the Han Fu*, 5-43 (Seattle: Far Eastern and Russian Institute, University of Washington, 1968).

¹⁹⁸ For debates on whether it was right for Qu Yuan to drown himself, see Zhu Xi 朱熹, ed. and comm., *Chu ci houyu* 楚辭後語, in his *Chu ci jizhu* 楚辭集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), 2.234-41.

	門有萬里客	“At the Gate There Is a Myriad- <i>Li</i> Traveler” ¹⁹⁹
	門有萬里客	At the gate there is a myriad- <i>li</i> traveler.
	問君何鄉人	I ask you sir, “Where are you from?”
	褰裳起從之	Lifting my lower garment I rise to join him,
4	果得心所親	Finally I find someone dear to my heart.
	挽衣對我泣	Pulling his clothes he faces me weeping,
	太息前自陳	Sighing heavily he advances to tell about himself:
	本是朔方士	“Originally I was a noble man of the North,
8	今為吳越民	Now I am a commoner of Wu-Yue.
	行行將復行	On and on, I will go further on,
	去去適西秦	Away and away, I am bound for western Qin.”
	情詩	“ <i>Shi</i> on Feelings” ²⁰⁰
	微陰翳陽景	Wispy clouds masked the sunlight,
	清風飄我衣	A cool breeze blew my clothes.
	游魚潛綠水	Swimming fish submerged in green waters,
4	翔鳥薄天飛	Soaring birds flew toward Heaven.
	眇眇客行士	From far, far off the man travels away from home,
	徭役不得歸	Serving afar, unable to return.
	始出嚴霜結	When he first went, severe frost formed;
8	今來白露晞	Now as he returns, white dew dries.
	遊者歎黍離	He who travels away from home sighs “The Millet Hangs;”
	處者歌式微	She who stays at home sings “How Few.”
	慷慨對嘉賓	Impassioned, I face my fine guests;
12	悽愴內傷悲	Sad and sorrowful, I grieve inside.

The “At the Gate There Is a Myriad-*Li* Traveler” is clear. Although there are changes of voice, which are typical of a *yuefu* poem, we know the host is speaking in line 2 and the traveler in lines 7-10. The “*Shi* on Feelings” is rather obscure. There are many characters: “I” in line 2, “the man traveling away from home” in line 5, “the one who travels away from home” in line 9, “the one who stays at home” in line 10, another “I” implied in line 11 and a “fine guest” (or “fine guests”)

¹⁹⁹ *Cao ji quanping*, 5.70. The translation is based on Hans H. Frankel, “Fifteen Poems by Ts’ao Chih,” 2; Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 240.

²⁰⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 4.50-51. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 241.

in the same line. We have to decide whether they are all separate individuals, or some of them are identical.

In his commentaries to Cao Zhi's poems, Huang Jie tried to relate the "Shi on Feelings" to Cao Zhi's biography, in particular the pains that he suffered when his brother Cao Pi took the throne. Huang Jie explained, the *Shi jing* poem "Shu li" 黍離 (The Millet Hangs, no. 65) cited in line 9, was used to lament the death of Cao Zhang 曹彰 (d. 223), who was close to Cao Zhi and said to have been killed by Cao Pi; and the *Shi jing* poem "Shi wei" 式微 (Reduced, no. 36) cited in line 10, was intended to show his loyalty to Cao Pi, who rejected his visit to the court.²⁰¹ As a result, both "the one who travels away from home" and "the one who stays at home" referred to Cao Zhi himself. Hans H. Frankel did not comment on this poem of Cao Zhi, but he would disagree with Huang Jie as he did in the article "Fifteen Poems by Ts'ao Chih: An Attempt at a New Approach." Hans H. Frankel avoided identifying the characters in the poems as Cao Zhi or others because "no such identification is required in the interpretation of a lyric poem."²⁰²

I disagree with both of them. According to Huang Jie, Cao Zhi wrote melancholic words simply because he was wronged and rejected. According to Hans H. Frankel, on the other hand, Cao Zhi wrote purely from his imagination. Neither of them considered that Cao Zhi may have had a poetic dialogue with his contemporaries in these two poems, portraying himself as a lord who would love to listen to and care for the travelers. Because of his solicitude for others, for example, the traveler in the "At the Gate There Is a Myriad-Li Traveler" weeps and tells about himself and his incessant travel.

In the "Shi on Feelings," the penultimate line—"Impassioned, I face my fine guests" (*kangkai dui jiabing* 慷慨對嘉賓)—gives us a clue: Cao Zhi is hosting a gathering, and very

²⁰¹ Cao Zhi; Huang Jie, comm., *Cao Zijian shi zhu*, 1.88-89.

²⁰² Hans H. Frankel, "Fifteen Poems by Ts'ao Chih," 8.

likely engaging in a dialogue with his guests. Before revealing the occasion, Cao Zhi begins with an outdoor scene:

4	微陰翳陽景 清風飄我衣 游魚潛綠水 翔鳥薄天飛	Wispy clouds masked the sunlight, A cool breeze blew my clothes. Swimming fish submerged in green waters, Soaring birds flew toward Heaven.
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This scene with clouds blocking the sun is similar to the scene described in the first two lines of the “Nineteen Old Poems,” which is a set of poems that dates back to the Eastern Han:²⁰³

12	浮雲蔽白日 遊子不顧返	Drifting clouds block the bright sun, The one who wanders does not think of return.
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In this poem of the “Nineteen Old Poems,” the blocked sun somehow reminds the speaker, presumably a deserted wife, of a person who is away from home, presumably her husband. When Cao Zhi wrote his first line “Wispy clouds masked the sunlight,” he may have thought of this old poem and introduced his yearning for a traveler with this scene. This may explain why this poem of Cao Zhi is also included—under the title of “Za shi” 雜詩 (Miscellaneous *Shi*)—in the *Yutai xinyong* among poems about love and separation. Later Cao Shu 曹摅 (d. 308) begins his “Si youren shi” 思友人詩 (*Shi* on Yearning for a Friend) with a line almost identical to Cao Zhi’s: “Dense clouds masked the sunlight” (*miyun yi yangjing* 密雲翳陽景).²⁰⁴ Since there seems to be a conventional association of yearning for a traveler with such a scene, we assume that Cao Zhi is recalling a day on which he saw off a traveler. It was cloudy and a little chilly. Fish swam deep and birds soared high. They were like the traveler, moving away from him.

Then Cao Zhi refers to frost formation and white dew drying, which are probably

²⁰³ Lu Qinli, ed., “Han shi” 漢詩, 12.329.

²⁰⁴ Lu Qinli, ed., “Jin shi” 晉詩, 8.755.

borrowed from the *Shi jing* poem “Jian jia” 蒹葭 (The Rush, no. 129). In the *Shi jing* poem, the lovely one is never reached no matter when the white dew turns into frost or has not dried; in this poem of Cao Zhi, the traveler has been unable to return home since severe frost formed until white dew dries. Cao Zhi further imagines that he who travels away from home sings the *Shi jing* poem “The Millet Hangs,” and she who stays at home sings the *Shi jing* poem “Reduced.” They sing these two *Shi jing* poems because the former sings “I drag along the road,/ As if my heart is choked,” and the latter sings “Why not return.”

When we read the last two lines of the “*Shi on Feelings*,” we suddenly realize that Cao Zhi is actually not alone but accompanied by fine guests. His recollection of seeing off a traveler, description of the incessant travel, and imagination of the traveler and his wife’s sighs are all shared with the guests in the poetic form of *shi* (whereas his “At the Gate There Is a Myriad-Li Traveler” is a *yuefu* poem). Although it is supposed to be a merry gathering with fine guests, Cao Zhi expresses sorrow and grief (*qichuang* 悽愴 and *shangbei* 傷悲)—the feelings (*qing* 情) of impassioned (*kangkai* 慷慨) spirit—in this poem. Such a melancholic moment at a gathering finds its echoes in two Jian’an letters. One was written by Cao Pi to Wu Zhi, titled “Yu Zhaoge ling Wu Zhi shu” 與朝歌令吳質書 (Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of Zhaoge) in the *Wen xuan*:²⁰⁵

When the bright sun hid away, we continued [our pleasures] under the bright moon. Riding together in the same carriage, we visited the rear park. The carriage wheels slowly moved, and the entourage did not utter a sound. A cool breeze arose in the night, and sad reed pipes softly moaned. As joy departed, sorrow arrived. Deeply grieved, we were all sad at heart. I looked back and said, “Such joy cannot long endure.” You all said I was right. Now we are really apart, each in a separate place. Yuanyu [i.e. Ruan Yu] has eternally gone, translated to something other. Every time I recall these things—but when will it be possible to speak with you?

白日既匿，繼以朗月，同乘竝載，以遊後園，輿輪徐動，參從無聲，清風夜起，悲笳微吟，樂往哀來，愴然傷懷。余顧而言，斯樂難常，足下之徒，咸以為然。今果

²⁰⁵ *Wen xuan*, 42.1895. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 4; and an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

分別，各在一方。元瑜長逝，化為異物，每一念至，何時可言？

The other was written by Po Qin to Cao Pi, titled “Yu Wei Wendi jian” 與魏文帝牋 (Memorandum to Emperor Wen of Wei) in the *Wen xuan*. A passage is cited above in the discussion of Chen Lin’s excursion poem. Po Qin further writes in the following passage:²⁰⁶

At that time, the sun was at the western corner of the sky. Cool winds brushed our lapels. With mountains behind us, a stream in front, the flowing spring ran east. We who were seated there looked upward and sighed; those who were looking on lowered their heads and listened [to the singer singing]—all of us burst into tears, sad and impassioned. 是時日在西隅，涼風拂衽，背山臨谿，流泉東逝。同坐仰歎，觀者俯聽，莫不泫泣殞涕，悲懷慷慨。

Both letters tell of a gathering. When the participants listened to the mournful music and felt the cool evening winds, they became sad and impassioned. They could have thought of their homes, the inevitability of death, and the brevity of life. In the gathering with his guests, Cao Zhi could have also listened to mournful music and thus recalled the travelers whom he had talked to and found dear to his heart. In a poetic dialogue with his contemporaries on incessant travel, Cao Zhi wrote the “At the Gate There Is a Myriad-*Li* Traveler” and the “*Shi* on Feelings” to express his sympathy for the travelers.

Many scholars have followed the convention of interpreting Chinese poems as the authors’ poetic autobiographies. I have taken a different approach and demonstrated in this chapter that Jian’an poems can be read in the context of the authors’ poetic dialogues with their contemporary writers. In particular, in the last examples we see a Jian’an moment in which the lord shared poetic language and deep passion with his contemporary writers. As Plato’s “Symposium” has become an integral part of Western literature, this Jian’an moment has also inspired later courts and poets in the history of Chinese literature.

²⁰⁶ *Wen xuan*, 40.1821-22.

超疇畝而登殖
作階庭之華暉

Having left the farmlands they are planted in exalted positions,
Becoming radiant brilliance in the courtyard by the steps.

—Wang Can, “*Fu* on the Pagoda Trees”

Chapter 3. Taking a Position at Thriving Courts

Three Stages of Development: The Cao Family’s New Courts

In the Jian’an period, Cao Cao was designated as minister of works (*sikong* 司空), concurrent governor of Jizhou (*ling* Jizhou *mu* 領冀州牧), chancellor (*chengxiang* 丞相), Duke of Wei (Wei gong 魏公) and King of Wei (Wei wang 魏王). Each official position or noble title allowed him to establish a court. Thus he established a ministerial court (*sikongfu* 司空府 or *gongfu* 公府), provincial court (*zhoufu* 州府), chancellor court (*chengxiangfu* 丞相府), and court of Wei. Moreover, he sometimes had multiple courts at the same time. For example, from Jian’an 18 to 21 (213-216) he was concurrent governor of Jizhou, chancellor of Han, and Duke of Wei. Thus he concurrently presided over three courts.

In Jian’an 16 (211), his sons—including Cao Pi and Cao Zhi—were also allowed to establish their individual courts. The establishment of their courts can be shown as follows:

Stage I. Setting up a military headquarters

Jian’an 1 (196):

court of the minister of works (Cao Cao)

Jian’an 9 (204):

court of the concurrent governor of Jizhou (Cao Cao)

Stage II. “Restoring” old systems

Jian’an 13 (208):
court of the chancellor (Cao Cao)

Stage III. Establishing extra-bureaucratic courts

Jian’an 16 (211):
court of the leader of court gentlemen (Cao Pi)
+ court of the Marquis of Pingyuan (Cao Zhi)

Jian’an 18 (213):
court of the chancellor (Cao Cao)
+ court of the Duke of Wei (Cao Cao)

Jian’an 19 (214):
court of the leader of court gentlemen (Cao Pi)
+ court of the Marquis of Linzi (Cao Zhi)

Jian’an 21 (216):
court of the chancellor (Cao Cao)
+ court of the King of Wei (Cao Cao)

Jian’an 22 (217):
court of the leader of court gentlemen (Cao Pi)
+ court of Heir Designate of Wei (Cao Pi)
+ court of the Marquis of Linzi (Cao Zhi)

Jian’an 25 (220): Cao Cao died.

The three stages of the development of their courts are divided by lines and designated by Roman numerals. When Cao Cao and his sons established their courts, a new political and cultural center was also born. As mentioned at the end of Chapter 1, Related to the imperial court yet located in a separate city, this cultural center distinguished itself from those established by an imperial house as well as those established by the other provincial powers. In this chapter I will examine the construction of their new cultural center against the background of the development of the Cao courts. I will also explore the official careers of the writers, scholars and musicians at the Cao courts.

In his study on the patronage of the secular princes in medieval Germany, Joachim

Bumke observes:²⁰⁷

What gave the literary activities of the courtly age their decisive impulses was the emergence of the secular princes as patrons and sponsors from the second half of the twelfth century on. Their new role as supporters of literature must be seen in connection with the fact that the princes were developing during this period their own style of lordship in imitation of the representational forms of the royal court.

Like the secular princes, Cao Cao also developed his own style of lordship. In the first year of Jian'an (196), he moved Emperor Xian of Han to Xu. The biography of Cao Cao in the *Sanguo zhi* writes:²⁰⁸

Since the emperor moved west [to Chang'an], the imperial court became steadily chaotic. The systems of [a state, which was represented by] the ancestral temple of the ruling house and the altar to the earth and grain spirits were reestablished only at that time. 自天子西遷，朝廷日亂，至是宗廟社稷制度始立。

In the next pages of Cao Cao's biography, the words *shi* 始 and *chu* 初, which can be rendered into "for the first time" or "only at that time," appear repeatedly. For example,²⁰⁹

In this year [i.e. Jian'an 1 (196)], he employed the proposal of Zao Zhi, Han Hao and others to set up garrison-farms for the first time. 是歲用棗祗、韓浩等議，始興屯田。

In the third year (198), spring, third month, the lord [i.e. Cao Cao] returned to the city of Xu, establishing [the positions of] aides to the army supervisor for the first time.²¹⁰ 三年春正月，公還許，初置軍師祭酒。

[In the eighteenth year (213)], autumn, the seventh month, he established for Wei the altar to the earth and grain spirits and the ancestral temple of the ruling house for the first time. 秋七月，始建魏社稷宗廟。

In the eleventh month, he established [for Wei] a secretariat, [the positions of] palace attendants and six chamberlains for the first time.

²⁰⁷ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 470-71.

²⁰⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.13 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.57).

²⁰⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.14, 15, 42, 46 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.61, 67, 170, 173, 191).

²¹⁰ For a note on how Cao Cao is addressed in the *Sanguo zhi*, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.61 note 2.

十一月，初置尚書、侍中、六卿。

In the nineteenth year (214), spring, first month, he plowed the sacred field for the first time.

十九年春正月，始耕籍田。

[In the twentieth year (215)], winter, tenth month, he established [the four ranks] from “Named Marquises” to “Five Grand Masters” for the first time.²¹¹ Together with [the two ranks of] previously-established “Numerous Marquises” and “Marquises of Guannei,” there were six ranks to reward military feats.

冬十月，始置名號侯至五大夫，與舊列侯、關內侯凡六等，以賞軍功。

We learn from these passages that during the twenty-five years of the Jian’an period, Cao Cao not only reestablished the Han court, but also established new positions and systems for his courts. The writers, scholars and musicians who joined his courts thus embarked on official careers that were different from those at previous courts. This chapter will illustrate the twists and turns of their official careers against the background of the development of the Cao courts and the construction of the new cultural center.

Setting Up a Military Headquarters: At Cao Cao’s Ministerial Court

After taking the emperor under his control in Jian’an 1 (196), Cao Cao first was appointed

²¹¹ According to Wang Chen’s 王沈 (d. 266) *Wei shu* 魏書 cited by Pei Songzhi, the four ranks that Cao Cao established are

- 1) Named Marquises (Minghao hou 名號侯),
- 2) Marquises of Guanzhong (Guanzhong hou 關中侯),
- 3) Marquises of Guan(nei)wai (Guan[nei]wai hou 關[內]外侯), and
- 4) Five Grand Masters (Wu daifu 五大夫).

For Pei Songzhi’s citation, see *Sanguo zhi*, 1.46 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.191).

Respectively they corresponded to the eighteenth, seventh, sixteenth, and fifteenth titles among the twenty titles of nobility (*jue* 爵) of Han.

Pan Mei 潘眉 (1771-1841) suspects that Guanneiwei hou should be Guanwai hou, and thus I refer to it as Guan(nei)wai hou. For Pan Mei’s comment, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.192 note 1.

As for previously-established Numerous Marquises (Liehou 列侯, which replaced Chehou 徹侯 to avoid the taboo on the personal name of the Han emperor Liu Che 劉徹) and Marquises of Guannei, they were the twentieth and nineteenth titles—the highest two titles.

For Lu Bi’s commentary to this passage, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.191-92 note 1.

general-in-chief (*da jiangjun* 大將軍), the position from which the Dou 竇, Deng 鄧, Liang 梁 and He 何 consort clans of the Eastern Han expanded their powers. Yuan Shao, who was the most powerful of the warlords, objected to this appointment. Because Cao Cao lacked the authority and power to challenge Yuan Shao at that time, Cao Cao yielded the title to Yuan Shao. Cao Cao then was appointed minister of works (*sikong* 司空).

In the capacity as minister of works, one was responsible for public works such as the construction of city walls, canals and dikes. When Cao Cao prepared for his military campaigns, he indeed launched several construction projects. In Jian'an 9 (204), he first diverted the Qi River 淇水 to make the White Canal (Bai gou 白溝) that enabled him to transport supplies of grain from the Yellow River to the Zhang River 漳水 where the city was located.²¹² Then he made mounds and tunnels to carry out attacks. Finally he dug a moat around the city and filled it overnight with the Zhang River water to cut off all of the supplies to the city. In Jian'an 11 (206), Cao Cao built two more canals, the Trench of Pacifying the Caitiffs (Pinglu qu 平虜渠) and the Quanzhou Trench (Quanzhou qu 泉州渠), to prepare for the transportation of supplies for his northeastern expedition against the Wuhuan people.²¹³ In Jian'an 13 (208), Cao Cao had the Dark Warrior Pond (Xuanwu chi 玄武池) constructed northwest of Ye to train waterborne armies for his southern expedition against Liu Biao.²¹⁴

By examining his preparations for the attacks, we know that Cao Cao combined the work of construction with his military aims and strategies. In fact, as the third passage cited above from the biography of Cao Cao shows, already in Jian'an 3 (198) Cao Cao confirmed the

²¹² For more information about the canal, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord: A Biography of Cao Cao 155-220 AD* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 214-15.

²¹³ For more information about the canals, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 231-32.

²¹⁴ For more information about the pond, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 336-37.

military role of his court: he established the positions of aides to the army supervisor under the minister of works (*sikong junshi jijiu* 司空軍師祭酒). According to Lu Bi, these position existed at the court of a general, but they did not exist at a ministerial court until Cao Cao established them at his court. This is why Chen Shou emphasizes the phrase “to establish for the first time” (*chu zhi* 初置) when he relates Cao Cao’s establishment of the positions in his *Sanguo zhi*.²¹⁵

When Ruan Yu, Liu Zhen, Lu Cui, Chen Lin and Xu Gan first joined Cao Cao’s ministerial court, they were all appointed aides to the army supervisor. The *Sanguo zhi* further notes that Ruan Yu and Chen Lin were in charge of the secretariat (*jishi* 記室), and most of the “letters and proclamations on military and state affairs” (*junguo shu xi* 軍國書檄) were composed by them.²¹⁶ According to the “Monograph on the Bureaucracy” in the *Hou Han shu*, at a ministerial court there was a foreman clerk of the secretariat (*jishi lingshi* 記室令史), who was in charge of outgoing and incoming correspondence.²¹⁷ By assuming this position at Cao Cao’s court, which was a ministerial and military court, Ruan Yu and Chen Lin of course were responsible for drafting “letters and proclamations on military and state affairs.”

At this stage, the physical construction of a political and cultural center of the Cao family at Ye was still in preparation. In Jian’an 9 (204), the same year when Cao Cao seized the city of Ye, he heard voices that could have thwarted his plans. A dissenter was Xun Yu 荀彧 (163-212), who not only served Cao Cao as his main strategist but also served at the Han imperial court as palace attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) and director of the secretariat (*shangshu ling* 尚書令). Another

²¹⁵ *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.68 note 2.

²¹⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.46 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.191).

²¹⁷ *Hou Han shu*, *zhi* 24.3559. Although this position is listed under the defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉) rather than the minister of works (which were two of the Three Excellencies), such a position must have existed at the court of the minister of works. As Hans Bielenstein argues, the defender-in-chief and the minister of works had identical staffs. The historian did not list this position under the minister of works because he listed it under the defender-in-chief and did not wish to repeat himself. For the argument, see Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, 14.

dissenter was Kong Rong, who also served at the Han imperial court as chamberlain for the palace revenues (*shaofu* 少府). Their close relationship to the emperor is reported in the *Hou Han shu*.²¹⁸

Emperor Xian was fond of scholarship. [Xun] Yue, [Xun] Yu and Kong Rong, who was chamberlain for the palace revenues, attended him and taught him in the palace, engaging in discussion with him day and night.

獻帝頗好文學，悅與彧及少府孔融侍講禁中，旦夕談論。

In Jian'an 9 (204) when he was appointed concurrent governor of Jizhou, Cao Cao planned to extend the domain of Jizhou. Xun Yu tried to dissuade him, advising him “first to pacify the area north of the Yellow River, and then restore the old capital.”²¹⁹ Kong Rong presented a petition to the emperor, suggesting that the land within one thousand *li* from the capital Xu should not be used for enfeoffment but reserved for the imperial house “in order to levy revenues for the king and exalt the imperial house.”²²⁰ In his commentary to the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, Hu Sanxing 胡三省 (1230-1302) explains how Kong Rong posed a threat to Cao Cao:²²¹

If the land within one thousand *li* [from the capital] was not used for enfeoffment, Cao Cao could not have settled at Ye. Thus Cao Cao feared him [i.e. Kong Rong].

千里寰內不以封建，則操不可以居鄴矣，故憚之。

Kong Rong was executed in Jian'an 13 (208). Xun Yu died four years later, and it is said that he was forced by Cao Cao to commit suicide. Their objections to Cao Cao's plans, which reflect the conflict between Cao Cao and the imperial court, must have been partial causes for their being put to death.

²¹⁸ *Hou Han shu*, 62.2058.

²¹⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 10.315 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 10.1022-23).

²²⁰ Yuan Hong, comp.; Zhou Tianyou, comm., *Hou Han ji jiaozhu*, 29.821-22. Also see *Hou Han shu*, 70.2272.

²²¹ Sima Guang 司馬光, comp.; Hu Sanxing 胡三省, comm., *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956), 2081.

Despite the dissenting voices, Cao Cao decided to make Ye his political and cultural center. One of his first steps was to increase its population. Li Dian 李典, one of Cao Cao's best generals, volunteered to move his families and retainers—which numbered more than twelve thousand—to Ye. He told Cao Cao:²²²

I am incapable and have accomplished few feats, yet you excessively favored me with noble titles. Indeed I should have my entire clan offer its service. In addition, the military expeditions have not come to an end. We should populate the suburbs and outer suburbs [of Ye] so that we can further control the four corners.
典駑怯功微，而爵寵過厚，誠宜舉宗陳力；加以征伐未息，宜實郊遂之內，以制四方。

In fact, as Li Dian implied, the city of Ye must have lost much of its population in the civil wars. The *Sanguo zhi* reports when Cao Cao besieged the city, “more than half of the population in the city died of starvation.”²²³ In addition to the households and troops that Cao Cao and Li Dian brought to the city, Tian Chou 田疇 (169-214), who guided Cao Cao and his troops through difficult terrain to attack the Wuhuan people,²²⁴ moved his entire clan—which numbered more than three hundred households—to Ye.²²⁵ Moreover, Liang Xi 梁習 (d. 230) sent local clan leaders and soldiers of Bingzhou, which was taken over by Cao Cao from Yuan Shao's nephew Gao Gan 高幹 (d. 206), as well as their families—which numbered ten thousand in all—to Ye.²²⁶ With immigrants coming from various places, the city regained its vigor and continued to grow into a political and cultural center.

“Restoring” Old Systems: At Cao Cao's Chancellor Court and Wei Court

²²² *Sanguo zhi*, 18.534 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 18.1496).

²²³ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.25 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.96).

²²⁴ For a map of the route, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 232.

²²⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 11.343 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 11.1089).

²²⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 15.469 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 15.1365).

After relating Cao Cao's victory over Yuan Shao, Chen Shou writes in the *Sanguo zhi*:²²⁷

Formerly, Yuan Shao and the lord [i.e. Cao Cao] rose in revolt together. Yuan Shao asked the lord: "If we don't succeed this time, in which corner can we settle ourselves?" The lord said: "What do you think?" Yuan Shao said: "I am going to settle myself [in the area with] the Yellow River in the south, use Yan and Dai [modern northwestern Hebei and northeastern Shanxi] as barriers in the north, combine the multitudes of Rong and Di, and head south to vie for all under Heaven—I shall succeed!" The lord said: "I am going to use all the talented and capable men under Heaven, and control them with proper ways—I shall not fail anywhere."

初，紹與公共起兵，紹問公曰：「若事不輯，則方面何所可據？」公曰：「足下意以為何如？」紹曰：「吾南據河，北阻燕、代，兼戎狄之眾，南向以爭天下，庶可以濟乎！」公曰：「吾任天下之智力，以道御之，無所不可。」

By placing this conversation after Cao Cao's victory over Yuan Shao, Chen Shou seems to imply only the person who used "all the talented and capable men under Heaven" could succeed. This is because by using a multiplicity of talents, one shows his tolerance, repute, and vision.

After defeating Yuan Shao and seizing the northern territory, Cao Cao had a more specific plan. He found that he did not have to confine himself to the court system of the Eastern Han, whose power was largely controlled by the eunuchs and consort clans, but could institute a "restoration" of the court system of the Western Han, whose power was shared first with vassal lords and then with a capable chancellor.

Cao Cao first restored the power of chancellor (*chengxiang* 丞相). In Jian'an 13 (208), he was appointed chancellor of Han. One of the most important powers of a chancellor was to recommend and appoint officials. In his study on the central government of the Western Han, Wang Yü-ch'üan summarizes this power as follows:²²⁸

He was entitled to recommend candidates for the most important positions in the central, as well as in the local governments. He could appoint officials from the 600-bushel rank down without consulting the Emperor.

²²⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.26 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.101).

²²⁸ Wang Yü-ch'üan, "An Outline of the Central Government of the Former Han Dynasty," 145.

According to the *Shi ji* 史記, the chancellor Tian Fen 田蚡 (d. 131) even recommended candidates for positions of 2,000-bushel rank during the first decade of Emperor Wu's reign:²²⁹

At that time, the chancellor came to make reports. He sat and spoke there while the sun was moving. Whatever he said was heeded. Recommending candidates for positions of 2,000-bushel rank, he had power greater than the emperor's. Then the emperor said, "Are you done with appointing officials? I also want to appoint officials."
當是時，丞相入奏事，坐語移日，所言皆聽。薦人或起家至二千石，權移主上。上乃曰：「君除吏已盡未？吾亦欲除吏。」

Moreover, in 117 B.C. (which is in the third decade of Emperor Wu's reign), the chancellor's staff numbered 382.²³⁰ This is about five times the size of the minister of works' staff (which numbered 72).²³¹ In the capacity as chancellor, Cao Cao could justify the expansion of his court.

At this stage, most of the writers, scholars and musicians mentioned in Chapter 1 gathered at Cao Cao's chancellor court. The aides to the army supervisor Ruan Yu, Liu Zhen, Lu Cui, Chen Lin, Xu Gan, and the aide in the east hall (*dongge jijiu* 東閣祭酒) Bing Yuan transferred from Cao Cao's ministerial court to his chancellor court. The court gentlemen Zhongchang Tong and Yang Xiu transferred from the imperial court. The former was recommended to Cao Cao by Xun Yu. The latter probably obtained his position through his family's high social status. Wang Can, Po Qin, Liu Yi and Du Kui came from Liu Biao's court. Ying Yang and Ding Yi, whose first positions are unknown, also took a position at the chancellor court. Their positions are listed below:

Positions that were already established in the Western Han on a chancellor's staff:
1. *yuan*shu 掾屬 (a combined reference to *yuan*[*shi*] 掾[史] and *shu* 屬, who were

²²⁹ Sima Qian 司馬遷, comp.; Pei Yin 裴駟, *jijie*; Sima Zhen 司馬貞, *suoyin*; Zhang Shoujie 張守節, *zhengyi*, *Shi ji* 史記 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), 107.2845.

²³⁰ Wei Hong 衛宏, comp.; Sun Xingyan 孫星衍, ed., *Han jiuyi* 漢舊儀, in *Han guan liuzhong* 漢官六種 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 1.68.

²³¹ *Hou Han shu*, *zhi* 24.3562.

“clerks,” a rank of 300 or 400 bushels, and “subsidiary clerks,” a rank of 200 bushels).²³²

Liu Zhen, Xu Gan, Ying Yang, Ding Yi, Yang Xiu, Wang Can, Liu Yi

2. *zhubu* 主簿 (recorder, of unknown rank): **Yang Xiu, Po Qin**

3. *zhengshi* 徵事 (consultant, a rank of “equivalent to” 600 bushels):²³³ **Bing Yuan**

Military positions that were established by Cao Cao on a chancellor’s staff:

4. *junshi jijiu* 軍師祭酒 (aide to the army supervisor, of rank probably higher than the ranks of *yuanshu*):²³⁴ **Wang Can, Du Kui**

5. *menxia du* 門下督 (headquarters supervisor, of unknown rank):²³⁵ **Chen Lin**

6. *can junshi* 參軍事 (literally, taking part in the military affairs; adjunct, of unknown rank): **Zhongchang Tong**

When Cao Cao’s eldest son Cao Pi was commissioned vice-chancellor and his three other sons—Cao Zhi, Cao Ju 曹據 and Cao Bao 曹豹 (i.e. Cao Lin 曹林)²³⁶—were named marquises in Jian’an 16 (211),²³⁷ Cao Pi and Cao Zhi also began to establish their own courts, which are discussed in the next section. While some writers and scholars remained at Cao Cao’s court, others joined Cao Pi’s and Cao Zhi’s courts.

In Jian’an 17 (212), Cao Cao devoted much of his time and effort to expanding his power. First, he was given the privileges of Xiao He 蕭何 (257-193 B.C.), the first chancellor of Han: When he ascended the hall, he could wear a sword and shoes (*jian lü shang dian* 劍履上殿); when he entered the court, he did not have to quicken his pace (*ru chao bu qu* 入朝不趨).²³⁸ This again confirmed his vision of “restoring” the Western Han system. Second, he extended the land

²³² Wei Hong, comp.; Sun Xingyan, ed., *Han jiuyi*, 1.68-69.

²³³ Wei Hong, comp.; Sun Xingyan, ed., *Han jiuyi*, 1.69. I follow Hans Bielenstein to translate *bi* 比 as “equivalent to.” For his translation of this term, see Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, 125.

²³⁴ Its rank probably was higher than *yuanshu* because Wang Can was first appointed *yuan*, and then he was reappointed (*qian* 遷)—very likely promoted to—*junshi jijiu*. For an account of Wang Can’s positions, *Sanguo zhi*, 21.598 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1647-48).

²³⁵ According to Hu Sanxing’s commentary to the *Zizhi tongjian* under the line about Xu Xuan 徐宣, who was another *menxia du* on Cao Cao’s staff in the Jian’an period, *menxia du* was a supervising commander who stayed at the headquarters (*dujiang zhi ju menxia zhe* 督將之居門下者). For his commentary, see *Zizhi tongjian*, 66.2106.

²³⁶ For a note on his names, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.139 note 1.

²³⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.34 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.139).

²³⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.36 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.147). There was one more privilege granted to Cao Cao: When he paid respects at court, he did not have to have his name announced (*zanbai bu ming* 贊拜不名). This privilege seems not to have been granted to Xiao He. For a note on this, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.148 note 2.

of Wei 魏 commandery—whose administrative center was Ye—by including its neighboring prefectures and marquisates.²³⁹ Third, his advisor Dong Zhao 董昭 (156-236) proposed to “restore” the five-rank (*gong-hou-bo-zi-nan* 公侯伯子男) system of the Zhou dynasty and entitle Cao Cao *gong* 公 or “duke.” He also proposed to honor Cao Cao with the “Nine Bestowals” (*jiuxi* 九錫).²⁴⁰ These were the belongings of the Son of Heaven and were reputedly bestowed on the vassal lords as the highest honor. Dong Zhao consulted Xun Yu about this proposal, but Xun Yu considered the plan improper.

Upon hearing Xun Yu’s dissent, Cao Cao was displeased. As the *Sanguo zhi* reports, Xun Yu died of “apprehension” in that year, and Cao Cao became Duke of Wei in the next year.²⁴¹ The plan of extending the domain of Jizhou, which had been shelved because of Xun Yu’s objection, was carried out. Now it consisted of thirty-two commanderies, much larger than the other provinces.²⁴² As Duke of Wei, Cao Cao was enfeoffed with ten commanderies of the extended Jizhou.

²³⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.36 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.147).

²⁴⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 10.317, 14.439-40 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 10.1028, 14.1300-1). The Nine Bestowals were the following items:

- 1) Carriages and stallions (*juma* 車馬): According to Emperor’s Xian’s edict conferring the Nine Bestowals drafted by Pan Xu 潘勗 (d. 205), they consisted of a grand carriage (*dalu* 大輅), a war carriage (*ronglu* 戎輅), and two teams of black stallions (*xuanmu* 玄牡);
- 2) Attire (*yifu* 衣服): a set of attire with a robe with embroidered dragons and a ceremonial cap (*gun mian zhi fu* 衮冕之服), and matching scarlet slippers (*chixi* 赤舄);
- 3) Suspended musical instruments (*xuanxuan zhi yue* 軒懸之樂) and six files of dancers (*liuyi zhi wu* 六佾之舞).
- 4) A vermilion door (*zhuhu* 朱戶) behind which to dwell;
- 5) An inner stairway (*nabi* 納陛) by which to ascend;
- 6) Three hundred rapid-as-tigers guardsmen (*huben* 虎賁);
- 7) A chopping knife and a battle axe (*fu yue* 鈇鉞) to administer punishment;
- 8) Bows and arrows (*gong shi* 弓矢): a red bow (*tonggong* 彤弓) with one hundred red arrows (*tongshi* 彤矢), and ten black bows (*lugong* 旅弓) with a thousand black arrows (*lushi* 旅矢) to fight against the rebels;
- 9) one goblet of millet-flavored ale (*juchang* 秬鬯) with a matching jade ladle (*guizan* 珪瓚) to make offerings.

For the edict drafted by Pan Yue, see *Sanguo zhi*, 1.37-39 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.154-65). The translation of the Nine Bestowals is based on David R. Knechtges, “Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han,” 2.

²⁴¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 10.317 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 10.1028).

²⁴² For more information about the extension and reduction of the provinces, see *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.151-52 note 4.

Although Cao Cao was entitled Duke, which was the highest rank in the five-rank system, the old Zhou system was not really restored. Many sons of Emperor Xian were entitled kings (*wang* 王), which means that the king-marquis system of Han was maintained. To define Cao Cao's status, Emperor Xian announced that the Duke of Wei was higher than all the kings on the one hand, but bestowed the perquisites of a king upon Cao Cao on the other hand.²⁴³ Finally in Jian'an 21 (216), Emperor Xian "promoted" the Duke of Wei to King of Wei. According to the imperial edict conferring the title, it was because the title of king had not been given to non-imperial-house members in the Eastern Han, and because the emperor feared that Cao Cao would refuse the title, that he did not name Cao Cao King of Wei until Cao Cao pacified the western area.²⁴⁴ This explanation is not convincing, but it reflects the fact that Cao Cao was uncertain which old system he should "restore" to legitimate his expansion of power.²⁴⁵

Cao Cao was very selective about the members of his court of Wei. While other writers and scholars remained at the chancellor court or his sons' courts, only Wang Can and Lu Cui transferred to the court of Wei. Wang Can served as palace attendant (*shizhong* 侍中),²⁴⁶ the rank of which was 2,000 bushels. Lu Cui served as director of the secretariat (*mishu ling* 秘書令, the rank of which is unknown).²⁴⁷

At this stage—from Jian'an 13 to 25 (208-220)—the development of Ye can be clearly perceived. In the latter half of the third century, the poet Zuo Si 左思 celebrated in his "Wei du fu" 魏都賦 (*Fu* on the Wei Capital) its palaces and offices, terraces and parks, streets and

²⁴³ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.43 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.176).

²⁴⁴ For the edict, see *Sanguo zhi*, 1.48 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.194-95).

²⁴⁵ For a comparison between Wang Mang 王莽 (45 B.C.-A.D. 23) and Cao Cao, who both "restored" the old systems of Zhou to expand their power, see Yu Tao 于濤, *Sanguo qianzhuan: Han mo qunxiong tianzi meng* 三國前傳：漢末群雄天子夢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 167-68.

²⁴⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.42 note 2, 21.598 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.170, 21.1648).

²⁴⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.603 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1668).

bridges, market places and residential districts, farm lands and natural resources, and most important of all, its music and rites, outstanding rulers and historical figures.²⁴⁸

The wonders of the city were not created all at once, of course, but began with Cao Cao's southern expedition against Liu Biao and Sun Quan in Jian'an 13 (208). Although Cao Cao was defeated by Sun Quan at the Red Cliff Battle, he acquired the services of Wang Can and Du Kui. Their significance to the cultural center at Ye is pointed out in the *Song shu*:²⁴⁹

At the end of Han [the realm] was in turmoil, and the musical pieces had fallen into oblivion and had become fragmental. When Emperor Wu of Wei [i.e. Cao Cao] pacified Jingzhou, he obtained Du Kui. Skilled in the eight types of musical sounds, Du Kui had once served as Han gentleman in charge of classical music. Because [Du Kui] was especially familiar with music, [Cao Cao] appointed him aide to the army supervisor and had him compose classical music and fix it in final form. At that time, there were also Deng Jing and Yin Shang, who were skilled at explaining classical music; the singing master Yin Hu, who was able to sing the songs made for ancestral temples and boundary sacrifices; the dance masters Feng Su and Fu Yang, who knew the dances of ancient times—Du Kui led them all. For ancient materials, he looked into the classics; for more recent materials, he collected old practices. It was beginning with Du Kui that Wei restored the ancient music of former times.

漢末大亂，眾樂淪缺。魏武平荊州，獲杜夔，善八音，嘗為漢雅樂郎，尤悉樂事，於是以為軍(謀)[師]祭酒，使創定雅樂。時又有鄧靜、尹商，善訓雅樂，哥師尹胡能哥宗廟郊祀之曲，舞師馮肅、服養曉知先代諸舞，夔悉總領之。遠考經籍，近采故事，魏復先代古樂，自夔始也。

Since the end of Han [the realm] became chaotic, and the old regulations were violated and lax. At the beginning of Wei, it was Wang Can and Wei Ji who took charge of fixing the ceremonial rites.

自漢末剝亂，舊章乖弛，魏初則王粲、衛覬典定眾儀。

Before Wang Can and Du Kui formally undertook the revival of ancient music and rites, the Bronze Bird Terrace (Tongque tai 銅爵臺) became a center for “modern” music and poetry. In Jian'an 15 (210) Cao Cao had the Bronze Bird Terrace constructed by the west city wall. It was

²⁴⁸ For the *fu*, see *Wen xuan*, 6.261-320. For a translation of the *fu*, see Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 2, 429-77.

²⁴⁹ *Song shu*, 19.534, 14.327.

ten *zhang* 丈 (24.2 m) tall with one hundred and one *jian* 間 (housing units).²⁵⁰ The biography of Cao Zhi in the *Sanguo zhi* writes:²⁵¹

At that time, the Bronze Bird Terrace at Ye was just constructed. Taizu [i.e. Cao Cao] took along all his sons to climb the terrace and commanded them to write *fu*. [Cao] Zhi took up a writing brush and immediately completed one. It was remarkable. Taizu was quite surprised.

時鄴銅爵臺新成，太祖悉將諸子登臺，使各為賦。植援筆立成，可觀；太祖甚異之。

In the preface to his “Deng tai fu” 登臺賦 (*Fu* on Climbing the Terrace), Cao Pi also recounts their visit to the terrace in Jian’an 17 (212):²⁵²

In Jian’an 17 (212), we visited in spring the Western Park and climbed the Bronze Bird Terrace. He [presumably Cao Cao] commanded us brothers to compose [a *fu*].

建安十七年，春遊西園，登銅雀臺，命余兄弟並作。

Cao Pi’s *fu*, together with this preface, is cited in the *Yiwen leiju*, and Cao Zhi’s *fu* is cited in Pei Songzhi’s commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*.²⁵³ In addition, Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (d. 527) cites in his *Shui jing zhu* 水經注 two lines from Cao Cao’s “*Fu* on Climbing the Terrace.”²⁵⁴ According to the extant lines of their *fu*, the Western Park (Xiyuan 西園) and the Long-lasting-brilliance Canal (Changming gou 長明溝) were constructed along with the Bronze Bird Terrace. The former was located east of the terrace, also called Beiyuan 北園 (Northern Park) and Tongque yuan 銅爵園 (Bronze Bird Park). The latter was fed by the Zhang River and flowed through the center of the

²⁵⁰ For an explanation of a “housing unit,” which probably designates “the space between two supports, hence structural units,” see Edward H. Schafer, “The Yeh Chung Chi,” *T’oung Pao*, second series 76.4-5 (1990): 176 note 160.

²⁵¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 19.557 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1547).

²⁵² For the preface and extant lines of this *fu*, see *Yiwen leiju*, 62.1120.

²⁵³ *Sanguo zhi*, 19.558 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1547).

²⁵⁴ Li Daoyuan 酈道元, comm.; Yang Shoujing 楊守敬, subcomm., *Shui jing zhu shu* 水經注疏 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989), 10.936.

city from west to east. In Jian'an 18 (213), two more terraces, the Golden Tiger Terrace (Jinhu tai 金虎臺) and the Ice Well Terrace (Bingjing tai 冰井臺), were constructed in the park.

The park became a center of cultural activities. There the Cao family held feasts, enjoyed various types of music, and composed new poetry with the writers at Ye. When the sixth century literary critic Liu Xie paid tribute to Jian'an *shi* in five-syllable lines, he wrote about their activities as cited in the introduction. The fifth century calligrapher and music expert Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 identified “the Bronze Bird”—which could refer to the terrace, the park, or the cultural center at the city of Ye—as the origin of the *qingshang* 清商 music performed at the Liu-Song court:²⁵⁵

Today's *qingshang* is truly derived from “the Bronze Bird.” The urbane manner of the Three Rulers of Wei [Cao Cao, Cao Pi and Cao Rui 曹叅 (r. 226-239)] is memorable. 今之清商，實由銅雀，魏氏三祖，風流可懷。

In Jian'an 18 (213), Cao Cao was named Duke of Wei. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it was in this year that Cao Cao had the altar to the earth and grain spirits and the ancestral temple of the ruling house constructed for Wei. It was also at this time that he established a secretariat, and the positions of palace attendants and six chamberlains at the Wei court. The palace attendant Wang Can formally took the responsibility of composing ceremonial songs, including the “Xianmiao song” 顯廟頌 (Eulogy to the Illustrious Temple),²⁵⁶ “Yu'er wu

²⁵⁵ *Song shu*, 19.553.

²⁵⁶ This set of verses is titled “Taimiao song” 太廟頌 (Eulogy to the Grand Temple) in the *Chuxue ji*. Zhang Qiao 章樵 notes in his commentary to the *Guwen yuan* 古文苑 that it was titled “Xianmiao song” 顯廟頌 (Eulogy to the Illustrious Temple) in a now lost collection of Wang Can's works. Since “the Grand Temple” refers to the imperial ancestral temple and Cao Cao was not an emperor, the title could have been changed from “Eulogy to the Illustrious Temple” to “Eulogy to the Grand Temple” after Cao Cao's death. For Wang Can's eulogy and Yu Shaochu's note on the title, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.128.

ge” 俞兒舞歌 (Yu Lads Dance Songs),²⁵⁷ and the lost “An shi shi” 安世詩 (*Shi* Pacifying the Realm).²⁵⁸ Although Du Xi’s name was not associated with these songs, he must have played an important role in composing ceremonial music.

It was also in this year that Liang Xi, who had sent ten thousand people from Bingzhou to Ye, now transported large timbers from Shangdang 上黨 commandery in modern southeastern Shanxi “to provide for Ye palaces and chambers” (*gong Ye gongshi* 供鄴宮室).²⁵⁹ In addition to the Golden Tiger Terrace and the Ice Well Terrace, we can assume that the Hall of Cultural Splendor (Wenchang dian 文昌殿), the Government Hall (Tingzheng dian 聽政殿), and rear palace complex were constructed—or at least expanded—at this time.²⁶⁰

The Hall of Cultural Splendor was used for court audiences and feasts such as the New Year’s audience (*zhenghui* 正會). The *Jin shu* writes:²⁶¹

Emperor Wu of Wei [i.e. Cao Cao] established Ye as his capital. He hosted the New Year gathering at the Hall of Cultural Splendor, where he performed Han rites and set out one hundred ornate lamps.

魏武帝都鄴，正會文昌殿，用漢儀，又設百華燈。

Wang Can, who was learned and owned Cai Yong’s collection of books, must have participated in the collation of Han rites and the preparation for the New Year’s audience. Wang Lang, who was minister of works of Wei, provided more details about the New Year’s gatherings hosted in the early Wei period:²⁶²

²⁵⁷ For the songs, see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 3.93-95.

²⁵⁸ For an account of the composition of this *shi*, see *Song shu*, 19.536-37.

²⁵⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 15.469 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 15.1365).

²⁶⁰ For a recent reconstruction of the city plan, see Xu Guangji 徐光冀, “Cao Wei Yecheng de pingmian fuyuan yanjiu” 曹魏鄴城的平面復原研究, in *Zhongguo kaogu xue luncong* 中國考古學論叢, eds. Wang Weiji 王偉濟 and Zhang Yumei 張玉梅, 422-28 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1993), 424.

²⁶¹ Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, comp., *Jin shu* 晉書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980), 21.649.

²⁶² *Song shu*, 14.342.

According to the precedent, there was a celebration on the first day of the first month. Two hundred ornate lamps were set out in front of the hall, in pairs between the two sets of stairs [presumably the host stairs on the east and the guest stairs on the west]. Courtyard torches were set out at the Main Gate. Five-*chi* [121 cm] and three-*chi* [72.6 cm] lamps were set outside the Main Gate. The moon shone and the stars were bright. Although it was at night, it seemed to be in the morning.

故事，正月朔，賀。殿下設兩百華鐙，對於二階之間。端門設庭燎火炬，端門外設五尺、三尺鐙。月照星明，雖夜猶晝矣。

Brilliantly lit up with lamps and torches, the city demonstrated its supreme position in the realm. It was the political and cultural center where courtiers and visitors had an audience with Cao Cao on the first day of the first month and were impressed by the splendor of the palace complex.

In Jian'an 20 (215), Cao Cao defeated Zhang Lu 張魯 (d. 216), who controlled Hanzhong 漢中 commandery in modern southwestern Shaanxi. This victory enabled Cao Cao to make his political and cultural center even more wealthy, populous and powerful. In addition to the treasures that Zhang Lu collected,²⁶³ Cao Cao acquired more than eighty thousand people, who moved from Hanzhong commandery to the cities of Luoyang and Ye under Du Xi's guidance.²⁶⁴

Named King of Wei in Jian'an 21 (216), Cao Cao had two bells cast. Two years previously, he had been given permission to set up in his palace bell stands (*zhongju* 鐘虞), which corresponded to the "suspended musical instruments" (*xuanxuan zhi yue* 軒懸之樂) among the Nine Bestowals. Now the bells were cast, set up in front of the Hall of Cultural Splendor, and sounded for foreign visitors. The bells were cast respectively in the *ruibin* 蕤賓 pitch and the *wuyi* 無射 pitch. Wang Can and Du Kui again took part in the project. According to the *Sanguo zhi*, Du Kui "prepared musical instruments" (*beizuo yueqi* 備作樂器) and even

²⁶³ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.45, 8.265 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.183, 8.887).

²⁶⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 23.666 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 23.1823).

argued with the bell-caster for better quality:²⁶⁵

The Han bell-caster Chai Yu was ingenious. Among the various forms of instruments, he made many of them. He was also recognized by contemporary noblemen. Du Kui ordered Chai Yu to cast bronze bells, but because most of them did not conform to the standards in terms of their “pure” and “turbid” sounds, the bells were destroyed and re-cast many times. Fed up with this, Chai Yu believed that Du Kui identified “pure” and “turbid” sounds as he pleased. He became rather disobedient to Du Kui. Du Kui and Chai Yu in turn spoke to Taizu [i.e. Cao Cao]. Taizu took the bells they cast and tried them alternately. Then he knew Du Kui was accurate and Chai Yu was wrong. Thus he punished Chai Yu and his sons, having them serve as horse-raisers.

漢鑄鐘工柴玉巧有意思，形器之中，多所造作，亦為時貴人見知。夔令玉鑄銅鐘，其聲均清濁多不如法，數毀改作。玉甚厭之，謂夔清濁任意，頗拒捍夔。夔、玉更相白於太祖，太祖取所鑄鐘，雜錯更試，然[後]知夔為精而玉之妄也，於是罪玉及諸子，皆為養馬士。

Wang Can’s task was to compose inscriptions for each bell.²⁶⁶ The prefaces tell us that they were made on the seventeenth day of the ninth month, respectively weighing 2,800 *jun* 鈞 plus 12 *jin* 斤 (18.48264 metric tons) and 3,050 *jun* plus 8 *jin* (20.13176 metric tons). The third century writer Zhang Zai 張載 provided two different dates in his commentary to Zuo Si’s “*Fu* on the Wei Capital.” He first cited the inscription on the bell stand, which read that the two bells were made on the *bingyin* 丙寅 day of the fifth month. Then he wrote that the bell stand was set up in front of the Hall of Cultural Splendor in the seventh month in order to “grant audiences to guests from the four corners” (*chaohui sifang* 朝會四方).²⁶⁷ In the fifth and seventh months, Wuhuan and Xiongnu leaders in turn paid homage to Cao Cao.²⁶⁸ Probably to receive and impress the foreign visitors, Cao Cao had these two huge bells cast in the fifth month, but they were not ready until the seventh month, and even re-cast in the ninth month. In “*Fu* on the Wei Capital,” Zuo Si describes a reception for foreign leaders in the Hall of Cultural Splendor. His description

²⁶⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 29.806 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 29.2134).

²⁶⁶ For the inscriptions, see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 3.139-40.

²⁶⁷ *Wen xuan*, 6.270.

²⁶⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.47 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.196).

could show how Cao Cao hosted an audience in the hall.²⁶⁹

492	鬃首之豪 鑿耳之傑 服其荒服 斂衽魏闕 置酒文昌	Foreign chiefs, topknots on their heads, Tribal leaders, metal rings in their ears, Dressed in their outlander's garb, Straightening their sleeves, paid homage at court. They were feasted in the Hall of Cultural Splendor,
496	高張宿設 其夜未遽 庭燎晰晰 有客祁祁	Where hanging high were instruments placed well in advance. The night was not yet over, And the courtyard torches brightly blazed. There were guests in droves and crowds,
500	載華載裔 岌岌冠緋 纍纍辮髮	Both Chinese and non-Chinese. Tall, tall were their caps and turbans, Piled and heaped was their plaited hair.
504	清醕如濟 濁醪如河 凍醴流漸 溫酎躍波 豐肴衍衍	There were limpid spirits as clear as the Ji River, Cloudy liquors as turbid as the Yellow River. Chilled wines flowed like melting ice, Warm wines frothed like leaping swells. Rich meats were in plentiful supply,
508	行庖皤皤 愔愔醞讌 酣滑無譁	Running the kitchen were great numbers of chefs. Relaxed and harmonious was their feasting, Though drunk and merry, they were never boisterous.
512	延廣樂 奏九成 冠韶夏 冒(六)[英]莖 僮響起	They performed the "Grand Music," Presented the "Nine Movements." The music led off with the "Shao" and "Xia," Included the "Blossoms" and "Stalks." The rising of their clamorous sounds
516	疑震霆 天宇駭 地廬驚	Was taken for the noise of thunderclaps. The vault of Heaven was shaken, The hermitage of Earth was startled.
520	億若大帝之所興作 二嬴之所曾聆	Oh, it was just like the music of the Lord of Heaven himself, Those songs once heard by the two Yings!

Zuo Si also describes how officials held office in the inner court area, the center of which was the Government Hall, and how prominent personages and auspicious objects were painted on the

²⁶⁹ *Wen xuan*, 6.283-84. The variant marked here is based on Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 458 note on line 514. The translation is taken (with minor alterations) from pages 457 and 459.

walls of the Warm Chamber, which was located between the eastern and western quarters of the rear palace complex. In the collection of Cao Zhi's works, there is a set of encomia on the personages and objects portrayed in the paintings.²⁷⁰ This is another example of a writer's contribution to the establishment of a political, cultural center at Ye.

In Jian'an 22 (217), Cao Cao had the Hall with Semi-Circular Moat (Pangong 泮宮) constructed south of Ye.²⁷¹ The commentary sponsored by Li Xian 李賢 (654-684) to the *Hou Han shu* gives an explanation of this type of building:²⁷²

The Son of Heaven had a Biyong. The vassal lords had a Pangong. The Biyong was encircled by water, and was round like a *bi* or “a jade disk.” Pan means *ban* or “half”—the vassal lords had half of the hall of the Son of Heaven. These were both used to establish schools and pass on teaching.

天子辟雍，諸侯頰宮。璧雍者，環之以水，圓而如璧也。頰，半也。諸侯半天子之宮。皆所以立學垂教也。

There is no account of how Cao Cao used his Pangong to “establish schools and pass on teaching,” but he was recognized in the Eastern Jin for his dedication to cultural activities, including poetry, scholarship and classical education. For example, when the Eastern Jin general Yu Liang 庾亮 (289-340) established an academy in Wuchang 武昌 commandery in modern Hubei, he praised Cao Cao as follows:²⁷³

Now the area beyond [i.e. south of] the Yangzi River is peaceful, and the kingly way is magnificent. If we cannot promote rites and music, or attach great importance to academies, what shall we use to teach the proper order of human relationships and attract people far away? Emperor Wu of Wei [i.e. Cao Cao] made his home on horseback when he was galloping [through the realm]. At the end of the Jian'an period, the wind-blown dust [i.e. the warfare] had not come to an end. However, he still thought of observing antiquity, developing education and fostering scholarship. As [Confucius] said, although in difficulty and hardship, [a gentleman] invariably abides with [benevolence]. He was

²⁷⁰ For the preface to the encomia, see *Cao ji quanping*, 8.143-44. For the encomia, see *Cao ji quanping*, 6.90-97.

²⁷¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.49 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.201).

²⁷² *Hou Han shu*, 52.1709 note 7.

²⁷³ *Song shu*, 14.363-64.

indeed a man of comprehensive talent.

今江表晏然，王道隆盛，而不能弘敷禮樂，敦明庠序，其何以訓彝倫而來遠人乎？魏武帝於馳騫之時，以馬上為家，逮于建安之末，風塵未弭，然猶留心遠覽，大學興業，所謂顛沛必於是，真通才也。

Although Wang Can did not serve in a policy-making capacity at this thriving Wei court as his grandfather Wang Chang and great grandfather Wang Gong did at the Han imperial court, he contributed much to the rites and ceremonies. Wang Can and Lu Cui were also known for the petitions they drafted. As their contemporary Wei Dan 韋誕 (*zi* Zhongjiang 仲將) explained to Yu Huan 魚豢, the writers could be compared to red lacquer (*zhuqi* 朱漆). They were not the wall posts of the royal house, but they added splendor to the court.²⁷⁴

Zhongxuan [i.e. Wang Can] was diminished by his corpulence and rashness. Xiubo [i.e. Po Qin] lacked discretion. Yuanyu's [i.e. Ruan Yu] drawback was his weak physique. Kongzhang [i.e. Chen Lin] was in fact coarse and careless. Wenwei [i.e. Lu Cui] was rather fierce and ferocious. Being like this, they not only [hurt themselves as if] burning themselves with candles. This also explained why they were not placed in high positions. However, a gentleman does not ask for perfection in one person. They could be compared to red lacquer. Although it does not have [the qualities of] a wall post, given its luster it is also splendid.

仲宣傷於肥臆，休伯都無格檢，元瑜病於體弱，孔璋實自麤疏，文尉性頗忿鷙，如是彼為，非徒以脂燭自煎糜也，其不高蹈，蓋有由矣。然君子不責備于一人，譬之朱漆，雖無楨幹，其為光澤亦壯觀也。

Establishing Extra-Bureaucratic Courts: At Cao Pi's and Cao Zhi's Courts

Like many emperors and powerful leaders, Cao Cao hesitated in the selection of his successor. His top candidates were Cao Pi and Cao Zhi, each of whom had his supporters. Based on their political and personal conflicts, scholars have often assumed two scenarios: (1) Cao Pi's court members would support Cao Pi, and Cao Zhi's court members would support Cao Zhi, and (2)

²⁷⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.604 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1668-69).

although they knew their brother was an excellent writer, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi would exclude each other from their lists of Jian'an writers because of the enmity between them.

I find both assumptions wrong. First of all, it was Cao Cao who appointed their core court members. The positions that writers and scholars took at their courts are listed below:

At the court of the leader of court gentlemen (Cao Pi) established in Jian'an 16 (211):

1. *zhangshi* 長史 (chief clerk): **Liang Mao 涼茂, Bing Yuan**
2. *wenxue* 文學 (scholar):²⁷⁵ **Xu Gan, Ying Yang, Liu Zhen, Liu Yi**

At the court of the Marquis of Pingyuan (Cao Zhi) established in Jian'an 16 (211):

1. *jiacheng* 家丞 (household aide): **Xing Yong 邢顥**
2. *shuzi* 庶子 (cadet):²⁷⁶
Ying Yang (later transferred to Cao Pi's court),
Liu Zhen (transferred from Cao Pi's court),²⁷⁷
Xu Gan (see footnote)²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Hans Bielenstein translates the position title *wenxue* 文學 as “literary scholar.” As Hans Bielenstein notes, the literary scholars (*wenxue* 文學) and authorities on ancient matters (*zhanggu* 掌故) were “the 40 best students passing [the annual civil-service examinations on] the lowest level” and “absorbed into the bureaucracy.” For his translation of the term and note on it, see Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, 140.

Hans Bielenstein's note explains why they were called *wenxue* and *zhanggu*: they were accomplished students. However, his translation “literary scholar” could be misleading. During the Han period, *wenxue* was a general term for scholarship rather a specific term for literature. Thus I translate *wenxue* as “scholar” here.

Charles O. Hucker observes that *wenxue* referred to two kinds of positions in Han times, and he translates them as “instructor” and “clerk” respectively. For his translations, see Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (1985; rpt. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2008), 567 entry 7704.

At Cao Pi's and Cao Zhi's courts, *wenxue* seemed to be clerks, not instructors. To convey the literal meaning of the position title, I translate it as “scholar” instead of “clerk.”

²⁷⁶ In the *Zhou li* 周禮, *shuzi* 諸子 was in charge of supervision and instruction of *guozi* 國子. In his commentary to the *Zhou li*, Zheng Xuan cites Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (d. 83), who said that *guozi* were the sons of Zhou aristocrats. Based on this, the Tang scholar Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 notes that because there were many sons, their supervisor-instructor was called *shuzi* 諸子 or *shuzi* 庶子 (both *zhu* and *shu* have the connotation of “many”). For the passage and the commentaries, see Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, comm.; Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, subcomm., *Zhou li zhushu* 周禮注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 31.7a (473-1).

In Han times, the duties of *shuzi* changed. According to Liu Zhao's commentary to the “Monograph on the Bureaucracy” in the *Hou Han shu*, *shuzi* attended the marquises and took care of their households together with the household aides (*jiacheng* 家丞). Thus I translate *shuzi* as “cadet” here. For Liu Zhao's commentary, see *Hou Han shu*, *zhi* 28.3631.

²⁷⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.383 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1182).

²⁷⁸ The *Jin shu* writes that Xu Gan was appointed *wenxue* at the court of the Marquis of Linzi (Cao Zhi). For the passage, see *Jin shu*, 44.1249.

Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng doubt this. They argue that Xu Gan retired no later than Jian'an 18 (213), but Cao Zhi was named Marquis of Linzi in Jian'an 19 (214). If Xu Gan ever served at Cao Zhi's court, the court was that of the Marquis of Pingyuan, which was established in Jian'an 16 (211). For their note, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 46-47.

We are not sure whether Xu Gan first served at Cao Pi's court and then transferred to Cao Zhi's, or the other way

At the court of the Marquis of Linzi (Cao Zhi) established in Jian'an 19 (214):

1. *wenxue* 文學 (scholar): **Handan Chun**²⁷⁹

At the court of the Heir Designate (Cao Pi) established in Jian'an 22 (217):

1. *taifu* 太傅 (grand mentor): **Liang Mao, Xing Yong**

2. *shaofu* 少傅 (junior mentor): **Xing Yong**

As Hans Bielenstein explains (see the footnote above), the “scholars” (*wenxue* 文學) were among the forty best students who passed the annual civil-service examination on the lowest level and were absorbed into the bureaucracy. The annual civil-service examination must have been cancelled in wartime, but the positions remained available. How then were “scholars” appointed? A passage from the Wei scholar Yu Huan's *Wei lue* 魏略 cited by Pei Songzhi in his commentary to the *Sanguo zhi* gives us a clue:²⁸⁰

At that time, the leader [of court gentlemen] for miscellaneous uses [i.e. Cao Pi] widely invited distinguished scholars. He had also heard about [Handan] Chun for a long time. Therefore he presented a note saying that he would like to have Chun as a member of his staff of “scholars.” The Marquis of Linzi [Cao] Zhi happened to ask for Chun too. Taizu [i.e. Cao Cao] sent Chun to Zhi.

時五官將博延英儒，亦宿聞淳名，因啓「淳欲使在文學官屬中」。會臨菑侯植亦求淳，太祖遣淳詣植。

Instead of giving examinations, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi sought out their own candidates. When they found one, they had to ask permission from their father to appoint him as one of their “scholars.”

As for the appointment of the highest positions at their courts—chief clerk (*zhangshi* 長史), household aide (*jiacheng* 家丞), and grand mentor (*taifu* 太傅)—Cao Cao made decisions for his sons. For example, he selected Bing Yuan as chief clerk for Cao Pi and Xing Yong as

around.

²⁷⁹ Li Fang 李昉 et al. comps., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 209.1598. Also see Handan Chun's “Zeng Wu Chuxuan shi” 贈吳處玄詩 (*Shi* Presented to Wu Chuxuan) in Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 5.409; Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 19-20.

²⁸⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.603 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1667).

household aide to Cao Zhi. Neither of them was close to Cao Pi or Cao Zhi. Bing Yuan had no interest in Cao Pi's social gatherings. Xing Yong did not get along with Cao Zhi.²⁸¹ On the other hand, the ardent supporters of Cao Zhi such as Yang Xiu and the Ding brothers did not seem to take a position at Cao Zhi's court but at Cao Cao's court.

Second, it is true that Cao Pi and Cao Zhi did not mention each other in their lists of Jian'an writers, but it was probably not because of the enmity between them. Cao Pi singled out seven "literary men today" (*jin zhi wenren* 今之文人) in his "*Dian lun lun wen*" 典論論文 (On Literature, from *Normative Discourses*):²⁸²

The literary men today: Kong Rong, *zi* Wenju, of Lu State; Chen Lin, *zi* Kongzhang, of Guangling; Wang Can, *zi* Zhongxuan, of Shanyang; Xu Gan, *zi* Weichang, of Beihai; Ruan Yu, *zi* Yuanyu, of Chenliu; Ying Yang, *zi* Delian, of Runan; Liu Zhen, *zi* Gonggan, of Dongping.

今之文人，魯國孔融文舉，廣陵陳琳孔璋，山陽王粲仲宣，北海徐幹偉長，陳留阮瑀元瑜，汝南應瑒德璉，東平劉楨公幹。

These seven literary men are the so-called "Seven Masters of Jian'an." Yu Shaochu's *Jian'an qizi ji* is a collection of their works.²⁸³ This term is also mentioned in most of the scholarly works on Jian'an literature.

Cao Pi's list of Jian'an writers is often compared with his brother Cao Zhi's list. In a letter to his close friend Yang Xiu, Cao Zhi listed six "contemporary writers" (*jinshi zuozhe* 今世作者). The list includes Yang Xiu as expected, but excludes Kong Rong and Ruan Yu.²⁸⁴

Thereupon I can roughly talk about contemporary writers. Some time ago, Zhongxuan

²⁸¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.353-54, 383 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1108, 1182).

²⁸² *Wen xuan* 52.2270.

²⁸³ An earlier collection compiled in the Ming is Yang Dezhou 楊德周, ed., *Jian'an qizi ji* 建安七子集 (1638; rev. Chen Chaofu 陳朝輔, 1758; rpt. Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1971). However, it includes Cao Zhi's works and excludes Kong Rong's.

²⁸⁴ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.145. Also see *Wen xuan*, 42.1901. The translation is based on Donald Holzman, "Literary Criticism in China in the Early Third Century A.D.," *Asiatische Studien* 28.2 (1974): 116-17.

[i.e. Wang Can] had no rival south of the Han River; Kongzhang [i.e. Chen Lin] soared like an eagle north of the Yellow River; Weichang [i.e. Xu Gan] enjoyed the highest repute in the Qing land; Gonggan [i.e. Liu Zhen] displayed his verbal virtuosity in the coastal area; Delian [i.e. Ying Yang] became prominent in the great Wei; you [i.e. Yang Xiu] looked down upon others at the Supreme Capital [i.e. Xu].

然今世作者可略而言也。昔仲宣獨步於漢南，孔璋鷹揚於河朔，偉長擅名於青土，公幹振藻於海隅，德璉發迹於大魏，足下高視於上京。

Scholars have noted that Cao Pi and Cao Zhi gave different lists of Jian'an writers. Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) provided several possible explanations. First of all, some writers such as Yang Xiu, Handan Chun and his brother Cao Zhi were not close to Cao Pi, and thus Cao Pi excluded them. Wu Zhi was close to Cao Pi, but probably because he was not as talented as others, Cao Pi also excluded him. Ruan Yu probably was not as talented, and thus Cao Zhi excluded him. Lu Cui slandered Kong Rong, and thus he was not worth mentioning.

Nevertheless, Hu Yinglin found it difficult to explain why Po Qin, who was skilled in both *shi* and *fu* writing, was replaced by Ying Yang; and why Kong Rong, who was much older than others, was included by Cao Pi. Moreover, Hu Yinglin pointed out a problem: few writings of Yang Xiu survived, which means it is difficult for us to judge whether he is worth mentioning. Hu Yinglin decided to follow Cao Zhi to include Yang Xiu and exclude Ruan Yu. Adding the Cao brothers, he created another list of the “Seven Masters.”²⁸⁵

In contrast with Hu Yinglin, Xu Xueyi 許學夷 (1563-1633) seemed to suggest since Cao Pi was leader of court gentlemen for miscellaneous uses, he was the lord and thus should not be juxtaposed with other writers. Xu Xueyi proposed that the “Seven Masters” should be Cao Zhi (in place of Kong Rong), Wang Can, Xu Gan, Chen Lin, Ruan Yu, Ying Yang, and Liu Zhen. To support this argument, he pointed out that the following texts mention Cao Zhi but not Kong Rong: the biography of Wang Can in the *Sanguo zhi*, Xie Lingyun's “*Shi* on the Gathering at Ye

²⁸⁵ Hu Yinglin 胡應麟, *Shi sou* 詩藪 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), *waibian* 1.139-40.

[Hosted by] the Heir Designate of Wei: An Impersonation,” and Li Panlong’s 李攀龍 (1514-1570) “Dai Jian’an cong jun gongyan shi” 代建安從軍公讌詩 (Jian’an *Shi* on Accompanying the Army and Lord’s Feast: An Impersonation). It was because of the enmity between the Cao brothers that Cao Pi replaced Cao Zhi with Kong Rong in his essay “On Literature.”²⁸⁶

However, we have to note that there is a fundamental difference between the context of Li Panlong and Xie Lingyun’s literary impersonations and the context of the *Sanguo zhi*. The literary impersonations are about the writers’ gatherings at Ye and their accompanying the army on expeditions. Since Kong Rong did not participate in those occasions whereas Cao Zhi did, we understand why the literary impersonations include Cao Zhi instead of Kong Rong. On the other hand, the biography of Wang Can in the *Sanguo zhi* is about which men were received in a friendly manner by the Cao brothers:²⁸⁷

At that time, both Emperor Wen [i.e. Cao Pi], who was leader [of court gentlemen] for miscellaneous uses, and [Cao] Zhi, who was the Marquis of Pingyuan, loved literature. [Wang] Can and Xu Gan, *zi* Weichang, of Beihai; Chen Lin, *zi* Kongzhang, of Guangling; Ruan Yu, *zi* Yuanyu, of Chenliu; Ying Yang, *zi* Delian, of Runan; Liu Zhen, *zi* Gonggan, of Dongping were all received in a friendly manner. 始，文帝為五官將，及平原侯植，皆好文學。粲與北海徐幹字偉長、廣陵陳琳字孔璋、陳留阮瑀字元瑜、汝南應瑒字德璉、東平劉楨字公幹，並見友善。

In this context, the Cao brothers and the six writers are mentioned separately. It would be awkward to include Cao Pi or Cao Zhi among those who “were all received in a friendly manner” by the Cao brothers.

We can also re-examine the contexts in which Cao Pi and Cao Zhi gave their lists of Jian’an writers. Cao Zhi gave his list in a letter to Yang Xiu. He wrote that he had been devoted

²⁸⁶ Xu Xueyi 許學夷, *Shiyuan bian ti* 詩源辨體 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1987), 4.76 entry 16.

²⁸⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.599 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1654).

to writing for twenty-five years—“Thereupon I can roughly talk about contemporary writers.”²⁸⁸ Although Cao Zhi did not directly say that he was twenty-five years old, the number of years must refer to his age and he must have written the letter in Jian’an 21 (216).²⁸⁹ At that time, Kong Rong had already been executed and Ruan Yu had already passed away. In this context, it would be improper to include the deceased among the living. In addition, Cao Zhi wrote that the writers were captured by his father’s “heavenly net” (*tianwang* 天網) and gathered at the court of Wei. It would be also improper to include his brother Cao Pi in this context.

On the other hand, Cao Pi discussed the deceased writers in his essay. Toward the end of his essay, he sighed that they all passed away—only Xu Gan wrote the *Zhong lun* and established a tradition of his own:²⁹⁰

[Kong] Rong and others passed away. Only Xu Gan wrote the treatise [*Zhong lun*] and established a tradition of his own.
融等已逝，惟幹著論，成一家言。

Here Cao Pi wrote about the literary achievements of the deceased. Although Kong Rong did not serve at Cao Cao’s court, he fits in this context. The biography of Kong Rong in the *Hou Han shu* writes:²⁹¹

Emperor Wen of Wei [i.e. Cao Pi] deeply admired [Kong] Rong’s writings. He often sighed, “[Kong Rong] is a match for Yang [Xiong] and Ban [Gu].” He recruited those

²⁸⁸ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.145. Also see *Wen xuan*, 42.1901; *Sanguo zhi*, 19.558 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1548).

²⁸⁹ In this letter Cao Zhi writes that Wang Can, Chen Lin, Liu Zhen, etc. “all gather in this state [of Wei] now” (*jin xi ji ziguoyi* 今悉集茲國矣). Thus he must have written this letter when these writers were alive. These writers passed away in Jian’an 22 (217). Cao Zhi was twenty-six years old then. Thus Cao Zhi must have written this letter when he was twenty-six in Jian’an 22 (217), or more likely, twenty-five years old in Jian’an 21 (216).

²⁹⁰ *Wen xuan*, 52.2272.

Yu Shaochu reads these lines as “[Kong] Rong and others passed away; only Xu Gan [survived and] wrote the treatise [*Zhong lun*] and established a tradition of his own.” Since Xu Gan passed away in Jian’an 23 (218) according to the preface to the *Zhong lun*, Yu Shaochu argues that Cao Pi’s essay “On Literature” was written in Jian’an 22 (217). For his argument, see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 458.

In my reading, Xu Gan was among “[Kong] Rong and others” who passed away. Accordingly, Cao Pi’s essay “On Literature” was written in or after Jian’an 23 (218).

²⁹¹ *Hou Han shu*, 70.2279

who presented Rong's writings, and often rewarded them with gold and silk.
魏文帝深好融文辭，每歎曰：「楊、班儔也。」募天下有上融文章者，輒賞以金帛。

In other words, it was not because of the the enmity between the Cao brothers that Cao Pi replaced Cao Zhi with Kong Rong. It was rather because of the context that Cao Pi did not mention Cao Zhi.

We see how the competition between the Cao brothers could be oversimplified and overemphasized as in these two dubious assumptions. The two brothers indeed competed with each other, but their competition was not the only thing that defined their relationship.

In the next chapter, I will examine Jian'an writers' poetic dialogues on official careers. Joachim Bumke points out that the secular princes in medieval Germany “displayed a much greater degree of personal involvement” in literary patronage.²⁹² Cao Cao, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi also personally participated in the poetic dialogues. I shall explore how the lords and their retainers interacted with one another in their poetic dialogues on official careers.

²⁹² Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 471.

Chapter 4. Poetic Dialogues on Official Careers

Individual Aspirations: Cao Zhi, Wang Can, Penultimate Enticements

In Mei Sheng's 枚乘 (d. 141 B.C.) "Qi fa" 七發 (Seven Stimuli), a musical performance and a lavish banquet, a chariot race and an excursion, a grand hunt and a view of the tidal bore, and a presentation of "essential words and marvelous doctrines" (*yaoyan miaodao* 要言妙道) were the seven enticements presented by a traveling scholar from Wu to an ill Chu prince to arouse him from his sickbed. The prince was too sick to enjoy the first four, but when he heard the fifth—a view of the tidal bore—"the *yang* spirit appeared between his forehead and eyebrows, gradually rose, and almost filled his entire face."²⁹³ Moreover, when the last enticement was presented, he "began to perspire profusely, and suddenly his sickness was cured."²⁹⁴ This echoes what the traveling scholar declared in his diagnosis at the beginning: the only hope for the prince's recovery was to listen to the "essential words and marvelous doctrines" of a diverse group of thinkers and teachers from the past.

This poetic form with seven enticements structured within a dialogue—which is called Qi 七 or "Sevens" in Chinese literary tradition—finds its correspondence in dialogues between Diotima and Socrates on the nature of love in Plato's "Symposium." Just as the traveling scholar first gave his diagnosis of the prince's illness, Diotima first gave her definition of love.²⁹⁵

For wisdom is one of the most beautiful things, and Eros is love in regard to the beautiful; and so Eros is—necessarily—a philosopher; and as a philosopher he is between being wise and being without understanding.

²⁹³ David R. Knechtges and Jerry Swanson, "Seven Stimuli for the Prince: The *Ch'i-fa* of Mei Ch'eng," *Monumenta Serica* 29 (1970-71): 112.

²⁹⁴ David R. Knechtges and Jerry Swanson, "The *Ch'i-fa* of Mei Ch'eng," 116.

²⁹⁵ *Plato's "Symposium,"* 34 (204B).

The traveling scholar's diagnosis was followed by seven enticements that formed a course of treatment.²⁹⁶ Similarly, Diotima's definition of love was followed by "six stimuli" that formed a ladder to a philosophical life, the most erotic life. Her "six stimuli" were a beautiful body, all beautiful bodies, the beauty in souls, the beauty in pursuits and laws, the beauty of sciences, and finally the beautiful itself. Diotima explained to Socrates:²⁹⁷

This is what it is to proceed correctly, or to be led by another, to erotics—beginning from these beautiful things here, always to proceed on up for the sake of that beauty, using these beautiful things here as steps: from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; and from beautiful bodies to beautiful pursuits; and from pursuits to beautiful lessons; and from lessons to end at that lesson, which is the lesson of nothing else than the beautiful itself; and at last to know what is beauty itself.

Her explanation confirms the value of the beginning enticements. They can inspire a student step by step, from the concrete to the abstract, from the trivial to the profound. As we all know, to open students' eyes, a teacher cannot simply give a definition but must give good examples. To treat a disease, a doctor cannot simply give a diagnosis but must give good prescriptions. Good examples and prescriptions are their enticements or "stimuli." With this in mind, an ideal reader of "Sevens" would find this multifold form poetically profuse and complete, affording intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction.

The Eastern Han writers Fu Yi 傅毅 (d. A.D. 92), Cui Yin 崔駰 (d. 92), Zhang Heng 張衡 (78-139), Cao Zhi and Wang Can breathed new life into this poetic form. First, they replaced the prince with a recluse. Second, instead of trying to arouse a prince from his sickbed, the enticements were presented to the recluse to induce him to return to the court. Third, the last

²⁹⁶ Professor Cheng Yu-yu explains how the verbal presentation of those enticements could have curative powers. For her explanation, see Cheng Yu-yu 鄭毓瑜, "Lianlei, fengsong yu shiyu tiyan de chuanyi—cong 'Qi fa' de liaoji xiaoneng tanqi" 連類、諷誦與嗜欲體驗的傳譯——從〈七發〉的療疾效能談起, *Qinghua xuebao*, new series 36.2 (Dec., 2006): 399-425.

²⁹⁷ *Plato's "Symposium,"* 41-42 (211C).

enticement was not that of “essential words and marvelous doctrines” but a portrayal of a happy land reigned over by a wise ruler.

The development of “Sevens” corresponded to the changes in political and cultural centers in Han times. In Mei Sheng’s time, *fu* composition flourished not at the imperial court but at the courts of the kings. The kings were members of the imperial family and vassals of the emperor. Rich and powerful, they were also important patrons of scholarship and literature. For this reason, Mei Sheng served at the courts of the King of Wu 吳 (Liu Pi 劉濞, r. 195-154 B.C.) and King of Liang 梁 (Liu Wu 劉武, r. 168-144 B.C.), but never at the imperial court. He was like a Warring States traveling scholar, enjoying his status in the kingdoms. To win the kings’ hearts, he displayed his verbal virtuosity in the enticements in the setting of a dialogue between a vassal prince and a traveling scholar.

Eastern Han writers inherited the form of “Sevens” and further transformed it to meet the interests of their time. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the imperial control over the kingdoms was restored soon after Mei Sheng’s time. Hans Bielenstein observes:²⁹⁸

The abortive uprising of the Seven Kingdoms in 154 B.C. permanently broke the power of the kings. In 145 B.C., they were stripped of their right to appoint their own officials above the rank of 400 *shih*, and these posts were henceforth filled by imperial decree.

As a result, the political and cultural resources were controlled by the imperial court. In this period, the target audience of the “Sevens” became the imperial court. In this historical context, the Eastern Han writers Fu Yi, Cui Yin and Zhang Heng wrote not about a traveling scholar’s visit to a vassal prince, but about a courtier’s celebration of the imperial rule in their “Sevens.”

At the end of the Eastern Han, Cao Zhi added a new element to the “Sevens” in his “Qi

²⁹⁸ Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*, 106.

qi” 七啓 (Seven Enlightenments): vassal princes and their guests that are not *dramatis personae*,
but the penultimate enticement:²⁹⁹

鏡機子曰 予聞 君子樂奮節以顯義 烈士甘危軀以成仁 是以雄俊之徒 交黨結儔 重氣輕命 感分遺身 故田光伏劍於北燕 公叔畢命於西秦	Master Mirroring-motive-force said, “I heard that A gentleman is pleased to exert himself to manifest loyalty, A man of honor is willing to risk his life to achieve beneficence. Therefore, eminent men Form bands and associate with the like-minded, Value spirit and take death lightly, Appreciate favor and forget their own lives. Thus Tian Guang committed suicide with a sword in northern Yan; Gongshu ended his life in western Qin.
果毅輕斷 虎步谷風 威懼萬乘 華夏稱雄	Resolute and decisive, They walk like a tiger accompanied by the valley wind. Terrifying those who have a myriad chariots, They distinguish themselves in the Hua Xia.”
詞未及終 而玄微子曰善	Before his words come to an end, Master Mysterious said, “Excellent!”
鏡機子曰 此乃游俠之徒耳 未足稱妙也 若夫田文無忌之儔 乃上古之俊公子也	Master Mirroring-motive-force said, “They were only knights-errant, Not good enough to be called marvelous. As for people like Tian Wen and Wuji, They were outstanding young lords of ancient times.
皆飛仁揚義 騰躍道藝 遊心無方 抗志雲際 陵轢諸侯 驅馳當世 揮袂則九野生風 慷慨則氣成虹蜺	They all wafted benevolence and spread loyalty, Let soar the Way and the classics. They let their hearts wander in the boundless, Loft their aspirations to the edge of the clouds. They bullied the vassal lords, Made the world gallop for them. With a single sweep of their sleeves, winds rose from the nine fields; Impassioned, they turned the air into rainbows.
吾子若當此之時 能從我而友之乎	Sir, at this time, Could you follow me to make friends with them?”

²⁹⁹ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.138-39.

玄微子曰	Master Mysterious said,
予亮願焉	“I would really like to,
然方於大道有累	But it may interfere with the great Way.
如何	What should I do then?”

In this passage, the recluse was presented an enticement of Warring States heroes. The knights-errant Tian Guang 田光 and Gongshu 公叔 were willing to die for their lords.³⁰⁰ The vassal princes Tian Wen 田文 (known as Lord Meng of Chang 孟嘗君) and Wuji 無忌 (known as Lord of Xinling 信陵君) had lofty aspirations and great influence. With their impassioned (*kangkai* 慷慨) spirit, the knights-errant and vassal princes could cause winds to rise and rainbows to appear. These examples of impassioned spirit resonate with the following remarks Cao Zhi made in his “*Qian lu zixu*” 前錄自序 (Self Preface to the *First Collection*):³⁰¹

I have been fond of *fu* since I was young. What I value and love is impassioned [spirit], and what I have composed are numerous.
余少而好賦，其所尚也，雅好慷慨，所著繁多。

We can imagine that not only the recluse in the poem but also Cao Zhi himself were pleased with the heroic figures and the impassioned style. In a letter to Cao Zhi titled “Da Dong’e wang shu” 答東阿王書 (Letter Replying to the Prince of Dong’e) in the *Wen xuan*, Wu Zhi also compared Cao Zhi to prominent Warring States princes:³⁰²

Although I have relied on [your] grace [comparable to that of the Lord of] Pingyuan who provided for talented men, I am ashamed that I lack the talent [comparable to that of] Mao Sui [who distinguished himself like an awl piercing a sack with its] gleaming point. I have richly received [your] courtesy [comparable to that of] the Lord of Xue who

³⁰⁰ Li Shan notes “unknown” (*weixiang* 未詳) on Gongshu 公叔 in this context. Liu Liang 劉良 notes that Gongshu is said to be Jing Ke’s 荊軻 *zi*. For their notes, see *Liuchen zhu Wen xuan*, 34.30a (649).

³⁰¹ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.143.

³⁰² *Wen xuan*, 42.1909-10. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Letters and memorials in the early third century: The Case of Cao Zhi” (presented in the workshop “Letters and Epistolary Culture in China,” University of Colorado at Boulder, August 17-18, 2012), 8-9.

demeaned himself, but I lack the meritorious service [comparable to that of] Feng Xuan [who devised the stratagem of] “three burrows.” I have repeatedly benefited from [your] kindness [comparable to that of the Lord of] Xinling who saved the left seat [for Master Hou], but I also lack the remarkable excellence [comparable to that of] Master Hou. These several examples are the reason why frustration grows in my breast, and why I am melancholic when recalling your affection.

雖恃平原養士之懿，愧無毛遂耀穎之才。深蒙薛公折節之禮，而無馮諼三窟之効。屢獲信陵虛左之德，又無侯生可述之美。凡此數者，乃質之所以憤積於胸臆，懷眷而悵邑者也。

By comparing Cao Zhi to the Lord of Pingyuan 平原君, the Lord of Xue (i.e. Lord Meng of Chang) and the Lord of Xinling, Wu Zhi implied that Cao Zhi was as admirable as those Warring States princes. By claiming that he lacked the talent comparable to that of Mao Sui, Feng Xuan or Hou Ying 侯嬴—each of whom was the most famous guest of his prince—Wu Zhi denigrated himself and expressed his gratitude to Cao Zhi. Wu Zhi must have known of Cao Zhi’s interest in those figures, and thus very likely wrote to cater to his taste.

Whereas lavish banquets and musical performances, grand hunts and palatial mansions were common enticements, the Warring States princes and knights-errant were never used as an enticement before Cao Zhi. This was not because Cao Zhi was unaware of the tradition of “Sevens.” On the contrary, Cao Zhi wrote in the preface to his “Seven Enlightenments:”³⁰³

In the past, Mei Sheng wrote “Seven Stimuli,” Fu Yi wrote “Seven Stirrings,” Zhang Heng wrote “Seven Arguments,” and Cui Yin wrote “Seven Dependencies.” The language of each is beautiful. I admire them very much. Therefore I have written “Seven Enlightenments,” and commanded Wang Can to write one.

昔枚乘作七發，傅毅作七激，張衡作七辯，崔駟作七依，辭各美麗，余有慕之焉。遂作七啓，并命王粲作焉。

Here we see Cao Zhi enumerating a genealogy of “Sevens” writers. He clearly showed that he was aware of his position in this tradition. He wished to compose a “Sevens” in the beautiful

³⁰³ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.132.

language that had distinguished this form, and also ordered Wang Can to write a “Sevens” to match his composition. According to Cao Zhi’s preface to his “Seven Enlightenments” preserved in the *Wenguan cilin*, and the commentary to Cao Zhi’s preface in the *Wen xuan jizhu* 文選集注, Cao Zhi commanded Wang Can “and others” (*deng* 等) to write a “Sevens.”³⁰⁴ Candidates for the “others” are Xu Gan (who wrote the “Qi yu” 七喻), Yang Xiu (“Qi xun” 七訓), Liu Shao (“Qi hua” 七華), Fu Xun (“Qi hui” 七誨), and Bian Lan 卞蘭 (“Qi mu” 七牧). Their “Sevens,” however, were lost or exist as fragments in received corpus.

Wang Can’s piece is titled “Qi shi” 七釋 (Seven Elucidations). Only recently have we known of the complete text of this work preserved in the *Wenguan cilin*.³⁰⁵ His penultimate enticement is also unconventional. It is the delight of classical learning with teachers, friends and young men:³⁰⁶

大夫曰	The grandee said,
觀海然後知江河之淺	“Only after viewing the sea does one know the shallowness of rivers and streams,
登嶽然後見丘陵之狹	And only after climbing a tall peak can one see the smallness of hills and barrows.
君子志乎其大	The gentleman sets his mind on the large,
小人玩乎所狎	The petty man savors what he is familiar with.
昔在神聖	Of old, the divine sages
繼天垂業	Following heaven, handed down achievement.
指象畫卦	He pointed out heavenly phenomena, drew the trigrams,
陳疇敘法	Set forth wise counsels, told of proper standards,
經緯庶典	Devised numerous canons,
作謨來葉	Created plans for future generations.

³⁰⁴ For the variants of the preface, see Luo Guowei 羅國威, ed., *Ri cang Hongren ben Wenguan cilin jiaozheng* 日藏弘仁本文館詞林校證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 414.134; *Tang chao Wen xuan jizhu huicun* 唐鈔文選集註彙存, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), 68.83.

³⁰⁵ For more information, see Lin Jiali 林家驪, “Ribei suocun *Wenguan cilin* zhong de Wang Can ‘Qi shi’” 日本所存《文館詞林》中的王粲《七釋》, *Wenxian* 3 (1988): 15-18.

³⁰⁶ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 3.125. The translation is based on an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

天人之事
靡不備浹

Of the affairs of heaven and man
None went unattended to.

乃有應期觀達之師

Then, there are wise and discerning teachers in response to the favorable time,

開方敏學之友

Good friends who, clever in learning, can find the square root.

朋徒自遠

Companions and disciples come from afar,

童冠八九

Boys and capped men, eight or nine in number.

觀禮杞宋

They observe the rites in Qi and Song,

講誨曲阜

Lecture and teach at Qufu.

浴乎沂洙之上

Bathe in the Yi and Zhu rivers,

風乎舞雩之右

Enjoy the breeze right of the Rain Altar.

棲遲誦詠

When they rest and repose, they recite poems;

同車攜手

Together in a cart, they go out clasping hands.

論載籍

They discuss documents from the ages,

敘彝倫

Put human relationships in proper order,

度八索

Conjecture about the “Eight Ropes,”

考三墳

Investigate the “Three Mounds.”

升堂入室

They mount the hall and enter the inner chamber,

溫故知新

Review the old to know the new.

上不為悠悠苟進

Above they do not seek advancement through improper means like the multitudes,

下不與鳥獸同羣

Below they do not consort with birds and beasts.

近不逼俗

Near home they do not become too close to the ordinary folk,

遠不違親

Far away they do not become estranged from their kin.

從容中和

Relaxed and at ease they follow a course of central harmony,

與時屈申

With the times they bend and stretch.

煥然順敘

Brightly they are in accord with the proper order,

粲乎有文

Brilliant is their cultural elegance.

子曾此之弗欲

You never desired any of this,

而猶遂彼所遵

And you still pursue the course that you have always followed.

不以過乎

Is this not wrong?”

於是丈人變容

Then the elder changed expression,

降色而應曰

Regaining his composure he replied,

夫言有殊而感心

“There are words so unusual they affect the heart,

行有乖而悟事

There is conduct so strange it can illumine affairs.

大夫斯誨

This instruction of yours

實誘我志

Truly has seduced my mind.

道若存亡

The Way seems to exist and yet not exist [in your instruction].

In this passage, Wang Can employs phrases from a famous dialogue between Confucius and his students in the *Lun yu* 論語:³⁰⁷

When Zi-lu, Zeng Xi [i.e. Zeng Dian], Ran You and Gong-xi Hua were seated in attendance, the Master said, “Do not feel constrained simply because I am somewhat older than you are. Now you are in the habit of saying, ‘My abilities are not appreciated,’ but if someone did appreciate your abilities, do tell me how you would go about things.”
子路、曾皙、冉有、公西華侍坐。子曰：「以吾一日長乎爾，毋吾以也。居則曰：『不吾知也。』如或知爾，則何以哉？」

Zilu 子路 was the first one to reply to Confucius’ question, and Zeng Dian 曾點 was the last:

Zi-lu promptly answered, “If I were to administer a state of a thousand chariots, situated between powerful neighbours, troubled by armed invasions and by repeated famines, I could, within three years, give the people courage and a sense of direction.” The Master smiled at him. [...] “Dian, how about you?” After strumming a few dying notes and the final chord, he stood up from his lute. “I differ from the other three in my choice.” The Master said, “What harm is there in that? After all each man is stating what he has set his heart upon.” “In late spring, after the spring clothes have been newly made, I should like, together with five or six adults and six or seven boys, to go bathing in the River Yi and enjoy the breeze on the Rain Altar, and then to go home chanting poetry.” The Master sighed and said, “I am all in favour of Dian.”
子路率爾而對曰：「千乘之國，攝乎大國之間，加之以師旅，因之以饑饉，由也為之，比及三年，可使有勇，且知方也。」夫子哂之。[...]「點爾何如？」鼓瑟希，鏗爾，舍瑟而作，對曰：「異乎三子者之撰。」子曰：「何傷乎！亦各言其志也。」曰：「莫春者，春服既成。冠者五六人，童子六七人，浴乎沂，風乎舞雩，詠而歸。」夫子喟然歎曰：「吾與點也！」

Confucius later explained why he smiled at Zilu. It was because Zilu showed a lack of modesty that was required for a state administrator. If Confucius had heard Cao Zhi’s penultimate enticement, he would probably have smiled at Cao Zhi too. On the other hand, Confucius was

³⁰⁷ He Yan 何晏, comm.; Xing Bing 邢昺, subcomm., *Lun yu zhushu* 論語注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 11/26, 11.10a-b (100-2). The translation is taken from Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *baihua* trans.; D. C. Lau, English trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 2009), 11/26, 158-59.

really moved by Zeng Dian's words. Zeng Dian did not depict a mighty wind created by knights-errant or vassal princes, but a gentle breeze enjoyed by people who simply bathed in the river and went home chanting poetry. In addition, Zeng Dian's description of the gathering of people conforms to the following thought that Confucius expressed in another context:³⁰⁸

One cannot consort with birds and beasts. If I do not consort with human beings, who is there for me to consort with?

鳥獸不可與同羣，吾非斯人之徒與而誰與？

By incorporating Zeng Dian's and Confucius' words, Wang Can dreams a dream that scholars share. They study and teach. They do not seek positions or reclusion, but enjoy peaceful lives with friends and young men:

朋徒自遠	Companions and disciples come from afar,
童冠八九	Boys and capped men, eight or nine in number.
[...]	
浴乎沂洙之上	Bathe in the Yi and Zhu rivers,
風乎舞雩之右	Enjoy the breeze right of the Rain Altar.
[...]	
上不為悠悠苟進	Above they do not seek advancement through improper means like the multitudes,
下不與鳥獸同羣	Below they do not consort with birds and beasts.

This dream seems to have been realized at Liu Biao's court. Wang Can writes in his "Official Account of Classical Studies in Jingzhou."³⁰⁹

Classical learning is the governing factor in human relationships and the basis of the grand [Confucian] education. Thereupon [Liu Biao] commanded Song Zhong, supervisor of the five scholastic disciplines, to reinstitute classical learning and to invite companions and disciples. They propagated words of goodness to aid the people [to adhere to goodness], and granted fine rites to urge them [to follow the rites]. Within five years the transforming power of the Way was greatly extended. The venerable elder Qiwu Kai and

³⁰⁸ *Lun yu zhushu*, 18/6, 18.4a (165-2). The translation is based on Yang Bojun, *baihua* trans.; D. C. Lau, English trans., *Confucius: The Analects*, 18/6, 273.

³⁰⁹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.137. The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 70-71.

others who carried books and utensils on their backs from afar numbered more than three hundred.

夫文學也者，人倫之首，大教之本也。乃命五業從事宋衷新作文學，延朋徒焉，宣德音以贊之，降嘉禮以勸之，五載之間，道化大行。耆德故老綦毋闔等，負書荷器自遠而至者，三百有餘人。

When Wang Can drafted his “Sevens,” he served at Cao Cao’s court and wrote at Cao Zhi’s command. He would have been expected to write something fit for the ears of his new lords. For example, he may have been required to write on lavish banquets and musical performances, grand hunts and palatial mansions to demonstrate his verbal virtuosity. Most important of all, he had to write a panegyric to Cao Cao’s great rule in his last enticement. In contrast with those passages, the penultimate enticement could be something unconventional.

By placing Cao Zhi’s and Wang Can’s penultimate enticements side by side, we can see the topic of their poetic dialogue: What type of life could shake a recluse’s determination to live in seclusion? What kind of language could excite a person who was indifferent to the ornate descriptions of lavish banquets and musical performances, grand hunts and palatial mansions?

Cao Zhi chose a language in his beloved impassioned style to revive the valorous spirit that existed in the Warring States period. In the time of Fu Yi, Cui Yin and Zhang Heng, the realm was controlled by the imperial court. In Cao Zhi’s time, the imperial court collapsed and a succession of regional powers arose. Ambitious men now had various routes to apply their skills. For such individuals, Cao Zhi resorted to history to portray an exciting and challenging career.

On the other hand, Wang Can borrowed from the *Lun yu* to present the poised, cultivated character that existed in the Autumn and Spring period. He enjoyed the company of teachers, friends and young men. Together they observed the rites in Qi and Song, bathed in the Yi and Zhu rivers. Serious about scholarship yet relaxed during times of leisure, indifferent to worldly pursuits yet caring for their kin, they achieved a balance in their lives:

上不為悠悠苟進	Above they do not seek advancement through improper means like the multitudes,
下不與鳥獸同羣	Below they do not consort with birds and beasts.
近不逼俗	Near home they do not become too close to the ordinary folk,
遠不違親	Far away they do not become estranged from their kin.
從容中和	Relaxed and at ease they follow a course of central harmony,
與時屈伸	With the times they bend and stretch.
煥然順敘	Brightly they are in accord with the proper order,
粲乎有文	Brilliant is their cultural elegance.

Despite their differences, the impassioned spirit and cultural elegance amalgamated in Jian'an culture and poetry. Just as Aristophanes' comedy, Agathon's tragedy, and Socrates' philosophy constitute the essence of Athenian civilization, Cao Zhi and Wang Can's seemingly distinct inclinations constitute the essence of Jian'an literature.

Four Stimuli: Cao Cao, "Xing of 'Singing a Short Song'" (II of two)

In Chapter 2 I have cited Wang Can's congratulations to Cao Cao. Here I would like to quote it again and bring it into another context of poetic dialogue. At the banquet that Cao Cao held to celebrate his conquest of Jingzhou, Wang Can proposed a toast to Cao Cao and said:³¹⁰

Recently, when Yuan Shao arose north of the Yellow River, he relied on a large following and aspired to annex [the lands] under Heaven. However, although he was fond of worthy men he was unable to put them to use, and thus eminent men deserted him. Poised and composed in Jing-Chu [i.e. Jingzhou], Liu Biao sat by and watched the trends of the times, believing that he should emulate the example of the Western Lord [i.e. King Wen of Zhou]. The literati who fled to Jingzhou were all outstanding men within the Four Seas. Liu Biao did not know on whom to rely, and thus the state was endangered and rendered without proper support.

方今袁紹起河北，仗大眾，志兼天下，然好賢而不能用，故奇士去之。劉表雍容荊楚，坐觀時變，自以為西伯可規。士之避亂荊州者，皆海內之儁傑也；表不知所任，故國危而無輔。

³¹⁰ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.598 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1647-48). The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 79-80.

On the day that you, my enlightened lord, pacified Jizhou, you alit from your carriage and forthwith took command of their troops, gathered their outstanding men and put them to use. By doing so you advanced at will. When you brought peace to the Jiang-Han area [i.e. Jingzhou], you drew the worthy and outstanding men to you and gave them high positions. Thus [people] within the Four Seas turned their hearts [unto you], admire your regal bearing and hope for your good rule. Civil and military talents are both put to use. Outstanding men all render their service. This is [comparable to] the remarkable feat that the Three Kings had performed.

明公定冀州之日，下車即繕其甲卒，收其豪傑而用之，以橫行天下。及平江、漢，引其賢儁而置之列位，使海內回心，望風而願治。文武並用，英雄畢力，此三王之舉也。

Wang Can first criticized Yuan Shao and Liu Biao for failing to use men of talent. Then he praised Cao Cao for putting outstanding men to use when he conquered Yuan Shao's Jizhou and Liu Biao's Jingzhou. Wang Can observed because of this significant difference, Cao Cao "advanced at will" (*hengxing tianxia* 橫行天下), and "[people] within the Four Seas turned their hearts [unto him]" (*hainei hui xin* 海內回心). He expected that Cao Cao would thus achieve something comparable to "the remarkable feat that the Three Kings [i.e. the founders of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties] had performed" (*Sanwang zhi ju ye* 三王之舉).

As if in response to Wang Can's congratulations, Cao Cao also mentions turning people's hearts unto him (*gui xin* 歸心) and an exemplary figure in the past (the Duke of Zhou 周公) in the second of his two "Duange xing" 短歌行 (*Xing* of "Singing a Short Song"). The *Wen xuan* version blends joy with sorrow:³¹¹

4	對酒當歌 人生幾何 譬如朝露 去日苦多	Facing the ale while singing: How long does man's life last? It can be compared to the morning dew, The days gone by are all too many.
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³¹¹ *Wen xuan*, 27.1281-82. Also see Lu Qinli, ed., "Wei shi," 1.349 version 1. The translation is based on Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 197-98; and an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

- 8 慨當以慷
憂思難忘
何以解憂
唯有杜康
Impassioned and full of passion,
Care-filled thoughts, hard to forget.
How can one have release from cares?
He can only [rely on the ale of] Du Kang.
- 12 青青子衿
悠悠我心
但為君故
沉吟至今
Blue, blue is your lapel,
Ever, ever in my heart.
Only because of you
I brood on to this day.³¹²
- 16 呦呦鹿鳴
食野之苹
我有嘉賓
鼓瑟吹笙
ʔjiou-ʔjiou bellow the deer,
Eating pearly everlasting in the field.
I have fine guests—
Strum the zithers, play the reed organs.
- 20 明明如月
何時可掇
憂從中來
不可斷絕
Bright, bright is the moon,
Can it ever be grasped?
Cares come from within,
They cannot be stilled or ceased.
- 24 越陌度阡
枉用相存
契闊談讌
心念舊恩
Crossing paths, traversing lanes,
You have come to visit me.
After long separation we converse and feast,
Our hearts recall our old friendship.
- 28 月明星稀
烏鵲南飛
繞樹三匝
何枝可依
The moon is bright, the stars are few,
Crows and magpies are flying south.
Thrice they circle a tree,
On what branch can they find a roost?
- 32 山不厭高
海不厭深
周公吐哺
天下歸心
The mountain is never content with its height,
The sea is never content with its depth.
The Duke of Zhou spat out his food,
[People] under Heaven turned their hearts unto him.

³¹² According to Hu Kejia's 胡克家 (1757-1816) *Wen xuan kaoyi* 文選考異, the Yuan 袁 *Liujia* 六家 edition and the Chaling 茶陵 *Liuchen* 六臣 edition of the *Wen xuan* note that lines 11-12 did not exist in the Li Shan version of the *Wen xuan*. Hu Kejia doubts that the original Li Shan version would have omitted lines 11-12 because they are necessary to follow the rhyme scheme (three rhyming words in each four-line stanza except for the last stanza). In the Li Shan version prepared by You Mao 尤袤 (1127-1194), there are lines 11-12. Hu Kejia speculates that You Mao corrected the erroneous omission by adding the lines found in the editions with *Wuchen* 五臣 commentary. For Hu Kejia's note, see *Wen xuan*, 27.1282.

The *benci* 本辭 (original lyrics) version in the *Yuefu shiji*, which was probably based on a Li Shan version of the *Wen xuan* that does not have lines 11-12, also omits these two lines. For the *benci* version, see *Yuefu shiji*, 30.447.

The *Song shu* version has three significant differences from the *Wen xuan* version. First, lines 17-20 precede lines 13-16. Second, lines 21-28 are missing. Third, the poem is divided into six sections (*jie* 解) of four lines each. Thus the poem proceeds from sorrow to joy, from joy to aspirations (minor variants are indicated by squares):³¹³

4	對酒當歌 人生幾何 譬如朝露 去日苦多	Facing the ale while singing: How long does man's life last? It can be compared to the morning dew, The days gone by are all too many.	(一解 section 1)
8	慨當以慷 憂思難忘 以何解愁 唯有杜康	Impassioned and full of passion, Care-filled thoughts, hard to forget. How can one have release from cares? He can only [rely on the ale of] Du Kang.	(二解 section 2)
12	青青子衿 悠悠我心 但為君故 沉吟至今	Blue, blue is your lapel, Ever, ever in my heart. Only because of you I brood on to this day.	(三解 section 3)
16	明明如月 何時可掇 憂從中來 不可斷絕	Bright, bright is the moon, Can it ever be grasped? Cares come from within, They cannot be stilled or ceased.	(四解 section 4)
20	呦呦鹿鳴 食野之苹 我有嘉賓 鼓瑟吹笙	<i>?jiou-?jiou</i> bellow the deer, Eating pearly everlasting in the field. I have fine guests— Strum the zithers, play the reed organs.	(五解 section 5)
32	山不厭高 海不厭深 周公吐哺 天下歸心	The mountain is never content with its height, The sea is never content with its depth. The Duke of Zhou spat out his food, [People] under Heaven turned their hearts unto him.	(六解 section 6)

³¹³ *Song shu*, 21.610. The Jin *yue suo zou* 晉樂所奏 (performed by Jin music) version in the *Yuefu shiji*, which was probably based on the *Song shu* version, also has those differences. For the Jin *yue suo zou* version, see *Yuefu shiji*, 30.447.

In the *Yuefu shiji*, Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 claims that the former version was the original lyrics (*benci* 本辭) whereas the latter was performed by Jin music (Jin *yue suo zou* 晉樂所奏). He implies that Jin musicians such as Xun Xu 荀勗 (d. 289), who collected old lyrics and used them in musical performance,³¹⁴ had altered the original lyrics to fit their music.

Although Guo Maoqian does not explain why the former version was the original, I am inclined to concur with his view. In my view, the former version is Cao Cao's "four stimuli." It consists of four sections, each of which begins with sorrow and ends in joy. Based on this quadripartite structure, Cao Cao presents four ways to overcome the brevity of life: drinking, feasting, mutual understanding, and the revival of good rule. Like Cao Zhi's and Wang Can's "Sevens," the penultimate way is friendship between like-minded persons, and the last one is good rule—not of the emperor but of a regent.

What distinguishes Cao Cao's poem from Cao Zhi's and Wang Can's "Sevens" is that Cao Cao's poem is a *yuefu* piece, the primary aesthetics of which is very different from the "Sevens," which is a type of *fu*. As mentioned in the introduction, *yuefu* poems were designated as song verses in Han times and were sung to music. On the other hand, *fu* was defined in Han times as something "to recite without singing" (*bu ge er song* 不歌而誦).³¹⁵ How do we know Cao Cao's poem is a song verse? One may judge from its *yuefu* title, but the title could have been given by later musicians. One may also judge from its inclusion in the category of *qingshang sandiao geshi* 清商三調歌詩 (song verses in the three modes of *qingshang* music), but the category could have been devised by the Jin musician Xun Xu.³¹⁶ Here we base our argument mainly on a passage from Wang Chen's 王沈 (d. 266) *Wei shu* 魏書 cited by Pei Songzhi, which

³¹⁴ For the note "Xun Xu collected old lyrics to put to use" (荀勗撰舊詞施用), see *Song shu*, 21.608.

³¹⁵ *Han shu*, 30.1755.

³¹⁶ *Song shu*, 21.608.

tells us:³¹⁷

Whenever [Cao Cao] made new poems, he had them set to wind and string accompaniment, so that they all became musical pieces.
及造新詩，被之管弦，皆成樂章。

The enticement in Wang Can's "Seven Elucidations" that describes a musical performance may give us some sense of what a court musical performance was like in the Jian'an period:³¹⁸

於是白日西移
轉即閒堂
號鐘絙瑟
列乎洞房
管簫繁會
雜以笙簧
夔牙之師
呈能極方
奏白雪之高均
弄幽徵與反商
聲流暢以清哇
時忼慨而激揚

And then as the bright sun shifts westward,
People turn about and enter an idle hall.
The sounding-bell zithers and the tautly-strung zithers
Are arrayed in connecting rooms.
A rich ensemble of flutes and panpipes
Is mingled with mouth organs.
Music masters like Kui and Boya,
Demonstrate their skill and exhaust their art.
They perform the lofty tune of "White Snow,"
Play the somber *zhi* note and altered *shang* note.
The sound flows easy and smooth, clear and voluptuous,
At times it is impassioned, intensely rousing.

虞公含詠
陳惠清微
新聲變詞
慘悽增悲
聽者動容
梁塵為飛

The Venerable Yu mouths a song,
Chen Hui's sound is pure and light.
New music and altered lyrics,
Sad and sorrowful, increase one's grief.
Those who listen change expression,
Dust on the rafters is made to fly up.

As the last few lines indicate, the primary aesthetics of musical performance in Han times lay in mournful sentiments. Cao Cao's "stimuli" thus begins by lamenting the brevity of life. "How can

³¹⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.54 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.215). The translation is based on Hans H. Frankel, "The Development of Han and Wei *Yüeh-fu* as a High Literary Genre," in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T'ang*, eds. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen, 255-86 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 262.

³¹⁸ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.124. The translation is based on an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

one have release from cares?” he asks, “He can only rely on the ale of Du Kang.”³¹⁹ Cares and troubles reappear in the odd-numbered stanzas. The fifth and seventh stanzas further turn to the night sky. The bright moon hangs out of reach. The birds fly without rest. If the song verse was performed after sunset as Wang Can describes, these melancholic evening scenes must have been quite moving.

Interestingly, the *Shi jing* love poem “Zi jin” 子衿 (Your Lapel, no. 91) cited in the third stanza is matched by the *Shi jing* symposium poem “Lu ming” 鹿鳴 (Bellow the Dear, no. 161) in the fourth stanza. The one who wears a “blue, blue lapel” in the former poem now seems to be entertained with a feast that is described in the latter poem. By separating the *Shi jing* lines from their contexts and incorporating them into his new song verse, Cao Cao transforms the diplomatic tradition of citing the *Shi jing* into his own mode of song verse writing.

The sixth and seventh stanzas are missing from the *Song shu* version, but I believe the sixth stanza matches the fifth stanza, and the eighth stanza matches the seventh stanza, just as the second matches the first, and the fourth matches the third. The bright moon in the fifth stanza represents something unreachable, but old friends in the sixth stanza shorten the distance. “Crossing paths, traversing lanes,” they visit one another from afar after long separation. The knights-errant and vassal princes in Cao Cao’s “Seven Enlightenments” and the scholars in Wang Can’s “Seven Elucidations” have brought great joy. How much more delightful would it be for us to have old friends coming afar despite the barriers of time and space?

The revival of good rule, however, is even more joyful in Cao Cao’s “four stimuli.”

³¹⁹ Du Kang was the Xia Dynasty Shaokang 少康, who invented the dustpan (*ji* 箕), broom (*zhou* 帚) and millet ale (*shujiu* 秫酒) according to the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字. For the note on Du Kang under the entry of 帚, see Xu Shen 許慎, comp.; Duan Yucai 段玉裁, comm., *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Kaohsiung: Gaoxiong fuwen chubanshe, 2000), 7b.52a (361).

According to the *Han shi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳, the Duke of Zhou said:³²⁰

In washing my hair once, I must catch it up [all wet as it is] three times; and in eating one meal I must thrice spit out my food, and still I fear to lose [an interview with] one of the outstanding men under Heaven.

一沐三握髮，一飯三吐哺，猶恐失天下之士。

Like the traveling goose in Ying Yang's symposium poem, the crows and magpies in the seventh stanza represent the traveling scholars who could not find an understanding lord. Upon meeting a fine lord, who would not find rest? What great rule in the past could not be revived?

Cao Cao tells of cares and troubles in the four odd-numbered stanzas, and provides solutions in the four even-numbered stanzas: drinking, feasting, mutual understanding, and the revival of good rule. By blending sorrow with joy, Cao Cao leads his audience to reflect why they are here at the feast. Is it for drinking to forget the brevity of life, or to feast with their beloved one? Do they simply hope to visit old friends, or to achieve something great together so that they can say it is worth living? The quadripartite structure implies the answer.

In Plato's "Symposium," Diotima demonstrated that lovers of physical beauty, lovers of spiritual beauty—including poets, craftsmen, educators and lawgivers—and lovers of the beautiful itself all aspire to immortality. Thus they all give birth to their "children." However, only the lovers of the beautiful itself can give birth to "something wonderfully beautiful in its nature" and "something that is, first of all, always being and neither coming to be nor perishing"—which is philosophy.³²¹ With this threefold analysis of lovers, Diotima's presentation on the nature of love is comprehensive and profound.

³²⁰ Han Ying 韓嬰; Han Yanyuan 韓炎元, comm. and trans., *Han shi waizhuan jinzhū jīnyì* 韓詩外傳今註今譯 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), 3.135. The translation is based on Han Ying; James Robert Hightower, trans., *Han shi wai chuan: Han Ying's Illustrations of the Didactic Application of the Classic of Songs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), 3/31, 114.

³²¹ Plato's "Symposium," 39 (208E-209A), 41 (210D-211B).

In his “*Xing* of ‘Singing a Short Song,’” Cao Cao is as confident in the revival of good rule as was Diotima in philosophy. The quadripartite structure of the *Wen xuan* version also shows the depth and breadth of Cao Cao’s inquiries about life. This version has been considered confusing because it goes back and forth between sorrow and joy. Here we see its inner structure and, as a song verse, its inclination to express mournful sentiments. It is the reoccurrence of cares and troubles that forms a continuous, melancholic tone, and it was with the four solutions that Cao Cao entertained his audience and aroused lofty aspirations in them at the merry feast.

Fine Courtiers: Group Composition on Beautiful Plants and Stones

As we have read in Chapter 2, Liu Zhen compares Cao Cao’s court to a numinous mountain (line 17, *xin cishan zhi duoling* 信此山之多靈) in his “*Fu* on Realizing My True Aim.” Liu Zhen writes that there are catalpa woods (*jialin* 欖林) and white jade (*jiaoyu* 璣玉) in the mountain. At Cao Cao’s court, there were indeed beautiful plants and stones like these, including pagoda trees (*huai* 槐), rosemary (*midie* 迷迭), agate bridles (*manao le* 馬腦勒), and a *juqu* bowl (*juqu wan* 車渠碗).³²² Cao Pi wrote *fu* on each of them and commanded other writers to compose with him.

As mentioned in the introduction, Jian’an *fu* on a common theme or topic are preserved mainly in *leishu* (literary compendia) compiled in the Sui, Tang and Song. Although *leishu* rarely

³²² According to Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1593), *juqu* is a type of seashell. For his explanation, see Li Shizhen 李時珍, comp.; Chen Guiting 陳貴廷, ed. and comm., *Bencao gangmu jishi* 本草綱目集釋 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1992), 46.2019.

Some Buddhist text translators used *juqu* as a calque on the Sanskrit word *musāragalva*. *Musāragalva* is said to mean coral, sapphire, emerald, or cat’s eye in different contexts. For a note on *musāragalva*, see Franklin Edgerton, comp., *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953; rpt. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2004), 436. If *juqu* is a type of seashell, it is misleading to translate *musāragalva* into Chinese as *juqu*.

According to Cao Pi’s preface cited below, *juqu* is a type of jade from the Western Regions. Li Shizhen considered this identification wrong. We do not know whether Cao Pi saw a precious stone that was translated into Chinese as *juqu*, or a seashell that was somehow identified as a type of jade from the Western Regions.

preserve complete texts of anything, they are important early sources of texts. Fortunately, Cao Pi's prefaces to their *fu* on the beautiful plants and stones are extant (whether they are complete is unknown):³²³

In [the courtyard of] the Hall of Cultural Splendor there are pagoda trees. During the height of summer, I often strolled beneath them. Admiring their beauty, I have written a *fu* on them. Wang Can was on duty at the Gate of Ascendant Worthies. Outside the Lesser Bureau there are also pagoda trees. I thus went there and had him write a *fu* on them.

文昌殿中槐樹，盛暑之時，余數遊其下，美而賦之。王粲直登賢門，小閣外亦有槐樹，乃就使賦焉。

I planted rosemary in the courtyard. I admire the aroma emitted from its raised branches. It has a pungent, fine fragrance, and I have thus written a *fu* on it.

余種迷(送)[迭]於中庭，嘉其(楊)[揚]條吐香，馥有令芳，乃為之賦。

Agate [literally, horse brain] is a type of jade. It comes from the Western Regions. Its veins crisscross like the brain of a horse, and thus the people of those places named it accordingly. Sometimes it is tied to the neck, and other times it is used to ornament bridles. I have bridles of this kind. Admiring their beauty, I have written a *fu* on them, and commanded Chen Lin and Wang Can to compose with me.

馬腦，玉屬也。出自西域，文理交錯，有似馬腦，故其方人因以名之。或以繫頸，或以(飭)[飾]勒。余有斯勒，美而賦之，命陳琳、王粲並作。

Juqu is a type of jade. It has many fine veins and elaborate patterns. It comes from the Western States. People there treasure it. Small ones are tied to the neck, and large ones are used to make vessels.

車渠，玉屬，多纖理縟文。出於西國，其俗寶之。小以繫頸，大以為器。

³²³ For Cao Pi's preface to the "*Fu* on the Pagoda Trees," see *Yiwen leiju*, 88.1518.

For his preface to the "*Fu* on the Rosemary," see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 134, 982.6b.

For his preface to the "*Fu* on the Agate Bridles," see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 55, 358.6b. Also see *Yiwen leiju*, 84.1441, which does not preserve the second half of the preface.

For his preface to the "*Fu* on the *Juqu* Bowl," see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 113, 808.5a, which is preserved not under Cao Pi's name but *gu juqu wan fu* 古車渠碗賦 (Old *fu* on the *juqu* bowl). Also see *Yiwen leiju*, 84.1442, which is preserved under Cao Pi's name but does not preserve the last two lines of the preface.

The variants marked here are based on Cao Pi 曹丕; Zhang Pu 張溥, ed., *Wei Wendi ji* 魏文帝集, in his *Han Wei Liuchao baisanjia ji* 漢魏六朝百三家集 (woodblock edition prepared by Xinchu tang 信述堂 in Qing Guangxu *jimao* 清光緒己卯, i.e. 1879), 1.9b, 1.13a

The translation of the prefaces is based on David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 16, 20, 18, 19.

Liu Zhen writes how he wanders in the numinous mountain with beautiful plants and stones:³²⁴

	聊且遊觀	For the moment I wander about and look around
20	周歷高岑	All over the high hills.
	仰攀高枝	Above I grasp high branches,
	側身遺陰	Placing myself in lingering shadows.
	磷磷礚礚	Spangling and sparkling, glittering and glistening [is the mountain],
24	以廣其心	[I do so] to broaden my mind.

Similarly, Wang Can says in his “*Fu* on the Agate Bridles:”³²⁵

	遊大國以廣觀兮	Wandering in a great state to broaden my horizons,
	覽希世之偉寶	I saw rare, extraordinary treasures.

In my analysis, catalpa woods and white jade in Liu Zhen’s *fu* represent outstanding men at the court. Therefore, what broadened his mind are his new colleagues. When the writers composed *fu* on the beautiful plants and stones at the court, they must have had the same idea. Celebrating these objects in the palace was tantamount to celebrating themselves at the court. It was a way for them to express their aspirations, and to offer some views on their official careers.

In Chinese literature, it is in fact a long tradition to celebrate refined men by comparing them to beautiful plants or stones. For example, in the *Shi jing* poem “*Qi yu*” 淇輿 (Bay of the Qi River, no. 55), the waving green bamboos remind the poet of a lord,³²⁶ and his elegance is compared to cut and polished jade in the first stanza (which consists of two rhyme groups):³²⁷

³²⁴ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 7.204.

³²⁵ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 3.111.

³²⁶ For the Mao commentary, which notes that *zhu* 竹 in this poem refers to *bianzhu* 篇竹 (*Polgonum aviculare* L.; knotgrass), see *Mao shi zhengyi*, 3b.11a (127-1).

Zhu Xi believes that *zhu* refers to bamboos. For his note, see Zhu Xi 朱熹, ed. and comm., *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 3.450.

For an argument for reading *zhu* as bamboos, see Yang Mu 楊牧, “*Shi jing* ‘*Guo feng*’ de caomu” 詩經國風的草木, in his *Chuantong de yu xiandai de* 傳統的與現代的, 119-56 (Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 1979), 132.

³²⁷ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 3b.11a (127-1). The translation is based on Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 46.

	瞻彼淇奧	Look at that bay of the Qi River,
	綠竹猗猗	Its green bamboos so delicately waving.
	有匪君子	Delicately fashioned is my lord,
4	如切如磋	As jade cut, as jade filed,
	如琢如磨	As jade chiseled, as jade polished.

	瑟兮儻兮	Oh, the grace, oh, the elegance!
	赫兮咺兮	Oh, the luster, oh, the light!
8	有匪君子	Delicately fashioned is my lord,
	終不可諼兮	Never for a moment can I forget him.

In their *fu* on the pagoda trees, rosemary, agate bridles and *juqu* bowl, Jian'an writers also associate the beautiful plants and stones with various virtues. For example, Xu Gan writes in his

“*Fu* on the *Juqu* Bowl.”³²⁸

圓德應規	Its virtue of roundness corresponds to the compass,
巽從易安	Compliant and docile, at ease and in comfort.
大小得宜	The size is proper,
容如可觀	The appearance is remarkable.
盛彼清醴	Filled with pure ale,
承以瑀盤	It is joined to a carved plate.
因歡接口	On joyous occasions it touches the mouth,
媚于君顏	Obtaining a favorable expression from our lord.

Wang Can's “*Fu* on the Agate Bridles” has similar lines:³²⁹

厥容應規	Their look corresponds to the compass,
厥性順德	Their temperament complies with the virtues.
御世嗣之駿服	Used on the excellent horses of the heir designate,
表駉驥之儀則	They show the norm of Lu'er 駉耳 and Qiji 駉驥 [i.e. fine steeds].

In the first rhyme group of Cao Zhi's “*Fu* on the *Juqu* Bowl,” the stone was like the recluse in

³²⁸ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 4.155. The translation is based on David R. Knechtges, “Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han,” 32.

³²⁹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.111. The translation is based on an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

his “Seven Enlightenments.” With beautiful colors and patterns, the uncut stone (*pu* 璞) lay hidden in the western wilds (*xiye* 西野):³³⁰

惟斯椀之所生	The place from which this bowl comes,
于涼風之浚湄	Is the steep slopes of Langfeng.
采金光(之)[以]定色	It draws from gold’s brilliance to form its hues;
擬朝陽而發輝	It replicates the morning sun in emitting radiant light.
豐玄素之曄曄	It is replete with the dazzling glow of black and white;
帶朱榮之葳蕤	It is banded with the lush beauty of scarlet blossoms.
縑絲綸以肆采	The veins scatter their color like fishing lines;
藻繁布以相追	The patterns intricately spread as if in mutual pursuit.
翩飄颻而浮景	They flutter and flutter like drifting shadows;
若驚鵠之雙飛	Or they fly in pairs like startled cranes.
隱神璞於西野	The divine stone lay hidden in the western wilds;
彌百葉而莫斂	For a hundred ages it remained unknown.

It was not until the “divine lord” (*shenghou* 神后), who presumably was Cao Cao, had his beneficent name spread far and wide that the tribes (*yi* 夷) presented it as a gift to the court, where the stone shines forth in its dazzling beauty. Like a refined gentleman, it finally attends the lord at the banquet and “can be perpetually used and never be forgotten” (*young yu er bu wang* 永御而不忘). Cao Zhi writes in the second and third rhyme groups of his *fu*:³³¹

於時乃有篤厚神后	And there was a divine sovereign generous and wise,
廣被仁聲	Who broadly spreads his beneficent name.
夷慕義而重使	Admiring his dedication to rightness, the foreign tribes sent an envoy,
獻茲寶於斯庭	To present this treasure to our court.
命公輸之巧匠	He commanded an artisan as great as Gongshu Ban,
窮妍麗之殊形	Fully to bring out the beauty of its unusual form.
華色粲爛	Its flowery hues glitter and glisten,
文若點成	Its patterns seem as if dotted on.

³³⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 2.22. The variant marked here is provided in this edition. The translation is taken from an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges. In the second line, 涼風 is read as Langfeng 閼風, which is a mythical peak of Mount Kunlun.

³³¹ *Cao ji quanping*, 2.22-23. The variant marked here is provided in this edition. The translation is taken from an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges.

鬱蒼雲蒸	Dense and thick, they swell like clouds;
蜿蟬龍征	Twisting and twining, they course like dragons.
光如激電	Their brilliance is like flashing lightning;
影若浮星	Their shadows are like drifting stars.
何神怪之巨偉	How great this divine wonder!
信一覽而九驚	Truly after a single glance one is thoroughly amazed!
雖離朱之聰目	Even someone with the acute vision of Li Zhu,
猶炫曜而失精	Would be dazed and dazzled and bereft of sight.
何明麗之可悅	How delightful its bright beauty!
超羣寶而特章	Surpassing all other treasures it alone is illustrious.
俟君子之閒燕	It attends our lord's grand feast,
酌甘醴於斯觥	He pours sweet wine from this goblet.
既娛情而可貴	It cheers the heart and is precious too;
故(求)[永]御而不忘	Thus it can be perpetually used and never be forgotten.

In Cao Pi's "Fu on the Rosemary," the plant is even more like a human being.³³²

薄西夷之穢俗兮	It disdained the foul customs of the western tribe,
越萬里而來征	Crossing a myriad <i>li</i> it traveled to come here.

The western tribe in Cao Zhi and Cao Pi's *fu* presumably refers to the Roman Empire, which was called the "Great Western State" (Da Qin 大秦) in their time. According to the "Xirong zhuan" 西戎傳 (Account of the Western Tribes) in the *Wei lüe* cited by Pei Songzhi, rosemary (called *mimi* 迷迷 in the passage), agate (written as *manao* 瑪瑙 in the passage) and *juqu* all came from Da Qin.³³³ In contrast with the exotic objects, the pagoda trees were important shade trees in Chinese cities. Thus Cao Pi calls them "the beautiful trees of a great state" (*dabang zhi meishu* 大邦之美樹) in his "Fu on the Pagoda Trees."

Just as the beautiful objects had different origins, Jian'an writers were different from one another. Although they composed for the same occasion on the same object, their *fu* show

³³² *Yiwen leiju*, 81.1394. Also see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 134, 982.6b. The translation is based on by David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 31.

³³³ *Sanguo zhi*, 30.861 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 30.2264).

significant differences and constitute an interesting poetic dialogue. Take Cao Pi, Wang Can and Cao Zhi's "Fu on the Pagoda Trees" for example. Cao Pi writes:³³⁴

<p>有大邦之美樹 惟令質之可佳 託靈根于豐壤 被日月之光華 周長廊而開趾 夾通門而駢羅 承文昌之邃宇 望迎風之曲阿</p>	<p>There are beautiful trees of a great state, Their fine nature is worthy of praise. Entrusting their numinous roots to the rich soil, They bask in the radiant brilliance of the sun and the moon. Surrounding the long veranda they set their root bases, Pressing both sides of the passage gate they are arrayed. Holding in their palms the deep eaves of the Hall of Cultural Splendor, They look up at the crooked corners of the Tower of Greeting the Breeze.</p>
<p>脩幹紛其漙錯 綠葉萋而重陰 上幽藹而雲覆 下莖立而擢心</p>	<p>Their long trunks spread into interlacing branches; Their green leaves, thickly matted, provide dense shade. Above, they are dark and exuberant, like clouds covering the ground; Below, the trunks stand, pulling from the "cores" [i.e. tap roots].</p>
<p>伊暮春之既替 即首夏之初期 鴻鴈遊而送節 凱風翔而迎時 天清和而溫潤 氣恬淡以安治 違隆暑而適體 誰謂此之不怡</p>	<p>When the late spring is replaced [by another season], It comes to the beginning of the early summer. Wild geese travel forth sending off the [spring] season, Southern winds soar welcoming the [summer] time. The weather is mild and warm, The air is still and peaceful. Escaping the summer heat and feeling comfort [under them], Who would say they are not delightful?</p>

Here Cao Pi portrays the pagoda trees as an integral part of the harmonious court. Nourished by the soil and light, they grow around the veranda, gate, eaves and tower. When summer comes, they have become so luxuriant that they can provide shade for people who frequent this place. Everything is peaceful and natural. Like Cao Pi, they were born to be members of the court.

In Wang Can's *fu*, we read something different:³³⁵

³³⁴ *Yiwen leiju*, 88.1518. The translation is based on David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 29-30.

³³⁵ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.112.

惟中唐之奇樹	The marvelous trees in the courtyard
稟天然之淑姿	Are endowed with elegant bearing.
超疇畝而登殖	Having left the farmlands they are planted in exalted positions,
作階庭之華暉	Becoming radiant brilliance in the courtyard by the steps.

Wang Can contrasts the place from which the pagoda trees came from with their current location:

They came from the farmlands, but now they are “planted in exalted positions” (*deng zhi* 登殖).

In his “*Fu* on the Rosemary,” Wang Can has a similar expression:³³⁶

去原野之側陋兮	Having left the remoteness and humbleness of the fields,
植高宇之外庭	It is planted in the outer courtyard of the tall chamber.

The rosemary came from remote and humble fields before it was planted before the tall chamber.

Similarly, Wang Can came from Liu Biao’s court among “the Jing tribes” (*Jing man* 荆蠻)

before he joined Cao Cao’s court. Now that Wang Can and the plants are “endowed with elegant bearing,” they have become “radiant brilliance” at the court.

Interestingly, Cao Zhi compares the pagoda trees to Cao Cao, whom he calls “the bright lord” (*minghou* 明后) in his “*Fu* on the Pagoda Trees:”³³⁷

羨良木之華麗	I admire the radiant beauty of the good trees,
爰獲貴於至尊	Here they obtained honor from the Supremely Exalted.
憑文昌之華殿	They lean against the bright Hall of Cultural Splendor,
森列峙乎端門	Densely they stand in array at the Main Gate.
觀朱(櫳之)[櫳以]振條	Viewing the vermilion rafters, they stretch out twigs;
據文陸而結根	Standing against the embellished steps, they set roots.
(暢)[揚]沉陰以博覆	They raise heavy shade to offer broad cover,
似明后之垂恩	Like the grace vouchsafed by our bright lord.
在季春以初茂	In late spring they began to thrive,
踐朱夏而乃繁	Crossing into vermilion summer they then became luxuriant.
覆陽精之炎景	They enfold the fiery light of the essence of <i>yang</i> [i.e. the sun];

³³⁶ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.110.

³³⁷ *Cao ji quanping*, 3.33. The variants marked here are provided in this edition.

散流耀以增鮮 Spreading flowing radiance, they add luster.

Unlike the withering orange tree in the Bronze Bird Park, the pagoda trees in the courtyard of the Hall of Cultural Splendor grow luxuriant, spreading heavy shade (*chenyin* 沉陰) and flowing radiance (*liuyao* 流耀). In Cao Zhi's eyes, the radiance and the broad shade of the trees remind him of none other than his father. Cao Zhi admires the beautiful trees as he admires his father.

Cao Pi, Wang Can and Chen Lin's "Fu on the Agate Bridles" are also good examples to illustrate the distinctive voices of the poets. When they describe how the agate stones are carved and polished, they show their individual imagination. Further, since the polishing of jade represents the cultivation of a gentleman as in the *Shi jing* poem cited above, their different and even contradictory descriptions of jade processing could represent their individual views on the cultivation of a courtier. Cao Pi writes:³³⁸

命夫良工	I command a fine artisan
是剖是鑄	To cut it open and chisel it into the pieces.
追形逐好	Tracking their shapes and pursuing their excellence,
從宜索便	He complies with what is proper and seeks what is fit.
乃加砥礪	Then he puts them to the grindstone,
刻方為圓	Carving the square into round ones.

As Cao Pi conceives of him, the gem artisan carefully applies his craft as he cuts and chisels. He observes the natural beauty of the agate stones before polishing and carving them. In Wang Can's imagination of agate processing, the gem artisan does not carve them at all.³³⁹

於是乃命工人	And then, he commands an artisan
裁以飾勒	To cut it in order to ornament the bridles.
因姿象形	Following their forms, replicating their shapes,
匪彫匪刻	He does not embellish or carve upon them.

³³⁸ *Yiwen leiju*, 84.1441. These lines are absent from the *fu* preserved in *Taiping yulan*, vol. 55, 358.6b.

³³⁹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.111.

厥容應規	Their look corresponds to the compass,
厥性順德	Their temperament complies with the virtues.
御世嗣之駿服	Used on the excellent horses of the heir designate,
表駉驥之儀則	They show the norm of Lu'er 駉耳 and Qiji 駉驥 [i.e. fine steeds].

Because each of the agate stones already “corresponds to the compass” and “complies with the virtues,” Wang Can observes, there is no need to “put them to the grindstone” or “carve the square into round ones.” They not only can be used on the horses of the heir designate, but also can show the norm of fine steeds: gentleness. Wang Can seems to imply that the courtiers are refined, cultivated and ready to be put to use. They do not need any embellishment because their natural beauty is already in accord with the requirements for a gentle courtier.

Chen Lin’s description is still different from Cao Pi’s and Wang Can’s. He emphasizes what are used as grinding tools and who serves as gem artisan:³⁴⁰

爾乃他山為錯	And then, with [the stones from] other mountains as grinding tools,
荆和為理	Bian He from Jing [i.e. Chu] as gem artisan,
制為寶勒	[The agate stones] are made into precious bridles
以御君子	In order to be used by our lord.

Chen Lin makes two allusions here. The second one is about Bian He 卞和. According to the *Han Feizi* 韓非子, Bian He was a native of Chu. He found an uncut jade stone and presented it to the Chu court, first to King Li 厲王 and then to King Wu 武王. However, the kings’ gem artisan did not recognize its value. Bian He’s feet were cut off as punishment for trying to deceive the kings. Finally, King Wen 文王 believed Bian He’s story and had the jade stone cut open, revealing a beautiful jade inside.³⁴¹ Thus Bian He represents someone who perceives the

³⁴⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.49.

³⁴¹ Han Fei 韓非; Wang Xianshen 王先慎, ed. and comm., *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 4.95.

true value in a stone. Here Bian He could also represent someone who understands the true value in a man, and Chen Lin would prefer to have a gem artisan like Bian He, rather than any common gem artisan, to take charge of the work of processing the true treasure.

As for the grinding tools, Chen Lin makes allusion to the *Shi jing* poem “He ming” 鶴鳴 (The Crane Cries, no. 184). In the first stanza (which consists of three rhyme groups), the *Shi jing* poet sings:³⁴²

4	鶴鳴于九皋 聲聞于野 魚潛在淵 或在于渚	When the crane cries in the Nine Swamps, Its voice is heard in the wild. A fish can plunge deep into the pool Or rest upon the shoals.
8	樂彼之園 爰有樹檀 其下維蘩 它山之石 可以為錯	I am pleased with that park, Where the hardwood trees are planted, Beneath which are fallen barks and leaves. The stones from other mountains Can be used as grinding tools.

In this *Shi jing* poem, the poet celebrates a pleasant park (*leyuan* 樂園). The relation between the grinding tools and the pleasant park had long perplexed me, but when I explored how Chen Lin borrowed the *Shi jing* phrases in his poetic dialogue with Cao Pi and Wang Can, both the *Shi jing* poem and Chen Lin’s *fu* suddenly became clear to me: since the polishing of jade represents the cultivation of a gentleman, “the stones from other mountains” (*tashan zhi shi* 他山之石) that are used as “grinding tools” (*cuo* 錯) can refer to our friends and colleagues, who came from other places and often give us good advice. It is because of them that we can improve ourselves. It is also because of them that we feel we are in a pleasant park. By juxtaposing “the stones from

³⁴² *Mao shi zhengyi*, 11a.8a-9b (376-2 to 377-1). The translation is based on Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 158.

other mountains” with a crane, fish and trees, the *Shi jing* poet depicts his ideal pleasant park. By borrowing phrases from the *Shi jing* poem, Chen Lin implies that it is because of his friends and colleagues that the court has become a pleasant place and he has become a better person.

We can imagine how vigorously Jian’an writers would have applauded one another as the Athenians applauded Agathon, who delivered the prettiest speech on the beauty of the god of love in Plato’s “Symposium.” As Aristodemus said, “the youth had spoken in a way as suited to himself as to the god.”³⁴³ Now we can say that the courtiers had spoken in a way as suited to themselves as to the beautiful objects.

However, Allan Bloom finds Agathon’s speech “pretty silly.” He comments on the Athens’ applause as follows:³⁴⁴

Agathon has turned the group into the audience at the theater, who like to be flattered and who like virtuoso displays. Even in Athens, the public can have very bad taste.

Allan Bloom may sound harsh, but Socrates also criticized his friends for lavishing their compliments while ignoring the truth. He said:³⁴⁵

And you assert that he [the god of love] is of this sort and that sort and the cause of so many things, so that he may seem to be as beautiful and good as possible—plainly to those who do not know, for this surely is not the case for those who do know—and so the praise turns out to be beautiful and awesome. But after all I did not know that this was to be the manner of praise, and in ignorance I came to an agreement with you that I would take my turn in praising.

In fact, *fu* writers including those in the Jian’an period also had the same doubts about their compositions. They were uncomfortable about the discrepancy between their words and the truth. As we shall see, one of them was troubled so much that he decided to stop writing *meili zhi wen*

³⁴³ Plato’s “Symposium,” 27 (198A).

³⁴⁴ Allan Bloom, “The Ladder of Love,” 121.

³⁴⁵ Plato’s “Symposium,” 28 (198E-199A).

美麗之文 or *belles lettres*.

Failed Suasion: Cao Zhi, “Presented to Xu Gan”

Xu Gan, one of the writers of “*Fu* on the *Juqu* Bowl,” decided to leave the court on the grounds of illness. According to the preface to Xu Gan’s *Zhong lun*, which probably was written by his contemporary Ren Gu as mentioned in the introduction, Xu Gan not only left the court but also stopped writing poems:³⁴⁶

After five or six years, his illness gradually worsened and he could no longer endure [the rigors of] service to the king. He thus hid himself away in a remote lane, nurturing his true aim and keeping his genuineness intact. Leading a plain, simple existence, and initiating no unnecessary action, he devoted himself to the correct Way. [Although he had no more than] surrounding squares of walls to shield his wife and children from the elements, and made one day’s food last for two, he was not depressed. [...] His natural inclination was such that he constantly wanted to reduce that of which the time had a surplus and increase that in which the age was deficient. He saw men of letters writing *belles lettres*, but he found none of them elucidating the fundamental import [of the classics] or disseminating the teachings of the Way, seeking the balance achieved by sages or dispelling the confusion of popular contemporary mores. For this reason, he stopped writing *shi*, *fu*, eulogy, inscription and encomium, and wrote the book *Balanced Discourses* in twenty-two chapters.

歷載五六，疾稍沈篤，不堪王事。潛身窮巷，頤志保真。淡泊無為，惟存正道。環堵之墻，以庇妻子。并日而食，不以為戚。[...]君之性，常欲損世之有餘，益俗之不足。見辭人美麗之文並時而作，曾無闡弘大義，敷散道教，上求聖人之中，下救流俗之昏者。故廢詩、賦、頌、銘、贊之文，著中論之書二十二篇。

The author of the preface often visited Xu Gan. He describes in the preface what he felt in Xu Gan’s presence:³⁴⁷

I was often seated in attendance upon him. When I observed his words, I was constantly

³⁴⁶ Xu Gan, *Zhong lun*, preface 3b-4b. The translation is based on Xu Gan; John Makeham, trans., *Balanced Discourses*, xxxiv-xxxv.

³⁴⁷ Xu Gan, *Zhong lun*, preface 5a. The translation is based on Xu Gan; John Makeham, trans., *Balanced Discourses*, xxxv.

fearful. Although I devoted and exerted myself, I disdained myself in my heart. Why was that? It was because I considered my talent and mind vastly inferior to those of him. Nevertheless, I revered and esteemed him, taking him to be exemplary.

余數侍坐，觀君之言常怖。篤意自勉，而心自薄也。何則？自顧才志不如之遠矣耳。然宗之仰之，以為師表。

In Plato's "Symposium," Alcibiades felt something similar in the presence of Socrates:³⁴⁸

Only before him do I feel shame. For I know within myself that I am incapable of contradicting him or of saying that what he commands must not be done; and whenever I go away, I know within myself that I am doing so because I have succumbed to the honor I get from the many. So I have become a runaway and avoid him; and whenever I see him, I am ashamed of what has been agreed upon. And many is the time when I should see with pleasure that he is not among human beings; but again, if this should happen, I know well that I should be much more greatly distressed. I do not know what to do with this human being.

Further, Alcibiades pointed out Socrates's moderation and his contempt for so-called beauties.

Just as Xu Gan was the most admirable in the preface author's eyes, Socrates was the most beautiful in Alcibiades' eyes.³⁴⁹

You see that Socrates is erotically inclined to the beauties and is always around them, and that he is thunderstruck [...] but once he is opened up, do you suspect, fellow drinking men, how full he is of moderation? Know that he's not at all concerned if someone is beautiful—and he holds in this in such great contempt that no one would believe it—any more than if someone is rich or has any other honor of those deemed blessed by the multitude. But he believes that all these possessions are worth nothing and that we are nothing, I tell you, and all his life he keeps on being ironical and playful to human beings. And when he is in earnest and opened up, I do not know if anyone has seen the images within; but I once saw them, and it was my opinion that they were so divine, golden, altogether beautiful, and amazing that one had to do just about whatever Socrates commanded.

Although Xu Gan was not as "ironical and playful to human beings" as Socrates, his teaching method had something in common with Socrates. Rather than simply giving lectures to their

³⁴⁸ Plato's "Symposium," 47 (216B-C).

³⁴⁹ Plato's "Symposium," 47 (216D-217A).

students, Socrates and Xu Gan “led them in discussions and discourses” (*chang qi yanlun* 倡其言論). Based on the sixth chapter “Gui yan” 貴言 (Valuing Words) of Xu Gan’s *Zhong lun* and his personal experience,³⁵⁰ the preface author writes:³⁵¹

Among his contemporaries, there were those who, having heard that he was like this, went to visit him, and those who, having formed quite an appreciation of his genuineness, sought to follow him. He agreed to see them all. He motivated them with his voice and facial expressions, appraised their inclinations and aims, and led them in discussions and discourses. Knowing which of them could grow in accord with the Way, he drew them on with such subtlety that those who benefited [from his instruction] were unaware [of what happened] while the great transformation worked its effects in undisclosed ways. There were many who were helped and saved by him.

時人或有聞其如此而往觀之，或有頗識其真而從之者，君無不容而見之。厲以聲色，度其情志，倡其言論。知可道長者，則微而誘之，令益者不自覺而大化陰行。其所匡濟，亦已多矣。

When Xu Gan was writing his *Zhong lun* and providing guidance for his visitors, Cao Zhi wrote him a poem titled “Zeng Xu Gan” 贈徐幹 (Presented to Xu Gan):³⁵²

	驚風飄白日	A startling wind blasts the bright sun,
	忽然歸西山	Which suddenly returns to the west mountains.
	圓景光未滿	The moon’s light is not yet full,
4	眾星粲以繁	The multitudinous stars are bright and serried.
	志士營世業	Men of ideals build works for the time,
	小人亦不閒	Petty men are not idle either.
	聊且夜行遊	For the moment I go wandering in the night,
8	遊彼雙闕間	Wandering between the twin watchtowers.
	文昌鬱雲興	The Hall of Cultural Splendor rises like a thick cloud,
	迎風高中天	The Tower of Greeting the Breeze soars to mid-sky.
	春鳩鳴飛棟	Spring doves coo among the flying ridgepoles,
12	流飈激櫺軒	Stray gusts buffet the latticed porch.

³⁵⁰ For this chapter, see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 280-82. John Makeham notes that the preface’s comment on Xu Gan’s teaching “appear to relate to a passage in ‘Valuing Words.’” For his note, see Xu Gan; John Makeham, trans., *Balanced Discourses*, 294 note 26.

³⁵¹ Xu Gan, *Zhong lun*, preface 4a. The translation is based on Xu Gan; John Makeham, trans., *Balanced Discourses*, xxxiv.

³⁵² *Cao ji quanping*, 4.41. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 197-98.

	顧念蓬室士	I recall the thatched hut scholar,
	貧賤誠足憐	Poor and humble, truly worthy of pity.
	薇蕡弗充虛	Wild beans and bean leaves don't fill his emptiness,
16	皮褐猶不全	His leather homespun is even incomplete.
	慷慨有悲心	Impassioned, he has a mournful heart;
	興文自成篇	Composing texts, he alone completes the chapters.
	寶棄怨何人	When a gem is discarded, who is to blame?
20	和氏有其愆	Master He [i.e. Bian He] is at fault.
	彈冠俟知己	To flick dust off your cap [i.e. to take an official position], you must await a sympathetic friend's [recommendation]—
	知己誰不然	Who among your friends was not like this?
	良田無晚歲	Good fields are not harvested late,
24	膏澤多豐年	Rich moisture brings many bumper crops.
	亮懷璵璠美	When one truly harbors the beauty of jade,
	積久德愈宣	His virtue stands out all the more with time.
	親交義在敦	A close friend's duty is to encourage;
28	申章復何言	Having presented this verse, what more can I say?

This is a *shi* in five-syllable lines, one of the poetic forms that Xu Gan had shared with his lords and colleagues but later abandoned. As if hoping to jog Xu Gan's pleasant memories of the court, which Xu Gan also abandoned, Cao Zhi begins his poetic letter with a description of a lovely starry night in the palace. At night, noises cease and memories become clear. While many people are still busy, he leads his target reader Xu Gan once again to visit the twin watchtowers, the Hall of Cultural Splendor, and the Tower of Greeting the Breeze. They hear the sweet coos of doves nesting in the ridgepoles, and feel the stray gusts of wind blowing around the latticed porch. Suddenly Cao Zhi realizes something is different from before: Xu Gan has become a “thatched hut scholar.” He is poor, humble, hungry and cold.

Interestingly, the compound verb *gunian* 顧念 that Cao Zhi uses for transition can be understood as “recall” as in the translation, or as “turn around and think of.” Professor Chu

Hsiao-hai observes:³⁵³

When he enjoys the cool breeze, he looks back to share his feelings with his colleague or to propose writing a poem on the scene. However, he finds his friend shivering because “his leather homespun is even incomplete.” What he delights in is what other people suffer from. The word *gu* thus changes the gist of the poem. It is this word *gu*, which originally refers to “turning around” physically, that introduces mentally “turning around” in the following part of the poem: self-examination and self-accusation.

風涼舒暢之際，正在回首向僚友分享感受，或提議賦詩記勝，卻發現友人因「皮褐猶不全」哆嗦。他的享受在旁人卻是煎熬。這一個「顧」字就使得全首詩內容重心霎時變易。而也就是這本為形體上的「顧」：回頭，引生下文心靈上的「顧」：反省與自責。

Professor Chu Hsiao-hai further points out that Cao Zhi makes allusion to Song Yu’s 宋玉 “Feng fu” 風賦 (*Fu* on the Wind), which consists of a dialogue between King Xiang of Chu 楚襄王 and Song Yu:³⁵⁴

King Xiang of Chu was amusing himself at the palace of Magnolia Terrace, with Song Yu and Jing Cuo attending him. A breeze suddenly blew in upon them. The king opened his lapel and faced the wind, saying, “How pleasant this wind! Do I share it with the common people?” Song Yu replied, “This is a wind for Your Majesty alone. How could the common people share it?”

楚襄王游於蘭臺之宮，宋玉景差侍。有風颯然而至，王迺披襟而當之曰：「快哉此風！寡人所與庶人共者邪？」宋玉對曰：「此獨大王之風耳，庶人安得而共之？」

Song Yu then explains to the king the differences between the wind that a king enjoyed and the wind from which common people suffered. In Cao Zhi’s poem, it is also the motif of wind that turns the topic from his enjoyment at the court to his consideration for the poor and humble.

I find this interpretation appealing, and I would like to extend it to the second half of the poem. When Cao Zhi alludes to the “*Fu* on the Wind,” he suggests to Xu Gan that he is different from King Xiang of Chu. While the king knows nothing about common people’s lives, he

³⁵³ Chu Hsiao-hai 朱曉海, “Cao Zijian shi zhuoluo ju yu” 曹子建詩卓犖舉隅, *Xin guoxue* 3 (Dec. 2001): 184.

³⁵⁴ *Wen xuan*, 13.581-82. The translation is based on Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 3 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7.

understands Xu Gan's sufferings and passions. In order to move Xu Gan, Cao Zhi first blames himself. He compares Xu Gan to a gem and himself to Bian He. He should have presented a gem to the court as Bian He did, but instead he let Xu Gan be discarded. Nevertheless, he asks Xu Gan to trust him:

彈冠俟知己	To flick dust off your cap [i.e. to take an official position], you
知己誰不然	must await a sympathetic friend's [recommendation]— Who among your friends was not like this?

When one flicks dust off his cap, he is preparing to take an official position. It is said that Gong Yu 貢禹 (124-44 B.C.) flicked off dust his cap when his friend Wang Ji 王吉 (d. 48 B.C.) was in position because he knew he would also obtain an appointment soon.³⁵⁵ This allusion is generally identified, but these two lines are subject to varying interpretations. Li Shan argues that they mean “[Xu Gan] hopes to flick dust off his cap and awaits a sympathetic friend’s [recommendation], but who among his friends is not like a discarded gem? Who is in a position to recommend him for office?”³⁵⁶ The Yuan scholar Liu Lü 劉履 agrees with Li Shan: “At this time, Zijian [i.e. Cao Zhi] was unable to realize his aspirations either.”³⁵⁷ Zhu Xuzeng 朱緒曾 (1805-1860) disagrees. He argues that Cao Zhi did not fall out of favor at this time, and he reads these two lines as “If you flick dust off your cap and await a sympathetic friend’s [recommendation], who would not be your friend?”³⁵⁸ Like Zhu Xuzeng, I see no complaint

³⁵⁵ *Han shu*, 72.3066.

³⁵⁶ For Li Shan's reading 言欲彈冠以俟知己，知己誰不同於棄寶，而能相(萬)[薦]乎，see *Wen xuan*, 24.1118 (and 24.1119 for the variant provided in Hu Kejia's *Wen xuan kaoyi*).

³⁵⁷ For Liu Lü's note 子建亦不得志於斯時，see Liu Lü 劉履, *Fengya yi* 風雅翼, in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, vol. 1370 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 2.23a.

³⁵⁸ For Zhu Xuzeng's reading 苟彈冠以俟知己，則誰非知己者乎 and his argument against Liu Lü, see Cao Zhi 曹植; Zhu Xuzeng 朱緒曾, ed., *Cao ji kaoyi* 曹集考異, in *Jinling congshu* 金陵叢書, third series (prepared by Jiangshi shenxiu shuwu 蔣氏慎脩書屋 in *Min'guo jiayin-bingchen* 民國甲寅-丙辰, i.e. 1914-1916), 5.15b.

about falling out of favor in Cao Zhi's poem.³⁵⁹ Moreover, it is unlikely for Cao Zhi to have thought that Xu Gan had already hoped to take an official position. It was because Xu Gan retired that Cao Zhi wrote this poem to persuade him back. The Tang scholar Lu Shanjing 陸善經 notes in the *Wen xuan jizhu*:³⁶⁰

“*Zhiji shui buran*” means who did not rely on a sympathetic friend's [recommendation] to obtain an appointment?

知己誰不然，誰不因知己而見用之也。

Lu Shanjing's note is inspiring. It implies that Cao Zhi also relied on his friends' recommendation and appreciates their help. Now he asks Xu Gan to rely on him. He would be more than happy to recommend Xu Gan for office.

In the closing lines, Cao Zhi compares Xu Gan to good fields and Cao Cao to rich moisture. He assures Xu Gan, who is in his forties, that having such “good fields” and receiving “rich moisture,” one will have many timely, bumper “harvests.” He further compares Xu Gan to beautiful jade, whose value will not fade with time but eventually be recognized. However, Cao Zhi seems to feel that Xu Gan would not listen to him. He could only do a close friend's duty—to encourage Xu Gan to serve at the court together.³⁶¹

We do not know whether Xu Gan replied or how he would reply. There seemed to be a huge gap between Xu Gan and Cao Zhi. First, Cao Zhi describes Xu Gan as a poor scholar and compares him to a discarded gem. According to the preface to his *Zhong lun*, Xu Gan actually enjoyed his retirement. Second, Xu Gan left the court and stopped writing poems, but Cao Zhi

³⁵⁹ According to the *Sanguo zhi*, Cao Zhi angered Cao Cao in Jian'an 22 (217) and fell out of favor since then. According to the preface to the *Zhong lun*, Xu Gan died in Jian'an 23 (218). If this poem was written in Jian'an 22 (217), Li Shan and Liu Lü's reading seems possible. However, I do not follow Li Shan and Liu Lü's reading because I see no complaint about falling out of favor in Cao Zhi's poem.

³⁶⁰ *Tang chao Wen xuan jizhu huicun*, vol. 1, 47.229.

³⁶¹ Line 27 can be translated as “A close friend's friendship is firm,” but I prefer Professor Robert Joe Cutter's reading as mentioned here.

still wrote him a poem about an official career. Above all, what Cao Zhi considered beautiful deviated from what Xu Gan considered truly beautiful: the teachings of the Way (*daojiao* 道教). In a sense, Cao Zhi was doomed to failure in his attempt to attract Xu Gan as was Alcibiades in his attempt to attract Socrates.

Failing to win Socrates' heart, Alcibiades said in Plato's "Symposium:"³⁶²

[He] despised and laughed at my youthful beauty [...] I believe I had been dishonored, and yet I still admired his nature, moderation, and courage; I had met a human being whose prudence and endurance were such as I believed I should never encounter. Consequently, I did not know how I could be angry at him and be deprived of his association; nor did I have any resources whereby I could attract him.

Cao Zhi may have had the same feeling, knowing that someone admirable did not belong to him, to the court, or to whatever he valued.

Many years later, Cao Pi confirmed in his "Yu Wu Zhi shu" 與吳質書 (Letter to Wu Zhi) that Xu Gan was the sole Jian'an writer who achieved "immortality" (*buxiu* 不朽) with his virtue and his treatise *Zhong lun*:³⁶³

Examining the literary men of past and present, [I found that] as a group they did not bother about refined conduct. Few could stand on their reputation or moral integrity. Weichang [i.e. Xu Gan] alone possessed refinement and substance. Calm, simple, and of few desires, he set his mind on Mount Ji [where the ancient hermit Xu You 許由 went into reclusion]. It can be said that he was a gentleman of refinement and substance. He wrote the *Balanced Discourses* in more than twenty chapters and established a tradition of his own. Its diction and meaning are classical and elegant, worthy of being transmitted to posterity. This master will be immortal!

觀古今文人，類不護細行，鮮能以名節自立。而偉長獨懷文抱質，恬惓寡欲，有箕山之志，可謂彬彬君子者矣。著中論二十餘篇，成一家之言，辭義典雅，足傳于後，此子為不朽矣。

³⁶² Plato's "Symposium," 50 (219C-E).

³⁶³ *Wen xuan*, 42.1896-97. The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, "Literary Criticism at the End of the Eastern Han," *Literature East and West* 16.3 (1972): 1031; Donald Holzman, "Literary Criticism in China in the Early Third Century A.D.," 123-24; Lois Fusek, "The Poetry of Ts'ao P'i (187-226)," 73-74.

In his essay “On Literature,” Cao Pi also asserted it was with the *Zhong lun* that Xu Gan established a tradition of his own. Nevertheless, Cao Pi still paid tribute to Xu Gan’s *fu* on black gibbon (*xuanyuan* 玄猿), leaking goblet (*louzhi* 漏卮), round fan (*yuanshan* 圓扇) and orange tree (*ju* 橘),³⁶⁴ as well as praised other writers’ *shi* and *fu*. Xu Gan could have totally abandoned *shi* and *fu*, but Cao Pi and Cao Zhi still felt nostalgia for the time when they exchanged beautiful poems in these forms.

³⁶⁴ *Wen xuan*, 52.2271.

惟尺斷而能植兮 Indeed a *chi*-long cutting can be planted,
信永貞而可羨 Truly it remains ever firm and admirable!

—Cao Pi, “*Fu* on the Willow”

Chapter 5. Carrying Writing Brushes to Accompany the Army

Cao Cao: A Commander, Husband, Father, and State Founder

During the twenty-five years of the Jian’an period, Cao Cao launched a military expedition nearly every year. Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 and Shen Yucheng 沈玉成 single out twelve expeditions during which Cao Cao not only brought generals and soldiers along with him, but also his wives, sons and daughters.³⁶⁵ They cite Pei Songzhi’s commentary to the “Houfei zhuan” 后妃傳 (Biographies of Empresses and Consorts) in the *Sanguo zhi*:³⁶⁶

In the twenty-first year [of Jian’an] (216), Taizu [i.e. Cao Cao] launched an eastern expedition. Empress Wuxuan [i.e. Cao Cao’s second wife Lady Bian 卞 (161-230)], Emperor Wen [i.e. Cao Pi] and Emperor Ming [i.e. Cao Pi’s first son Cao Rui], Princess of Dongxiang [i.e. Cao Pi’s daughter] all accompanied him. At that time, the empress [i.e. Cao Pi’s second wife Lady Zhen 甄 (182-221)] stayed at Ye because she was ill.
二十一年，太祖東征，武宣皇后、文帝及明帝、東鄉公主皆從，時后以病留鄴。

Pei Songzhi also cites the following lines in his commentary:³⁶⁷

In the sixteenth year [of Jian’an] (211), the seventh month, Taizu [i.e. Cao Cao] launched an expedition to Guanzhong [i.e. Chang’an area]. Empress Wuxuan [i.e. Lady Bian] accompanied him.
十六年七月，太祖征關中，武宣皇后從。

³⁶⁵ Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 33-34.

³⁶⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 5.161 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 5.593).

³⁶⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 5.160 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 5.593).

Aside from Cao Cao's family members, literary men also accompanied the army on military expeditions. They composed poems and exchanged letters during the campaigns. This was in effect a way for Cao Cao to take his literary salon on the road.

The twelve expeditions in which the literary men participated can be listed as follows. I provide three kinds of information: 1) the time, place and enemy (in bold), 2) the poems, war proclamations, personal and official letters that could have been written during the campaigns (the poems and letters in brackets were written by those who stayed in the city), and 3) the works that contain a reference to a literary man's participation in an expedition (underlined).

1. Time: Jian'an 2 (197)

Place: Yuan 宛 (modern Nanyang 南陽, Henan)

Enemy: Zhang Xiu 張繡 (d. 207)

Reference to Cao Pi's Participation: Cao Pi, "Dian lun zixu" 典論自敘

2. Time: Jian'an 5 (200)

Place: Guandu 官渡 (northeast of modern Zhongmou 中牟, Henan)

Enemy: Yuan Shao 袁紹 (d. 202)

Reference to Cao Pi's Participation: Cao Pi, "Liu fu" 柳賦

3. Time: Jian'an 8 (203)

Places: Liyang 黎陽 (east of modern Jun 浚 county, Henan)

Ye 鄴 (southwest of modern Linzhang 臨漳, Hebei)

Enemies: Yuan Shao's first son Yuan Tan 袁譚 (d. 205)

Yuan Shao's third son Yuan Shang 袁尚 (d. 207)

Poems: Cao Pi, "Liyang zuo shi" 黎陽作詩 (three poems)

4. Time: Jian'an 10 (205)

Place: Nanpi 南皮 (northeast of modern Nanpi, Hebei)

Enemy: Yuan Tan

Personal Letter: [Kong Rong, "Chao Caogong wei zi na Zhenshi shu" 嘲曹公為子納甄氏書]

Reference to Cao Pi's Participation: *Sanguo zhi*, 21.609 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1690)³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Pei Songzhi cites Cao Pi's letter to Wu Zhi about an excursion at Nanpi.

Yu Shaochu observes that the excursion at Nanpi could have taken place in Jian'an 10 (205). For his argument, see Yu Shaochu 俞紹初, "Nanpi zhi you' yu Jian'an shige chuanguo" 「南皮之遊」與建安詩歌創作, *Wenxue yichan* 5 (2007): 17.

Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng provide two references. The first is the "Biographies of Empresses and Consorts"

In Jian'an 11 (206) Cao Cao launched an expedition against Yuan Shao's nephew Gao Gan 高幹 (d. 206) at Hu Pass 壺關 (northeast of modern Licheng 黎城, Shanxi).

Poem: Cao Cao, "Ku han xing" 苦寒行

5. Time: Jian'an 12 (207)

Place: Mount White Wolf (Bailang shan 白狼山, east of modern Harqin Left Mongol autonomous county 喀喇沁左翼蒙古族自治縣, Liaoning)

Enemies: Yuan Shang

Yuan Shao's second son Yuan Xi 袁熙 (d. 207)

Wuwuan people

Poems: Cao Cao, "Bu chu Xiamen xing" 步出夏門行

Cao Cao, Cao Pi, "Canghai fu" 滄海賦

Chen Lin, "Shenwu fu" 神武賦

Ying Yang, "Zhuan zheng fu" 撰征賦

Personal Letter: [Kong Rong, "Chao Caogong tao Wuhuan shu" 嘲曹公討烏桓書]

Reference to Cao Zhi's Participation: Cao Zhi, "Qiu zi shi biao" 求自試表³⁶⁹

6. Time: Jian'an 13 (208) against at:

Places: Xiangyang 襄陽 (Xiangyang area of modern Xiangfan 襄樊, Hubei)

Chibi 赤壁 (northwest of modern Chibi, Hubei)

Enemies: Liu Biao 劉表 (d. 208) and Liu Bei 劉備 (161-223)

Sun Quan 孫權 (182-252) and Liu Bei

Poems: Chen Lin, Wang Can, Ying Yang, Yang Xiu, "Shennü fu" 神女賦

Cao Pi, "Shu zheng fu" 述征賦

Wang Can, "Chuzheng fu" 初征賦

Xu Gan, "Xu zheng fu" 序征賦

Ruan Yu, "Ji zheng fu" 紀征賦

Po Qin, "Zhuan zheng fu" 撰征賦

Reference to Cao Zhi's Participation: Cao Zhi, "Qiu zi shi biao" 求自試表³⁷⁰

in the *Sanguo zhi*. The lines to which they refer are "when Jizhou was pacified, Emperor Wen [i.e. Cao Pi] married the empress at Ye" (及冀州平，文帝納后于鄴). For these lines, see *Sanguo zhi*, 5.160 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 5.592). The second is Cao Pi's "*Dian lun zixu*" 典論自敘 (Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*). The lines to which they refer are "Jizhou was not pacified until Jian'an 10 (205)" (建安十年，始定冀州). For these lines, see *Sanguo zhi*, 2.89 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.342). Neither reference really mentions that Cao Pi accompanied the army on the expedition to Nanpi.

³⁶⁹ Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng provide this reference to show that Cao Zhi participated in this expedition. The line to which they refer is "We came near to the Dark Green Sea in the east" (東臨滄海). For this line, see *Cao ji quanping*, 7.106. Canghai could refer to Bohai 渤海, which was close to Cao Cao's initial route to the Wuwan people's headquarters. However, since Canghai 滄海 (Dark Green Sea) is juxtaposed by Cao Zhi with Chi'an 赤壁 (Red Bank) in the south, Yumen 玉門 (Jade Gate) in the west, and Xuansai 玄塞 (Dark Barrier) in the north, I suspect it simply represents a remote place in the east.

³⁷⁰ Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng provide this reference to show that Cao Zhi participated in this expedition. The line to which they refer is "We went as far as the Red Bank in the south" (南極赤岸). For this line, see *Cao ji*

Reference to Liu Zhen's Participation: Liu Zhen, "Zeng Wuguan zhonglang jiang shi"
贈五官中郎將詩 (I of four)

7. Time: Jian'an 14 (209)

Place: Hefei 合肥 (modern Hefei, Anhui)

Enemy: Sun Quan

Poems: Cao Pi, Wang Can, "Fu Huai fu" 浮淮賦

Cao Pi, "Gan wu fu" 感物賦

Reference to Liu Zhen's Participation: Liu Zhen, "Zeng Wuguan zhonglang jiang shi"
贈五官中郎將詩 (I of four)

8. Time: Jian'an 16 (211)

Place: Tong Pass 潼關 (north of modern Tongguan, Shaanxi)

Enemy: Ma Chao 馬超 (176-222)

Official Letter: Ruan Yu, "Wei Cao gong zuo shu yu Sun Quan" 為曹公作書與孫權

Poems: [Cao Pi, "Gan li fu" 感離賦]

Cao Zhi, "Li si fu" 離思賦, "Shu xing fu" 述行賦, "Luoyang fu" 洛陽賦,
"Song Ying shi" 送應氏 (two poems), "Zeng Ding Yi Wang Can shi" 贈
丁儀王粲詩

Xu Gan, Ying Yang, "Xizheng fu" 西征賦

Wang Can, "Zhengsi fu" 征思賦

Wang Can, "Diao Yi Qi wen" 弔夷齊文

Ruan Yu, "Diao Boyi wen" 弔伯夷文

Personal Letters: Po Qin, "Yu Wei Wendi jian" 與魏文帝箋

[Cao Pi, "Da Po Qin shu" 答繁欽書]

9. Time: Jian'an 17 (212)

Place: Ruxu kou 濡須口 (southeast of modern Wuwei 無為, Anhui)

Enemy: Sun Quan

War Proclamation: Wang Can, "Wei Xun Yu yu Sun Quan xi" 為荀彧與孫權檄

Poems: Cao Pi, Cao Zhi, "Lin Guo fu" 臨渦賦

Cao Pi, "Ji chuan fu" 濟川賦

Cao Zhi, "Guisi fu" 歸思賦, "Li you" 離友 (two poems)

Cao Pi, Cao Zhi, Wang Can, Ying Yang, "Chou lin fu" 愁霖賦, "Xi ji fu" 喜霽賦

10. Time: Jian'an 19 (214)

Place: Hefei

Enemy: Sun Quan

Poems: [Cao Zhi, "Dongzheng fu" 東征賦; Yang Xiu, "Chuzheng fu" 出征賦]

quanping, 7.106. They identify Chi'an 赤岸 with Chibi 赤壁, but again, I suspect it simply represents a remote place in the south.

Reference to Cao Pi's Participation: *Sanguo zhi*, 19.557 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1547)³⁷¹

11. Time: Jian'an 20 (215)

Place: Yangping Pass 陽平關 (i.e. Baimacheng 白馬城, west of modern Mian 勉 county, Shaanxi)

Enemy: Zhang Lu 張魯

Poems: Cao Cao, "Qiu Hu xing" 秋胡行 (I of two)

Personal Letters: [Cao Pi, "Da Cao Hong shu" 答曹洪書]

Chen Lin, "Wei Cao Hong yu Wei Wendi shu" 為曹洪與魏文帝書

Cao Pi also set out, guarding Mengjin 孟津 [east of modern Mengjin, Henan]

Poems: Cao Pi, "Mengjin shi" 孟津詩

Cao Pi, Wang Can, "Liu fu" 柳賦

[Liu Zhen, "Zeng Wuguan zhonglang jiang shi" 贈五官中郎將詩 (four poems)]

Personal Letters: Cao Pi, Cao Pi, "Yu Zhaoge ling Wu Zhi shu" 與朝歌令吳質書, "Yu Zhong Dali shu" 與鍾大理書

[Zhong You 鍾繇 (151-230), "Bao Taizi shu" 報太子書]

Reference to Cao Pi's Guard of Mengjin: *Sanguo zhi*, 13.396 note 1, 21.607-8 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 13.1207, 21.1689)³⁷²

12. Time: Jian'an 21 (216)

Place: Ruxu kou

Enemy: Sun Quan

War Proclamation: Chen Lin, "Xi Wu jiangxiao buqu wen" 檄吳將校部曲文

Poems: Wang Can, "Cong jun shi" 從軍詩 (II-V of five)

Reference to Cao Pi's Participation: *Sanguo zhi*, 5.160 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 5.593)³⁷³

From Pei Songzhi's commentary cited above, we know that if Cao Pi's wife née Zhen had not been ill, she would also have accompanied the army on the expedition against Sun Quan in 216.

One may ask why Cao Cao did not have his family members stay behind for safety, or at least have the literary men remain home to save travel costs. In fact, Cao Cao expressed his concern

³⁷¹ The *Sanguo zhi* writes that Cao Cao commanded Cao Zhi to guard Ye. Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng observe that since Cao Cao commended Cao Zhi to guard Ye, he must have had Cao Pi accompany him on the expedition. For their observation, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 33.

³⁷² The *Wei lüe* cited by Pei Songzhi writes that Cao Pi, who was at Mengjin, wrote the "Yu Zhong Dali shu" 與鍾大理書 when Cao Cao launched an expedition to Hanzhong 漢中 commandery (where the war against Zhang Lu took place).

The *Dian lüe* cited by Pei Songzhi writes that Cao Pi, who was at Mengjin, wrote the "Yu Zhaoge ling Wu Zhi shu" 與朝歌令吳質書 when the army went on a western expedition.

³⁷³ The *Sanguo zhi* writes that Cao Pi accompanied Cao Cao on the eastern expedition in Jian'an 21 (216).

for travel costs in the “Guchui ling” 鼓吹令 (Order Concerning the Drum and Pipe Band):³⁷⁴

The reason why I, the solitary man, was able to resist [foes that had] more soldiers is that I have been concerned to increase the number of military men and unconcerned about extraneous matters. Therefore, in the past when we had drum and pipe bands, I had them walk—this was out of concern for the horses of the military men. I do not like to appoint many [non-military] officials [in the army]—this is out of concern for the grain provisions of the military men.

孤所以能常以少兵敵眾者，常念增戰士，忽餘事。是以往者有鼓吹而使步行，為戰士愛馬也。不樂多署吏，為戰士愛糧也。

Despite the cost, Cao Cao still allowed his family members and literary men to join the military expeditions. In his earliest expeditions, it was probably because Cao Cao wanted to protect his family members that he brought them with him. Cao Cao must have remembered that his father was murdered without his escort. In addition, Cao Pi writes in his “Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*:”³⁷⁵

Because the times were full of troubles, every time he launched an expedition, I always went along.

以時之多故，每征，余常從。

In his later expeditions, Cao Cao may have decided not to abandon this practice. Although he failed to protect his eldest son Cao Ang 曹昂 (d. 197), for whose death his first wife née Ding 丁 cried and never forgave him,³⁷⁶ his second wife née Bian and their first son Cao Pi almost always accompanied him on military expeditions. Pei Songzhi cites Wang Chen’s *Wei shu* in his

³⁷⁴ *Taiping yulan*, vol. 83, 567.5b.

³⁷⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 2.89 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.342). The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “To the Manner Born? Nature and Nurture in Early Medieval Chinese Literary Thought,” in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, eds. Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey, 53-71 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 65.

³⁷⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 5.156 note 2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 5.581). For a translation of this passage, see Chen Shou, comp.; Pei Songzhi, comm.; Robert Joe Cutter and William Gordon Crowell, comp. and trans., *Empress and Consorts: Selections from Chen Shou’s Records of the Three States with Pei Songzhi’s Commentary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999), 91 note B.

commentary to the “Biographies of Empresses and Consorts:”³⁷⁷

Whenever the empress dowager [i.e. Lady Bian] accompanied the army on expeditions and saw elderly, white-haired people, she would always halt the carriage and call them over to ask how they were. She would present them with taffeta and face them weeping, saying, “I regret that my parents died before I came into my own.”

太后每隨軍征行，見高年白首，輒住車呼問，賜與絹帛，對之涕泣曰：「恨父母不及我時也。」

The passage shows that Lady Bian not only often accompanied the army on expeditions, but also cared about people in the army. To Lady Bian, accompanying the army was tantamount to being with her family and her people. It was so natural to have her in the army that if Cao Cao did not bring her along, people may have thought something was amiss. Furthermore, by bringing his sons along with him, Cao Cao could give his sons military training. Cao Pi writes in his “Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*:”³⁷⁸

I was five years old at that time. Because the realm was in a chaotic state, His Highness [i.e. Cao Cao] had me learn archery. By the time I was six I knew how to shoot. He also had me ride horse. By eight I could shoot from horseback.

余時年五歲，上以世方擾亂，教余學射，六歲而知射。又教余騎馬，八歲而能騎射矣。

Cao Cao and Lady Bian’s second son Cao Zhang was a natural general. According to the *Sanguo zhi*, he had great physical strength and was skilled in archery and horsemanship from childhood. He “accompanied the army on expeditions many times and was impassioned in his resolve and aims” (*shu cong zhengfa, zhiyi kangkai* 數從征伐，志意慷慨).³⁷⁹ Their third son Cao Zhi also accompanied their father on expeditions. Cao Zhi mentions his experience to Cao Rui in the “Qiu

³⁷⁷ *Sanguo zhi*, 5.157 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 5.584). The translation is based on Chen Shou, comp.; Pei Songzhi, comm.; Robert Joe Cutter and William Gordon Crowell, comp. and trans., *Empress and Consorts*, 93 note C.

³⁷⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 2.89 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.342). The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “To the Manner Born? Nature and Nurture in Early Medieval Chinese Literary Thought,” 65.

³⁷⁹ *Sanguo zhi*, 19.555 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1541).

zi shi biao” 求自試表 (Petition Seeking a Chance to Prove Myself):³⁸⁰

In the past, I, your servant, accompanied the late Emperor Wu [i.e. Cao Cao] [on expeditions]. We went as far as the Red Bank in the south, came near to the Dark Green Sea in the east, gazed at the Jade Gate in the west, and emerged from the Dark Barrier in the north. Respectfully I observed the way in which he led the troops and used the forces. One could call it ingenious.

臣昔從先武皇帝南極赤岸，東臨滄海，西望玉門，北出玄塞，伏見所以行師用兵之勢，可謂神妙也。

We assume that like Cao Pi, Cao Zhi also learned military skills from his father. It was just that the first time—and the last time—he was assigned to lead an army, Cao Cao discovered that he was drunk and thus relieved him of his command.³⁸¹

Aside from his family members, Cao Cao also brought literary men. As mentioned in Chapter 3, many of them were appointed military aides to the army supervisor. They drafted letters and proclamations on military and state affairs (*junguo shu xi* 軍國書檄). Although Cao Cao was also a good writer, he would not have had the time to compose so many documents. Men with literary skill were needed for this task.

Moreover, Cao Cao was an unusual military leader. He read texts and composed poems during his campaigns. Pei Songzhi cites Wang Chen’s *Wei shu*:³⁸²

[Cao Cao] commanded the army for more than thirty years, during which time he was never without a book in hand. In the mornings he studied military strategy. In the evenings he contemplated the classics and the commentaries. When he climbed high, he invariably composed a poem.

御軍三十餘年，手不捨書。晝則講武策，夜則思經傳，登高必賦。

Wang Chen’s description of Cao Cao seems to be based on the following excerpts:

³⁸⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 7.106.

³⁸¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 19.558 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1551).

³⁸² *Sanguo zhi*, 1.54 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.215).

Cao Pi, “Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*”³⁸³

His Highness [i.e. Cao Cao] was fond of the *Shi [jing]*, the [*Shang*] *shu*, and other writings and works. He was never without a text in hand even when he went on expeditions. When I asked after him in the morning and evening, I often found him relaxed and at ease [reading a book]. He often said, “If a person is studious at a young age, then his thoughts are focused. Upon growing older, one tends to become forgetful. Only Yuan Boye [i.e. Yuan Yi] and I can be studious when we get old.”

上雅好詩書文籍，雖在軍旅，手不釋卷，每每定省從容。常言「人少好學則思專，長則善忘，長大而能勤學者，唯吾與袁伯業耳。」

Zhang Chao 張超, recommending Yuan Yi 袁遺³⁸⁴

[Yuan Yi] read through all the books and had command of [the traditions established by] the hundred masters. When he climbed high, he could compose a poem. When he saw an object, he knew its name.

包羅載籍，管綜百氏，登高能賦，覩物知名。

To Cao Cao, military and literary activities were not incompatible. Besides undertaking both kinds of activities himself, he also asked his martial son Cao Zhang to do likewise:³⁸⁵

You don't study or admire the way of sages, but are fond of riding a [blood-]sweating horse and fighting with a sword. [By mastering these skills, you can only be] used as an ordinary man. How is it worth prizing?

汝不念讀書慕聖道，而好乘汗馬擊劍，此一夫之用，何足貴也！

Cao Cao's advice found its equivalence in twelfth century Europe. Joachim Bumke relates a letter that expressed a similar idea:³⁸⁶

In a remarkable letter to Count Philip of Flanders (d. 1191), Philip of Harvengt, the abbot of Bonne-Espérance (near Mons), expressed the notion that knightly vigor and a learned education did not have to exclude each other; instead, a combination of the two suited a secular prince well, since “a prince who is not distinguished by any knowledge of letters is as unworthy as a peasant.” The clerics were not alone in propagating this idea, for it appears that it was well received by the lay nobility as well.

³⁸³ *Sanguo zhi*, 2.90 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.343).

³⁸⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.7 note 6 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.31).

³⁸⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 19.555 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1541). Sun Quan even took Cao Cao as example to ask his general Lü Meng 呂蒙 (178-219) to study. For the anecdote, see *Sanguo zhi*, 54.1274-75 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 54.3294).

³⁸⁶ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 429.

Since Cao Cao and his family were also “lay nobility” in a sense—that is, those who belonged to high political status but not to the Han imperial house—they had to distinguish themselves with their learned education as the secular princes in medieval Europe did. With his military and literary accomplishments, Cao Cao became a legend. He was not only the idol of Cao Pi and Cao Zhi,³⁸⁷ but also a hero in later poems. The most well-known example is Su Shi’s 蘇軾 (1037-1101) “Chibi fu” 赤壁賦 (*Fu* on the Red Cliff). In the *fu*, Cao Cao was recognized as a “hero of his age” (*yishi zhi xiong* 一世之雄), who “poured a cup of ale and came to the Yangzi River, held a lance crosswise and composed a poem” (*si jiu lin Jiang, heng shuo fu shi* 釀酒臨江，橫槊賦詩).³⁸⁸ Further, Zhang Yue 張說 (667-731) described how Cao Cao, as one of the “lay nobility,” vied for heaven’s blessing that had been lost by the Han imperial house in his “Ye du yin” 鄴都引 (*Yin* on Ye Capital). He began with the following lines:³⁸⁹

君不見	Haven’t you seen
魏武草創爭天祿	When [Emperor] Wu of Wei [i.e. Cao Cao] founded his state and vied for heaven’s blessing,
羣雄睚眦相馳逐	Heroes with angry looks galloped and chased each other?
晝攜壯士破堅陣	By day he led bold warriors to smash strong legions,
夜接詞人賦華屋	By night he invited poets to compose in ornate chambers.

Zhang Yue told us how magnificent Cao Cao was. To found the state of Wei and vie for heaven’s blessing, he led bold warriors to fight and invited poets to compose. Cao Cao did not lose interest in literary matters during his military campaigns just as Socrates did not give up his

³⁸⁷ Cao Pi and Cao Zhi write about their admiration for Cao Cao’s various talents respectively in the “Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*” and the “Wudi lei” 武帝誄 (Dirge for Emperor Wu).

³⁸⁸ Su Shi 蘇軾; Kong Fanli 孔凡禮, ed., *Su Shi wenji* 蘇軾文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1.6. This image of Cao Cao is further elaborated in the *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (Romance of the Three States).

³⁸⁹ Zhang Yue 張說, *Zhang Yangong ji* 張燕公集 (in *Siqu quanshu* 四庫全書; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 10.1a. The translation is based on an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

philosophical pursuits during Athenian military expeditions. Socrates could stand outside through the night reflecting on philosophical matters. Cao Cao could find leisure time to read the texts and even go to the expense of bringing literary men with him on his expeditions. Both of them had boundless energy and a strong interest in something beyond warfare. According to Alcibiades, Socrates' unusual deeds demonstrated to the Athenians "what sort of thing the strong man did and dared."³⁹⁰ With his unusual decisions, Cao Cao demonstrated to both military and literary men what kind of lord was able to initiate a new era of rule.

Cao Pi and Cao Zhi: Guarding the City vs. Accompanying the Army

In Jian'an 16 (211), Cao Pi guarded Ye while his father launched a western expedition. During this campaign, his mother and brothers all accompanied the army. In Jian'an 19 (214), Cao Zhi guarded Ye while Cao Pi joined the expedition. Although guarding the city was an important task, the Cao brothers felt a sense of loss when they were left behind. Cao Pi writes in the "Gan li fu" 感離賦 (*Fu* on the Parting Sorrow):³⁹¹

In the sixteenth year of Jian'an (211), His Highness [i.e. Cao Cao] launched a western expedition. I stayed to guard [Ye] whereas my aged mother and brothers all accompanied him. I long for them so much that I have written a *fu* as follows:

建安十六年，上西征，余居守，老母諸弟皆從。不勝思慕，乃作賦曰：

秋風動兮天氣涼	The autumn wind stirs, and the air is cool;
居常不快兮中心傷	Staying here I am unhappy all the time, and my heart grieves.
出北園兮彷徨	I go out to the Northern Park, walking back and forth;
望眾(慕)[墓]兮成行	I look at the multitudinous tombs, which lie in array.

柯條慳兮無色	The branches are miserable and colorless,
綠草變兮萎黃	The green grass becomes dry and yellow.

³⁹⁰ Plato's "Symposium," 51 (220C).

³⁹¹ *Yiwen leiju*, 30.528. The variant marked here is based on Cao Pi; Zhang Pu, ed., *Wei Wendi ji*, 1.6a. The translation is based on Lois Fusek, "The Poetry of Ts'ao P'i (187-226)," 167.

感微霜兮零落
隨風雨兮飛揚

In response to the slight frost, they wither and fall;
With the wind and rain, they fly and drift.

日薄暮兮無惊
思不衰兮愈多
招延佇兮良久
忽踟躕兮忘家

As the sun sets, I feel joyless;
My thoughts do not stop, but grow all the more.
They cause me to linger a long time;
Pacing to and fro, suddenly I forget to return home.

This *fu* reads very similar to Cao Pi's first of two "Yan ge xing" 燕歌行 (*Xing* of "Singing a Yan Song"), which is written in the voice of a deserted wife. Cao Pi writes in the first eight lines:³⁹²

	秋風蕭瑟天氣涼	The autumn wind sighs and sighs, the air is cool;
	草木搖落露為霜	Plants and trees shudder and fall, dew turns to frost.
	羣燕辭歸雁南翔	Flocks of swallows cry farewell, geese fly south;
4	念君客遊多思腸	I think of you on your travel, my heart is filled with longing.
	慊慊思歸戀故鄉	Discontent you wish to return, you yearn for your old home;
	君何淹留寄他方	Why, sir, do you stay long, stay in that strange land?
	賤妾堯堯守空房	Your humble wife, all alone, keeps the empty chamber;
8	憂來思君不敢忘	Anxiously I think of you, I dare not forget.

Left behind, Cao Pi described his feelings as he described the deserted wife's. He felt no comfort or joy, but rather coldness, loneliness, and a sense of loss.

In the preface to his "Dong zheng fu" 東征賦 (*Fu* on the Eastern Expedition), Cao Zhi writes about the time when he stayed at Ye:³⁹³

In the nineteenth year of Jian'an (214), the royal army launched an eastern expedition against the Wu bandits [i.e. Sun Quan and his men]. I took charge of the palace guardsmen and guarded the palace bureaus. [I could not accompany the army] but once the Divine Militant [i.e. Cao Cao] acts, the eastern tribes will certainly be conquered. Imagining the majesty of their return, I thus have written a *fu*.

建安十九年，王師東征吳寇，余典禁兵，衛官省。然神武一舉，東夷必克。想見振旅之盛，故作賦一篇。

³⁹² Lu Qinli, ed., "Wei shi," 4.394. The translation is based on an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

³⁹³ *Cao ji quanping*, 1.1. The translation of this preface is based on David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 22.

In his *fu*, Cao Zhi imagines the majesty of the royal army. However, like his brother, Cao Zhi also expresses the sorrow he felt upon the army's departure:³⁹⁴

登城隅之飛觀兮	Climbing a soaring tower at the corner of the wall,
望六師之所登	I gaze at the movements of the six regiments.
幡旗轉而心異兮	The banners swirl, and I feel a change in my heart,
舟楫動而傷情	The boats' oars move, and I am pained with grief.
顧身微而任顯兮	Considering how slight is my person and how illustrious is my post,
愧責重而命輕	I am ashamed at how heavy is my charge and how meager is my fate.
嗟我愁其何為兮	Alas, why am I so sad?
心遙思而懸旌	Longing for someone afar, my heart is like a flapping banner.

Yang Xiu further describes Cao Zhi's anxiety in the "Chu zheng fu" 出征賦 (*Fu* on Sending Out the Expedition):³⁹⁵

公命臨淄	The lord [i.e. Cao Cao] commands the Marquis of Linzi [i.e. Cao Zhi]
守于鄴都	To guard the city of Ye.
侯懷大舜	The Marquis recalls the great Shun,
乃號乃誓	Issuing orders and making plans.
茂國事之是勉兮	On state affairs he vigorously exerts himself,
歎經時而離居	Yet he sighs that he must live apart for so long.
企觀愛之偏處兮	As he longs for attention and love from someone far away,
獨搔首於城隅	All alone he scratches his head at a corner of the wall.

Yang Xiu alludes to a love poem, the *Shi jing* poem "Jing nü" 靜女 (Fair Girl, no. 42). In this *Shi jing* poem, the speaker waits for a fair girl at a corner of the wall (*chengyu* 城隅). Not seeing her, he scratches his head (*sao shou* 搔首) and paces to and fro (*chichu* 踟躕). Now Cao Zhi, "climbing a soaring tower at the corner of the wall," reminded Yang Xiu of this anxious boy in the love poem. Just as the boy longed for the fair girl, Cao Zhi longed for "attention and love

³⁹⁴ *Cao ji quanping*, 1.1. The translation of these eight lines is based on David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 35.

³⁹⁵ For these eight lines and other sixteen lines of this *fu*, see *Yiwen leiju*, 59.1071. For still other six lines, see *Beitang shuchao*, 137.7b; *Taiping yulan*, vol. 108, 770.3b. The translation of these eight lines is based on David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 35.

from someone far away,” who presumably was Cao Cao. Based on Yang Xiu’s observation, we may assume that it was to receive their father’s affection and recognition that Cao Pi and Cao Zhi longed to accompany the army on expeditions. They loved to be in his presence and demonstrate their military skills.

In his “Self Statement, from *Normative Discourses*,” Cao Pi writes how he discussed archery with Xun Yu during a southern expedition:³⁹⁶

Later, the army launched a southern expedition and halted at Quli. The director of the imperial secretariat Xun Yu, upon [imperial] command, served as [imperial] envoy to bring greetings and gifts to the army. He visited me. Toward the end of our talk, Yu said, “I heard that you are skilled in shooting from both left and right. This is indeed difficult to achieve.” I said, “You sir have not seen me discharge arrows from my neck and mouth, downward onto [the targets made of] horse hooves and upward onto [the targets depicting an effigy of] the Yuezhi people.”³⁹⁷ Yu laughed merrily and said, “Really!” I said, “An archery range has a set size, and a target has a set place. Even though every shot hits the target, this does not mean it is the greatest feat. If one never draws his bow in vain and always pierces what he hits when he gallops on the plain, advances into lush grass, intercepts strong beasts, and obstructs light-flying birds, this is truly great.” At that time, the aide to the army supervisor Zhang Jing was seated. He looked at Yu, clapped and said, “Excellent!”

後軍南征，次曲蠡。尚書令荀彧奉使犒軍，見余，談論之末，彧言：「聞君善左右射，此實難能。」余言：「執事未覩夫項發口縱，俯馬蹄而仰月支也。」彧喜笑曰：「乃爾！」余曰：「埒有常徑，的有常所，雖每發輒中，非至妙也。若馳平原，赴豐草，要狡獸，截輕禽，使弓不虛彎，所中必洞，斯則妙矣。」時軍[師]祭酒張京在坐，顧彧拊手曰：「善！」

This memorable event took place in Jian’an 17 (212). Cao Pi was then twenty-six years old. He could shoot from both left and right and talk about archery. His talk was so appealing that people in the army applauded him.

In his “Mingdu pian” 名都篇 (*Pian* of “A Famous Metropolis”), Cao Zhi also describes splendid young men. With their handsome looks, energy and versatility, they dazzle the

³⁹⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 2.89-90 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.342).

³⁹⁷ For a note on the targets, see Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 3, 70 note on lines 87-88.

onlookers (line 15) and the master archers (line 16):³⁹⁸

	名都多妖女	A famous metropolis has many bewitching girls,
	京洛出少年	Luo capital produces its young men.
	寶劍直千金	Their precious swords are worth a thousand in gold,
4	被服麗且鮮	The clothes they wear are beautiful and lustrous.
	鬪雞東郊道	They fight cocks on the eastern suburb road,
	走馬長楸間	Ride their horses in the deep catalpas.
	馳騁未能半	Before I have galloped half the way,
8	雙兔過我前	A brace of rabbits crosses in front.
	攬弓捷鳴鏑	Grasping my bow, I nock a singing arrowhead;
	長驅上南山	Giving a long chase, I go up to the south mountains.
	左挽因右發	I draw to the left and shoot to the right,
12	一縱兩禽連	A single shot impales both the game.
	餘巧未及展	With other tricks yet to be shown,
	仰手接飛鳶	I raise my hands and hit a winging kite head on.
	觀者咸稱善	The onlookers all say “Excellent!”
16	眾工歸我妍	Those skilled [at archery] pay tribute to my fine skill.
	我歸宴平樂	We return and feast at the Pingle Tower [outside of the western gate],
	美酒斗十千	The good ale is ten thousand a flagon.
	膾鯉膾胎鰕	We mince carp, stew roe-bearing globe fish,
20	(炮)[寒]鼈炙熊蹯	Jelly turtle, broil bear paw.
	鳴儔嘯匹侶	I call my companions and shout for my partners and mates,
	列坐竟長筵	We sit in a row and fill the long mat.
	連翩擊鞠壤	We fly back and forth playing kickball and pegs,
24	巧捷惟萬端	Nimble and agile in a myriad ways.
	白日西南馳	The bright sun speeds to the southwest,
	光景不可攀	Time cannot be held back.
	雲散還城邑	Scattering like clouds, we return to the city;
28	清晨復來還	In the clear dawn, we will come again.

The speaker changes to a first person voice from line 7 on. Thus when the Tang poet Li Bo alludes lines 17-18 of Cao Zhi’s poem in his “Qiang jin jiu” 將進酒 (Please Have a Drink), he identifies the young man with Cao Zhi:³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ *Cao ji quanping*, 5.61-62. The variant marked here is provided in this edition. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 19-20.

³⁹⁹ Li Bo; Qu Tuiyuan and Zhu Jincheng, eds. and comm., *Li Bo ji jiaozhu*, 3.225.

陳王昔時宴平樂
斗酒十千恣歡譔

In the past when the Prince of Chen feasted at the Pingle Lodge,
With ale ten thousand a flagon, he gave himself to joy and mirth.

We do not need to identify any of the young men in the “*Pian* of ‘A Famous Metropolis’” with Cao Zhi, but we can say that Cao Zhi portrays an ideal figure of himself in the poem. The young man who impales two rabbits with a single shot is just like the excellent archer in Cao Pi’s talk with Xun Yu. Knowing those archery skills, the Cao brothers needed someone—especially their father—to demonstrate themselves to.

Joachim Bumke observes that in medieval Europe, there was “a wide range of motivations” that “might prompt a knight to participate in a tournament.”⁴⁰⁰ He points out that the tournaments provided “training in formation movements and in the technique of the massed charge,” but “many noble youths took part in these exercises” for other reasons:⁴⁰¹

The rough martial games offered the young knights a chance to distinguish themselves before an audience of their peers, and in this way to win fame and recognition within noble society. The didactic poem *Tirol und Fridebrant* puts it this way: “Tourneying elevates a man’s dignity, and for his dignity he is praised by the ladies. Tourneying is a knightly thing.”

At Cao Cao’s court, to win Cao Cao’s heart was more important than to win ladies’ hearts, but in terms of participating in a military event in order to distinguish themselves, the Cao brothers and the European noble youth were identical.

Aside from personal motivations, the Cao brothers also express a passion for the state in their poems. For example, Cao Zhi writes in his sixth “*Za shi*” 雜詩 (Miscellaneous Poems):⁴⁰²

飛觀百餘尺

The soaring tower is over a hundred feet,

⁴⁰⁰ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 264.

⁴⁰¹ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 264-65.

⁴⁰² *Cao ji quanping*, 4.38. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 363-64.

	臨牖御櫺軒	I come to the windows and arrive at the latticed porch.
	遠望周千里	I gaze afar a thousand <i>li</i> round,
4	朝夕見平原	Day and night watching the plains.
	烈士多悲心	Among men of honor there are many mournful hearts,
	小人偷自閒	Petty men snatch leisure time for themselves.
	國讎亮不塞	The enemies of the state are clearly unchecked,
8	甘心思喪元	Willingly I long to give up my head.
	撫劍西南望	Stroking my sword and gazing southwest [to guard against Liu Bei],
	思欲赴太山	I wish longingly to go to Mount Tai [where the dead go].
	絃急悲聲發	The strings quicken, mournful sounds emitted—
12	聆我慷慨言	Listen to my impassioned words.

Like Cao Zhi in his “*Fu* on the Eastern Expedition,” the speaker in this poem seems to stay in a city. He longes to meet a hero’s death (line 10), but having to guard the city, he could only gaze afar from a soaring tower (lines 1-4). The words *lieshi* 烈士 (men of honor), *beixin* 悲心 (mournful hearts) and *kangkai* 慷慨 (impassioned) that we have seen in Cao Zhi’s “Seven Enlightenments” and “Presented to Xu Gan” reappear in this poem. With these keywords, Cao Zhi reaffirms his passion for the state and inclination for impassioned expressions.

In his first “Liyang Zuo shi” 黎陽作詩 (*Shi* Written at Liyang), Cao Pi expresses the same passion for the state but in a distinct style. As if attempting to emulate the *Shi jing* tradition, he writes in four-syllable lines, borrows phrases from the *Shi jing*, and refers to the *Shi jing* heroes King Wu of Zhou and Duke of Zhou:⁴⁰³

	朝發鄴城	At dawn I leave the city of Ye,
	夕宿韓陵	At night I stay at Hanling.
	霖雨載塗	The continuous rain fills the road,
4	輿人困窮	The driver has great difficulty.
	載馳載驅	We gallop and race,
	沐雨櫛風	With hair washed by rain, combed by wind.
	舍我高殿	Leaving my tall hall,
8	何為泥中	Why am I here in the mud?

⁴⁰³ Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 4.399. The translation is based on Lois Fusek, “The Poetry of Ts’ao P’i (187-226),” 189.

	在昔周武	In the past, [King] Wu of Zhou
	爰暨公旦	And Dan, the Duke of Zhou
	載主而征	Took up the spirit tablet and launched expeditions,
12	救民塗炭	Saving people from mud and ashes.
	彼此一時	Like them, we are in a [favorable] time,
	唯天所讚	We are supported by heaven.
	我獨何人	After all, who am I?
16	能不靖亂	How can I not bring peace to the turmoil?

In these two stanzas, Cao Pi respectively recalls the sorrow of soldiers as described in the *Shi jing* poem “Shi wei” 式微 (Reduced, no. 36), and the solemn atmosphere of King Wu of Zhou’s 周武王 battle against King Zhou of Shang 商紂王 as described in the *Shi jing* poem “Da ming” 大明 (Greatly Bright, no. 236). Frustrated by the rain, wind, and muddy road as ancient soldiers were, Cao Pi questions himself by adapting the *Shi jing* poem “Reduced.” In the second stanza, the *Shi jing* poet sings:⁴⁰⁴

	式微	Reduced!
	式微	Reduced!
8	胡不歸	Why not return?
	微君之躬	Were it not for our lord’s own concerns,
	胡為乎泥中	Why are we here in the mud?

While the *Shi jing* poet ends this stanza with a complaint, Cao Pi seems to hear King Wu of Zhou’s exhortation in the *Shi jing* poem “Greatly Bright.”⁴⁰⁵

	維予侯興	“We alone shall rise!
	上帝臨女	The god on high heeds you.
48	無貳爾心	Let no one waver in his heart!”

⁴⁰⁴ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 2b.16b (92-2). The translation is based on James Legge, trans. *The She king or The Book of Poetry*, 59; Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 36.

⁴⁰⁵ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 16b.8b-9a (543-2, 544-1). The translation is taken from C. H. Wang, “Epic,” in his *From Ritual to Allegory: Seven Essays in Early Chinese Poetry*, 73-114 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988), 106.

Cao Pi claims that “Like them, we are in a [favorable] time,/ We are supported by heaven.” To save people once again from mud and ashes, they must follow King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, launching expeditions and bringing peace to the turmoil. No one, including himself, should disobey heaven’s mandate and be absent from such expeditions. With this poem Cao Pi justified why he longed to accompany the army. It was not only for his father’s recognition and personal fame, but also for the state, for the people, and for heaven’s support that was given to them.

Literary Men in the Army: Aides, Portraitists, and Beyond

In his “Xizheng fu” 西征賦 (*Fu* on the Western Expedition), Xu Gan writes:⁴⁰⁶

奉明辟之渥德 與遊軫而西伐 過京邑以釋駕 觀帝居之舊制	Respectfully receiving the bright lord’s great favor, I go on a western campaign with his traveling carriage. Passing by the capital, we loosen the harness To view the old forms of the imperial dwellings.
伊吾儕之挺(劣)[力] 獲載筆而從師 無嘉謀以云補 徒荷祿而蒙私 非小人之所幸 雖身安而心(危)[違]	We fellows exert our best efforts, Being allowed to carry writing brushes to accompany the army. Having no good counsel to assist him, We can do nothing but gratefully accept salary and his partiality. This is not what I, a petty man, aspire to; Although my body is comfortable, my heart is not.
庶區宇之今定 入告成乎后皇 登明堂而飲至 銘功烈乎帝裳	I hope the realm will be pacified today, [So that we can] return and report our success to Lord [Heaven] and Sovereign [Earth]. We ascend the Bright Hall and attend a victory feast, Inscribing achievements on the imperial banners.

⁴⁰⁶ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 4.152-53. The variants marked here are provided in this edition. The last character 裳 could be also written as 常. For a note on their interchangeability, see Xu Shen, comp.; Duan Yucai, comm., *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, 7b.47a (358). The word, written as 裳 or 常, had the connotation of “banner.” For an entry on “manager of the banners” (*sichang* 司常), see *Zhou li zhushu*, 27.16a (420-2). The practice of inscribing achievements on banners is also seen in Xie Tiao’s 謝朓 (464-499) “Wei Xuancheng gong bai zhang” 為宣城公拜章 (何以克詠九歌，載宣七德，銘彼旗裳，勒斯鍾鼎) and Shen Jiong’s 沈炯 (503-561) “Wudi ai’ce wen” 武帝哀策文 (銘功德於旗常，被徽音於鍾石). For the lines, see *Yiwen leiju*, 51.919, 14.273.

According to Yu Shaochu, this *fu* was written in Jian'an 16 (211) when Cao Cao launched a western expedition against Ma Chao. At that time, Xu Gan served as cadet at the court of Cao Zhi, who accompanied the army on this expedition.⁴⁰⁷ Xu Gan writes it is Cao Cao's favor that allows him to accompany the army on the expedition. Because of this favor, he was able to view the old capital Luoyang. However, he could not hold a weapon but a writing brush. He even had no good counsel to offer, but received undeserved salary and favor.

Xu Gan may have just been feigning modesty. Nevertheless, Wu Zhi indeed deprecated the role of literary men in the army. He writes in his "Da Wei taizi jian" 答魏太子牋 (Memorandum Replying to the Heir Designate of Wei):⁴⁰⁸

As for Chen Lin, Xu Gan, Liu Zhen and Ying Yang, [...] In serving as attendants with poise and composure, these men were truly such men. If there were troubles on the frontier, the subordinates were like boiling water in a tripod, military documents arrived like spokes [gathering at the center of a wheel], and feathered proclamations sped forth one after another, then those fine men could not have undertaken any tasks. 陳徐劉應，[...]凡此數子，於雍容侍從，實其人也。若乃邊境有虞，羣下鼎沸，軍書輻至，羽檄交馳，於彼諸賢，非其任也。

Based on this, one may think that Cao Cao should not have allowed literary men to join his military entourage. However, in his "Ruan Yuanyu lei" 阮元瑜誄 (Dirge for Ruan Yuanyu), Wang Can recognizes Ruan Yu's writings at the court and in the army:⁴⁰⁹

既登宰朝	Having ascended to the court of the chancellor,
充我祕府	He served at our secretariat [i.e. <i>jishi</i> 記室].
允司文章	Faithfully he took charge of writings,
爰及軍旅	As well as army [affairs].
庶績惟殷	His achievements are numerous,
簡書如雨	His writings on the tablets poured forth like rain.
強力(成敏)[敏成]	Exerting himself, he completed [his work] quickly;

⁴⁰⁷ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 437.

⁴⁰⁸ *Wen xuan*, 40.1825.

⁴⁰⁹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.142-43. The variants marked here are provided in this edition.

事至則舉

Whenever a matter came to him he immediately attended to it.

Wang Can praises Ruan Yu's writings that "poured forth like rain." We can imagine that when "military documents arrived like spokes [gathering at the center of a wheel], and feathered proclamations sped forth one after another" as Wu Zhi writes, it must have been vital to write fast and well. Wang Can observes that Ruan Yu could immediately attend to every matter.

In his "Wang Zhongxuan lei" 王仲宣誄 (Dirge for Wang Zhongxuan), Cao Zhi praises Wang Can's counsel:⁴¹⁰

乃署祭酒
與君行止
算無遺策
畫無失理

Then he was appointed aide [to the army supervisor],
To move about with the lord.
In what he planned, there was no miscalculation;
In what he proposed, there was no misjudgment.

Of course, writers of dirges tend to exaggerate the achievements of the deceased. Ruan Yu and Chen Lin, however, are indeed known for their writings for the court and the army. For example, Cao Pi singles out their "petitions and letters" (*zhangbiao shuji* 章表書記) in his "On Literature, from *Normative Discourses*" and "Letter to Wu Zhi."⁴¹¹ Pei Songzhi further cites from Yu Huan's *Dian lue* 典略 anecdotes about Ruan Yu and Chen Lin's writing of letters and proclamations for Cao Cao in the army:⁴¹²

When Taizu [i.e. Cao Cao] first launched an expedition to Jingzhou, he had [Ruan] Yu write a letter to Liu Bei. When he launched an expedition against Ma Chao, he again had Yu write a letter to Han Sui.

太祖初征荊州，使瑀作書與劉備。及征馬超，又使瑀作書與韓遂。

[Chen] Lin wrote letters and proclamations. When the drafts were completed, he presented them to Taizu. Taizu had been suffering from headaches. On that day he had a

⁴¹⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 10.188.

⁴¹¹ *Wen xuan*, 42.1897, 52.2271.

⁴¹² *Sanguo zhi*, 21.600-1 notes 1-2 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1658-59).

headache. He lay down to read what Lin had written. Suddenly he rose up and said: “This cured my illness.” He frequently generously rewarded [Chen Lin].

琳作諸書及檄，草成呈太祖。太祖先苦頭風，是日疾發，臥讀琳所作，翕然而起曰：「此愈我病。」數加厚賜。

Taizu once had [Ruan] Yu write a letter to Han Sui. Just at that time, Taizu went out to some nearby places and Yu accompanied him. Thus he prepared the draft on horseback. When the letter was completed, he presented it. Taizu held a writing brush and was about to apply finishing touches to it, but eventually he could not add or delete any word.

太祖嘗使瑀作書與韓遂，時太祖適近出，瑀隨從，因於馬上具草。書成呈之。太祖擘筆欲有所定，而竟不能增損。

Lu Bi cites the *Taiping yulan*, which cites a passage from the *Jinlouzi* 金樓子 of Xiao Yi 蕭繹

(508–544) about Ruan Yu’s composition of a letter to Liu Bei:⁴¹³

Liu Bei turned against Cao Cao. Cao Cao had Ruan Yu write a letter to Liu Bei. He immediately completed the letter on horseback.

劉備叛走，曹操使阮瑀為書與劉備，馬上立成。

These passages again emphasize the importance of writing fast and well in an army, a task that not every literary man could accomplish. For example, the biography of Sun Hui 孫惠—who was Sima Yue’s 司馬越 (d. 311) aide—in the *Jin shu* writes:⁴¹⁴

When [Sima Yue needed to] write letters or proclamations, [Sima] Yue sometimes sent a post horse to hurry him [i.e. Sun Hui] along. In response to his command, [Sun Hui] immediately had them completed. All of them showed literary polish.

每造書檄，越或驛馬催之，應命立成，皆有文采。

[Sima] Yue killed Zhou Mu and others. At night he summoned the adjunct Wang Yi to write a petition. Shivering, [Wang] Yi ruined several sheets of paper without completing anything. At that time [Sun] Hui was not there. [Sima] Yue sighed and said, “If the palace attendant Sun [Hui] were here, the petition would have been finished long ago.”

越誅周穆等，夜召參軍王虞造表，虞戰懼，壞數紙不成。時惠不在，越歎曰：「孫中郎在，表久就矣。」

⁴¹³ *Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1659. Also see Xiao Yi 蕭繹, comp.; Xu Yimin 許逸民, ed. and comm., *Jinlouzi jiaojian* 金樓子校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 1371-73.

⁴¹⁴ *Jin shu*, 71.1884.

Sun Hui and Wang Yi stood in sharp contrast. Whereas the former could complete his work in a short time with literary polish, the latter was a great disappointment to his lord. Ruan Yu and Chen Lin belonged to the former type. Ruan Yu could write on horseback his “draft” to which Cao Cao did not need to apply any finishing touches. Chen Lin’s drafts even aroused Cao Cao from his sickbed.

A good letter or proclamation could have a practical function in military campaigns. For example, when Cao Cao launched his northeastern expeditions, Zhong You 鍾繇 (151-230), who guarded the rear for Cao Cao, wrote to powerful generals in the northwest and successfully had them send their sons as hostages.⁴¹⁵ When Sun Quan ordered Lü Meng 呂蒙 (178-219) to attack three commanderies, Lü Meng first wrote to the governors and successfully had two of them surrender.⁴¹⁶ We do not know the immediate effects that Ruan Yu and Chen Lin’s writings had on the enemies or allies, but two letters and proclamations that they wrote on behalf of Cao Cao are included in the *Wen xuan* as models: Ruan Yu’s 阮瑀 “Wei Cao gong zuo shu yu Sun Quan” 為曹公作書與孫權 (Letter on Behalf of Lord Cao to Sun Quan) and Chen Lin’s “Xi Wu jiangxiao buqu wen” 檄吳將校部曲文 (Proclamation to Wu Generals and Soldiers).⁴¹⁷

According to Yu Shaochu, the letter to Sun Quan was written in Jian’an 16 (211), three years after the Red Cliff Battle as mentioned in the letter.⁴¹⁸ In the voice of Cao Cao, Ruan Yu attempts to induce Sun Quan to capitulate by reminding him of the Sun family’s marital

⁴¹⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 13.392 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 13.1203).

⁴¹⁶ *Sanguo zhi*, 54.1276 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 54.3298).

⁴¹⁷ *Wen xuan*, 42.1887-94, 44.1976-87. Also see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 5.165-69, 2.66-71.

The Qing scholar Zhao Ming 趙銘 (1828-1889) questioned the authenticity of Ruan Yu’s letter and Chen Lin’s proclamation included in the *Wen xuan*. For his argument, see Zhao Ming 趙銘, *Qinhe shanfang yigao* 琴鶴山房遺稿, in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian* 清代詩文集彙編, vol. 706 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 5.17b-19b (683-84).

For Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng’s defense of the authenticity of Ruan Yu’s letter, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 50-51.

For Yu Shaochu’s defense of the attribution of the proclamation to Chen Lin, see *Jian’an qizi ji*, 450-56.

⁴¹⁸ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 435.

relationship with the Cao family, by blaming Liu Bei for alienating Sun Quan from Cao Cao, and by explaining their loss at the Red Cliff Battle. Like an elder giving advice to a young man, he cites examples from history to explain how unnecessary enmities began and how wise decisions were made. He claims that he does not care to take Sun Quan's land, and promises that Sun Quan can continue to govern the land if he captures Liu Bei.

Chen Lin's proclamation was written in Jian'an 21 (216) when Cao Cao launched an expedition against Sun Quan, one year after Zhang Lu was defeated as mentioned in the proclamation. In the voice of the director of the imperial secretariat (*shangshu ling* 尚書令),⁴¹⁹ Chen Lin writes to the people of Wu. He first emphasizes it is because Cao Cao represents the Han court and heaven that he has easily conquered many regional powers and will also conquer Sun Quan. Cao Cao withdrew from his previous southern expeditions against Sun Quan because he was waiting for an opportune moment, like a vulture flying high before it strikes a bird, or like King Wu of Zhou retreating before he attacked King Zhou of Shang. Further, he claims that the people of Wu are "fine treasures and sharp weapons of the state" (*guojia liangbao liqi* 國家良寶利器), but many of them were killed by Sun Quan. If they surrender, the state will spare their lives and generously reward them.

As aides to the army supervisor, Ruan Yu and Chen Lin assisted Cao Cao in drafting letters and proclamations. When they wrote in Cao Cao's voice or about him, they also played the role of his portraitist, depicting for the audience a vivid image of Cao Cao—such as a wise elder in Ruan Yu's letter, and the legitimate representative of Han in Chen Lin's proclamation.

In their *shi* and *fu*, Ruan Yu, Chen Lin and other literary men also draw dazzling portraits

⁴¹⁹ The proclamation writes that the director of the imperial secretariat was [Xun] Yu, but Xun Yu died in Jian'an 17 (212) before Zhang Lu was defeated as mentioned in the proclamation. Thus Zhao Ming questions its authenticity. Yu Shaochu proposes that Yu could be a mistake for Hua Xin 華歆 (157-232), who was the director of the imperial secretariat. For his argument, see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 450-56.

of Cao Cao and his army. For example, Cao Pi's "Shu zheng fu" 述征賦 (*Fu* Recounting the Expedition) and Po Qin's "Zhuan zheng fu" 撰征賦 (*Fu* Written on the Expedition) describe the rumbling drums and flapping banners, white shining armor and scarlet arrows.⁴²⁰ In addition to land forces, Jian'an literati display something new: a fleet heading for an enormous-scale war. For example, in their "*Fu* on Drifting on the Huai River," Cao Pi and Wang Can write of "grove-like" masts and unfurled sails, yells of the sailors, and high morale of the warriors.⁴²¹ When he describes the ships sailing prow to stern a thousand *li* long (*zhulu qianli* 舳艫千里), Wang Can compares them to eagles gliding in the sky:⁴²²

(蒼)[若]鷹飄逸 遞相競軼 凌驚波以高鶩 馳駭浪而赴質	Gliding like eagles, They compete to overtake one another. Sailing over the frightening waves they steer high, Speeding on the terrifying billows they head for their destination.
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In their *fu* on military expeditions, Ruan Yu and Chen Lin do not forget to portray Cao Cao as a wise and legitimate ruler. For example, Ruan Yu begins his "Ji zheng fu" 紀征賦 (*Fu* Recording the Expedition) with the following lines:⁴²³

仰天民之高衢兮 慕在昔之遐軌 希篤聖之崇綱兮 惟弘哲而為紀 同天工而人代兮 匪賢智其能使	I esteem the high road that the heavenly men took, Admire the path that was followed in the remote past. I long for a steadfast sage to uphold the norms, Hope for a great wise man to create guidelines. The work is that of heaven, and men act for it; If not a sage or wise man, how could he carry it out?
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⁴²⁰ Cao Pi's "*Fu* Recounting the Expedition" and Po Qin's "*Fu* Written on the Expedition" are dated to Jian'an 13 (208) because Cao Pi indicates the year in his preface, and Po Qin mentions it was an eastern/southeastern expedition to *sanjiang wuhu* 三江五湖, which usually refers to the Wu area. For information about the date of Po Qin's *fu*, see Lu Kanru 陸侃如, *Zhonggu wenxue xinian* 中國文學繫年 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985), 375.

⁴²¹ Cao Pi's and Wang Can's "*Fu* on Drifting on the Huai River" are dated to Jian'an 14 (209) because Cao Pi indicates the year and the group composition in his preface.

⁴²² *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.99-100. The variant marked here is provided in this edition.

⁴²³ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 5.163. Ruan Yu's "*Fu* Recording the Expedition" is dated to Jian'an 13 (208). For a note on the date of this *fu*, see Cheng Liang-shu, "Chu ti feng zuo—Cao Wei jituan de fuzuo huodong," 187.

By paying tribute to ancient sages and citing the line “Men act for heaven to do its work” (*tiangong ren qi dai zhi* 天工人其代之) from the *Shang shu* 尚書,⁴²⁴ Ruan Yu implies that Cao Cao, like ancient sages, is able to act for heaven. Chen Lin also compares Cao Cao to exemplary figures in ancient times in his “Shenwu fu” 神武賦 (*Fu* on the Divine Militant):⁴²⁵

佇盤桓以淹次 乃申命而後征 覲狄民之故土 追大晉之遐蹤 惡先穀之懲寇 善魏絳之和戎 受金石而弗伐 蓋禮樂而思終	Long we remain here, lingering and waiting, halting for a while; Thereupon he issues commands, and then launches the expedition. Respectfully visiting the old land of the Di people, He traces the remote tracks of the great Jin. Detesting Xian Hu’s punishing the invaders, He approves of Wei Jiang’s making peace with the Rong people. Accepting bronze and stone [musical instruments] but not boasting, He upholds [the principles of] rites and music and ponders how things end.
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According to the preface, this *fu* was written about the northeastern expedition against the Wuhuan people in Jian’an 12 (207). In this *fu*, Chen Lin equates the land of the Wuhuan people with that of the Di people, where Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636-628 B.C.) took refuge for twelve years before he became a leader of the vassal lords in the Autumn and Spring period.⁴²⁶ Thus Chen Lin uses the word *jin* 覲, which means to visit the Son of Heaven or his representative like Duke Wen of Jin, to describe Cao Cao’s visit to the old land of the Di people. There Cao Cao “traces the remote tracks of the great Jin.” In Chen Lin’s portrait, he further recalls two figures of the Jin state who stood in sharp contrast: Xian Hu 先穀 (d. 596 B.C.) and Wei Jiang 魏絳 (fl. in the reign of Duke Dao of Jin 晉悼公, i.e. 573-558 B.C.). Xian Hu rushed

⁴²⁴ Kong Anguo 孔安國, comm. (attributed); Kong Yingda 孔穎達, subcomm., *Shang shu zhengyi* 尚書正義 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 4.21b (62-1).

⁴²⁵ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 2.44. Chen Lin’s “*Fu* on the Divine Militant” is dated to Jian’an 12 (207) because Chen Lin indicates the year in his preface.

⁴²⁶ For Duke Wen of Jin’s taking refuge in the land of the Di people, see Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed. and comm., *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Kaohsiung: Fuwen tushu chubanshe, 1991), Xi 23.6, 404-5.

into battle against the Chu people, resulting in the disastrous battle at Bi 郟 (northwest of modern Zhengzhou 鄭州, Henan), whereas Wei Jiang made peace with the Rong people and brought prosperity to the state of Jin.⁴²⁷ Moreover, according to the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, when Wei Jiang was honored by Duke Dao of Jin with bronze and stone musical instruments, he attributed the prosperity to the state, the lord, and the officers. He further asked the lord to think about the future while enjoying the present peace.⁴²⁸ His actions conformed to the principles of rites and music. Now Cao Cao, as Chen Lin portrays him, detests Xian Hu and approves of Wei Jiang. Thus he holds back his army and issues commands before he launches a military expedition, and will not boast when he wins victory.

Just as Ruan Yu and Chen Lin compared Cao Cao to ancient sages and exemplary figures, medieval European poets glorified their kings and princes as a second King David.⁴²⁹ When celebrating their lord's military achievements, they all attempted to identify him with a cultural hero. Thus the lord was not only someone who possessed personal strength, but also someone who inherited the values of antiquity.

Kong Rong was one of the few literary men who dared to develop this idea in a sarcastic way. For example, when Cao Cao captured Jizhou and married Yuan Xi's wife Lady Zhen to Cao Pi in Jian'an 10 (205), Kong Rong sent him a letter titled "Chao Caogong wei zi na Zhenshi shu" 嘲曹公為子納甄氏書 (Letter Mocking Lord Cao's Marrying Lady Zhen to His Son):⁴³⁰

After King Wu [of Zhou] launched an expedition against [King] Zhou [of Shang], he rewarded the Duke of Zhou with Da Ji [King Zhou's concubine, who reputedly infatuated King Zhou of Shang].

⁴²⁷ For the battle at Bi and Wei Jiang's making peace with the Rong people, see Yang Bojun, ed. and comm., *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, Xuan 12.2, 721-47; Xiang 4.7, 935-39.

⁴²⁸ For Wei Jiang's being honored with the musical instruments, see Yang Bojun, ed. and comm., *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, Xiang 11.5, 993-94.

⁴²⁹ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 281.

⁴³⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 1.23.

武王伐紂，以妲己賜周公。

Comparing Cao Cao's expedition against the Yuan family to King Wu of Zhou's expedition against King Zhou of Shang, the first line sounds like a compliment. However, the second line is outrageous: Did King Wu of Zhou marry the wicked figure Da Ji to the exemplary figure Duke of Zhou? In fact, Kong Rong writes this to mock Cao Cao as someone who launches an expedition only to marry the enemy's wife to his son.

Moreover, while Chen Lin glorifies Cao Cao's expedition against the Wuhuan people, Kong Rong writes the "Chao Caogong tao Wuhuan shu" 嘲曹公討烏桓書 (Letter Mocking Lord Cao's Launching Expedition Against the Wuhuan People):⁴³¹

You, the commander-in-chief, undertook a long expedition, roaming and rambling [i.e. *xiaoyao* 逍遙] overseas [i.e. modern Liaoning across Bohai 渤海]. In the past, the Sushen people did not present thorn arrows as tribute, and the Dingling people stole Su Wu's oxen and sheep. Now you can interrogate them about both cases.
大將軍遠征，蕭條海外。昔肅慎不貢楛矢，丁零盜蘇武牛羊，可并案也。

Again, Kong Rong mixes known events with those he makes up. According to the *Han shu* the Dingling people indeed stole Su Wu's 蘇武 (d. 60 B.C.) oxen and sheep,⁴³² but according to the *Guo yu* 國語 the Sushen people presented thorn arrows as tribute to King Wu of Zhou for his conquest of Shang.⁴³³ By citing and altering the historical accounts, Kong Rong mocks Cao Cao as someone who launches the long expedition only for small profits and trivial reasons. In both letters, Kong Rong writes against Cao Cao's expeditions by parodying typical panegyrics. This may explain why Cao Cao put him to death.

Aside from official letters and war proclamations, panegyrics and satires, the literary men

⁴³¹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 1.23.

⁴³² *Han shu*, 54.2463.

⁴³³ Xu Yuangao 徐元誥, ed. and comm., *Guo yu jijie* 國語集解, rev. ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 5.204.

in the army also wrote about their travel experiences. Their *fu* with the word “expedition” (*zheng* 征) in the titles are some of the examples. In these *fu*, the literary men often mention the spectacular landscape on their trips.

There are also *shi* and *fu* on a rainstorm, a historical site, and a goddess that may have been encountered, visited, and dreamed of by the literary men on the road. Although we do not find prefaces that can confirm those poems were written for the same occasion, it is very likely that they also engaged in group composition during the campaigns. They all had a vast knowledge of anecdotes and allusions. When they crossed the Han River 漢水 where a goddess was said to have appeared,⁴³⁴ or came to Mount Shouyang 首陽山 where the ancient worthies Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齊 died of starvation,⁴³⁵ or met a rainstorm on the way home,⁴³⁶ it is unlikely that they would have written individually without inviting others to contribute a piece for the occasion.

Their travel experiences are not limited to sightseeing. In the first month of Jian'an 17 (212), Po Qin wrote Cao Pi a letter, which is titled “Memorandum to Emperor Wen of Wei” in the *Wen xuan*.⁴³⁷ In this letter, Po Qin does not write about the campaign, but an amazing boy singer that he found on the way back from the expedition against Ma Chao. The singer, skilled in throat-singing (*houzhuān* 喉轉), also known as overtone chanting, deeply moved the audience with his clear sounds and sad songs. Although Cao Pi does not quite trust Po Qin's account, he

⁴³⁴ For notes on the date of the “Shennü fu” 神女賦 (*Fu* on the Goddess), see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 428; Cheng Liang-shu, “Chu ti feng zuo—Cao Wei jituan de fuzuo huodong,” 185-86.

⁴³⁵ For a note on the date of Ruan Yu's “Diao Bo Yi wen” 弔伯夷文 (Lamenting Bo Yi) and Wang Can's “Diao Yi Qi wen” 弔夷齊文 (Lamenting Bo Yi and Shu Qi), see *Jian'an qizi ji*, 436.

⁴³⁶ For a note on the date of the “Chou lin fu” 愁霖賦 (*Fu* Sorrowing about the Downpour), see Cheng Liang-shu, “Chu ti feng zuo—Cao Wei jituan de fuzuo huodong,” 196-97.

⁴³⁷ For a study on the date of this letter, see Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhongguo wenxue shiliao congkao*, 86-88.

considers it beautiful.⁴³⁸

When the literary men write about campaigns in letters, they sometimes write in an entertaining way. During the military expedition against Zhang Lu in Jian'an 20 (215), Cao Pi's uncle Cao Hong joined the expedition while Cao Pi guarded Mengjin. When Zhang Lu was defeated, Cao Hong wrote Cao Pi several letters about their victory. Cao Hong was not a skilled writer, but the letters were so well crafted that Cao Pi recognized they were ghostwritten by Chen Lin. One of the letters is titled "Wei Cao Hong yu Wei Wendi shu" 為曹洪與魏文帝書 (Letter on Behalf of Cao Hong to Emperor Wen of Wei) in the *Wen xuan*. Chen Lin begins with the following passage:⁴³⁹

The eleventh month, the fifth day, Hong states: Formerly we defeated our enemies. With immense satisfaction, I somewhat exaggerated the facts. I received your letter written on the twentieth day of the ninth month. I laughed when I first read it, and I never tire of rereading it. This time I also planned to have Chen Lin write back, but recently he was busy, unable to do so. Hoping to offer you some merriment from afar, this old man has racked his brain. I have much to say but cannot write it all. Thus I will give you a rough sketch as a topic for conversation and laughter.

十一月五日洪白：前初破賊，情多意奢，說事頗過其實。得九月二十日書，讀之喜笑，把玩無厭，亦欲令陳琳作報。琳頃多事，不能得為。念欲遠以為歡，故自竭老夫之思。辭多不可一一，粗舉大綱，以當談笑。

Chen Lin further emphasizes the "true hand" in the closing lines:⁴⁴⁰

Since I came to the region of Yi, admiring the practices handed down from Sima Xiangru, Yang Xiong, and Wang Bao, I had an irresistible impulse to exert myself. Thus I have somewhat exerted myself in writing, and seemed different from the other day. You went so far as to look down on "your neighbor Confucius" [i.e. "your uncle Cao Hong"], and asserted that he had a ghostwriter—what kind of assertion is that? [...] But I am afraid you still will not trust Confucius'/empty words, and you will certainly burst out laughing. Hong states.

⁴³⁸ For Cao Pi's comment on Po Qin's letter, see Li Shan's commentary in *Wen xuan*, 40.1821.

⁴³⁹ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.54-55. Also see *Wen xuan*, 41.1880.

⁴⁴⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.56-57. Also see *Wen xuan*, 41.1883-84. The variant is a possible solution to the problematic line. It is provided by Professor Chu Hsiao-hai 朱曉海 in his informal correspondence with my husband Yang Tung-yi 楊東益 on October 6, 2011.

閒自入益部，仰司馬、楊、王遺風，有(子)[不]勝斐然之志，故頗奮文辭，異於他日。怪乃輕其家丘，謂為倩人，是何言歟？[...]恐猶未信丘言，必大噓也。洪白。

Chen Lin makes a pun in the closing lines. The word *qiu* 丘 can be Confucius' name, and thus *qiu yan* 丘言 means “Confucius' words,” which echoes his previous phrase *jia Qiu* 家丘 (your neighbor Confucius). However, the word can also be an adjective, which means “empty,” and thus *qiu yan* 丘言 means “empty words.” This implies that the author is not Cao Hong as he claims. In his commentary, Li Shan cites Cao Pi's comment on Chen Lin's letter:⁴⁴¹

When His Highness [i.e. Cao Cao] pacified Hanzhong, my uncle the Protector-General wrote back to me, lavishly praising the land and terrain over there. Observing the words, I knew that [the letter] was written by Chen Lin.

上平定漢中，族父都護還書與余，盛稱彼方土地形勢。觀其辭，(如)[知]陳琳所敘為也。

I believe Cao Pi found the letter quite amusing. As Chen Lin predicted, he must have “burst out laughing” when he read the lines about “empty words.” In the next chapter, I will discuss other poems that literary men exchanged during the campaigns, and read the poems in a context of their poetic dialogues on military expeditions.

⁴⁴¹ *Wen xuan*, 41.1880, 1884. The variant is provided in Hu Kejia's *Wen xuan kaoyi* attached after the text.

Chapter 6. Poetic Dialogues on Military Expeditions

Inheriting a Heroic Tradition: Cao Cao, “*Xing* of ‘Suffering in the Cold’”

Upon hearing that the ship would arrive from Delos this coming day, which meant that he must die the next day, Socrates said:⁴⁴²

If it so please the gods, so be it. However, I do not think it will arrive today. [...] I thought that a beautiful and comely woman dressed in white approached me. She called me and said: “Socrates, may you arrive at fertile Phthia on the third day.”

Socrates alluded to the *Iliad*. Achilles, whose beloved Briseis was once taken away by Agamemnon, refused to join Agamemnon in the Trojan War and threatened to go home:⁴⁴³

But, now I am unwilling to fight against brilliant Hektor,
tomorrow, when I have sacrificed to Zeus and to all gods,
and loaded well my ships, and rowed out on to the salt water,
you will see, if you have a mind to it and if it concerns you,
my ships in the dawn at sea on the Hellespont where the fish swarm
and my men manning them with good will to row. If the glorious
shaker of the earth should grant us a favouring passage
on the third day thereafter we might raise generous Phthia.

The generous, fertile Phthia was Achilles’ homeland. Citing from the *Iliad*, Socrates compared himself to the epic hero and his willingness to die for the eternal truth to the hero’s going home. As Professor C. H. Wang observes, even though Socrates had reservations about poetry, here he chose poetic metaphor to express himself.⁴⁴⁴

If Achilles in the *Iliad* embodies heroism in the Western tradition, the *Shi jing* poem “Dong shan” 東山 (East Mountains, no. 156) represents another type of heroism, which is highly

⁴⁴² Plato; G. M. A. Grube, trans.; John M. Cooper, ed., *Five Dialogues*, 2nd ed., 46 (“Crito,” 43d-44b).

⁴⁴³ Homer; Richmond Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer*, 207 (9:356-63).

⁴⁴⁴ Yang Mu, *Yinyu yu shixian*, preface 1-2.

regarded in the Chinese tradition in Professor C. H. Wang's analysis.⁴⁴⁵ The poet sings:⁴⁴⁶

4	我徂東山 惓惓不歸 我來自東 零雨其濛	I went to the east mountains— Long it was that I did not return. Now that I am coming back from the east, It drizzles all over.
8	我東曰歸 我心西悲 制彼裳衣 勿士行枚	I longed to return when I was in the east, But now my heart is sad for the west. She once made me many clothes, and thought That I would never be gone with the troops.
12	蝸蝸者蠋 烝在桑野 敦彼獨宿 亦在車下	When the worms started to writhe Teeming in the mulberry field, Alone, I slept through the nights Once and again under the cart on the field.
16	我徂東山 惓惓不歸 我來自東 零雨其濛	I went to the east mountains— Long it was that I did not return. Now that I am coming back from the east, It drizzles all over.
20	果臝之實 亦施于宇 伊威在室 蠨蛸在戶	The fruit of the bryony has spread, Hanging down from the eaves of my house, Sowbugs live in the room: Spiders' webs blocked the door.
24	町疇鹿場 熠燿宵行 不可畏也 伊可懷也	My paddock has turned into a Deerfield, And the glow-worms move in the dark. These are [not] things to be afraid of, Indeed, (are) [but] things to love.
28	我徂東山 惓惓不歸 我來自東 零雨其濛	I went to the east mountains— Long it was that I did not return. Now that I am coming back from the east, It drizzles all over.
	鸛鳴于垤 婦歎于室	A stork cried on the ant-hill; The wife sighed in her room.

⁴⁴⁵ C. H. Wang, "Heroism," 56.

⁴⁴⁶ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 8b.7a-10b (295-1 to 296-2). The translation is taken (with minor alterations in brackets) from C. H. Wang, "Heroism," 63-64.

32	洒掃穹窒 我征聿至	She sprinkled and swept the empty house, For I was coming back from the war.
36	有敦瓜苦 烝在栗薪 自我不見 于今三年	The bitter melons have piled up, Many of them, on top of the firewood I cut. Since I last saw them Till now, it is three years!
40	我徂東山 慆慆不歸 我來自東 零雨其濛	I went to the east mountains— Long it was that I did not return. Now that I am coming back from the east, It drizzles all over.
44	倉庚于飛 熠熠其羽 之子于歸 皇駁其馬	The oriole was in flight; Its wings were glistening. The girl was going to be married; Her horse was bay and white:
48	親結其縵 九十其儀 其新孔嘉 其舊如之何	Her mother had tied the strings of girdle for her; And many other things were done properly for her. She was perfectly beautiful when she was my bride, But I wonder what she looks like after these years!

In this poem we do not see any clash of arms that is glorified in the *Iliad*. As Professor C. H. Wang notes, “the weapon and the battle are elided in the song [...] it is the longing for a life of simplicity and quietude that underscores the theme of the poem—a desire to return to the farming land.”⁴⁴⁷ Therefore, when the poet tells of the lonely nights under the cart (lines 11-12), which is the only memory of the military expedition mentioned in this poem, he juxtaposes it with “the thought of the common life back home when the worms writhed on the field during spring” (lines 9-10).⁴⁴⁸ The scenes of the common life occur one after another as the soldier approaches home on drizzly days. He first sees his house lying desolate and hears his wife sighing. He further finds melons and firewood piling there as before. All of a sudden he recalls

⁴⁴⁷ C. H. Wang, “Heroism,” 66.

⁴⁴⁸ C. H. Wang, “Heroism,” 64.

the day his beautiful bride came to him. He concludes his journey and poem:

48 其新孔嘉 She was perfectly beautiful when she was my bride,
 其舊如之何 But I wonder what she looks like after these years!

The ellipsis of battle and the grief of the soldier as we read in this poem conform to a type of heroism in the Chinese tradition. In the *Shi jing* poems and the traditional readings of them, Professor C. H. Wang perceives that the “military spirit (*wu*)” is hushed whereas the “cultural elegance (*wen*), music, rites, and agriculture” are promoted. This is because the poets, historicans and even conquerors “find in retrospection that a man’s wrath is not worthy of grand celebration, and that the weapon is a cursed thing.”⁴⁴⁹

“A man’s wrath” mentioned here is Achilles’ wrath with which the *Iliad* begins. Achilles is such an important hero in the Western tradition that Socrates referred to none other than Achilles when he dreamed of his eternal home in the “Crito” and instructed the men of Athens in the “Apology” that a good man must remain in a position he believes to be best and face danger rather than disgrace.⁴⁵⁰

The hero and heroism shown in the “East Mountains” are different from those celebrated in the *Iliad*. This *Shi jing* poem is traditionally associated with the three-year-long eastern expedition led by the Duke of Zhou. The Duke of Zhou, who reputedly “tells of the returning soldiers’ feelings and sympathizes with their pains” (*xu qi qing er min qi lao* 序其情而憫其勞),⁴⁵¹ is the hero. His avoidance of the mention of arms reaffirms the heroism handed down by the agricultural heroes of Zhou.

In the last three decades of the Han dynasty, Cao Cao referred to the “East Mountains” in

⁴⁴⁹ C. H. Wang, “Heroism,” 71.

⁴⁵⁰ Plato; G. M. A. Grube, trans.; John M. Cooper, ed., *Five Dialogues*, 2nd ed., 33 (“Apology,” 28c-e).

⁴⁵¹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 8b.6a (294-2).

his song “Ku han xing” 苦寒行 (*Xing* of “Suffering in the Cold”):⁴⁵²

	北上太行山	Northward I climb Mount Taihang,
	艱哉何巍巍	Hard it is, and how steep and high!
	羊腸坂詰屈	The sheep-gut slope twines and twists,
4	車輪為之摧	Chariot wheels by it are smashed.
	樹木何蕭瑟	How the trees sigh and sigh!
	北風聲正悲	The north wind is moaning.
	熊羆對我蹲	Black and Brown Bears crouch right before me,
8	虎豹夾路啼	Tigers and leopards roar on both sides of the road.
	谿谷少人民	In these valleys few people dwell,
	雪落何霏霏	How thick and fast it snows!
	延頸長歎息	I crane my neck and heave long sighs,
12	遠行多所懷	Traveling afar I have much longing.
	我心何怫鬱	How grieved and dejected my heart is!
	思欲一東歸	I wish once and for all to return east.
	水深橋梁絕	The river is deep, the bridges cut off,
16	中路正徘徊	In mid-road I pace back and forth.
	迷惑失故路	In confusion I have lost the old road,
	薄暮無宿栖	At sunset I have no place to spend the night.
	行行日已遠	On and on, going farther each day,
20	人馬同時飢	Men and horses both are starving.
	擔囊行取薪	Shouldering my sack, I go off to fetch firewood,
	斧冰持作糜	Chopping ice, I take it to make my gruel.
	悲彼東山詩	I am sad about the “East Mountains” poem—
24	悠悠使我哀	Longing and yearning, it makes me grieve.

I translate the word *youyou* 悠悠 in the last line as “longing and yearning,” rather than “always”

as Stephen Owen translates it in the line “it makes my heart always grieve,”⁴⁵³ or “distant and

wistful” as Paul W. Kroll translates it in the line “Distant and wistful—it makes me lament.”⁴⁵⁴

Indeed, the word can mean “long, distant, lasting” as well as “sad, wistful, yearning.” Here I

believe it is used to describe the tone of the “East Mountains,” which is full of “longing for a life

⁴⁵² Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 1.351 version 1. Also see *Wen xuan*, 27.1282-83. The translation is based on Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 263; and an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

⁴⁵³ Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 263.

⁴⁵⁴ Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao,” 60.

of simplicity and quietude.”

Because Mount Taihang is mentioned in the first line, this poem is associated with Cao Cao's expedition against Yuan Shao's nephew Gao Gan, which took place in Jian'an 11 (206) at Hu Pass of Mount Taihang. Accordingly, the hardship of travel described in this poem is read as Cao Cao's personal experience. I have no objections to this interpretation, but I would like to explore how Cao Cao transforms the experience into a poetic dialogue with his contemporaries. Like the “East Mountains,” this poem does not mention the clash of arms. But unlike the soldier in the “East Mountains,” the speaker in this poem is traveling away from home. The twisting road, whistling wind, roaring beasts, and falling snow lead him further away from the common life. He even gets lost in the desolate wild, cold and hungry. Finally, he tries to make some food:

擔囊行取薪
斧冰持作糜

Shouldering my sack, I go off to fetch firewood,
Chopping ice, I take it to make my gruel.

Collecting firewood, drawing water and making gruel—these are the daily work of ordinary people. However, what the protagonist carries on his shoulders is not a square or round basket (*kuang* 筐 or *ju* 筥) for collecting firewood, but a sack (*nang* 囊) for traveling. Moreover, he has to chop ice and melt it to make gruel, suggesting how cold it is in the mountains and how difficult it is to get water. When doing these, he recalls the “East Mountains,” which is full of longing for an ordinary life and also mentions firewood and food:

36 有敦瓜苦
 烝在栗薪
 自我不見
 于今三年

The bitter melons have piled up,
Many of them, on top of the firewood I cut.
Since I last saw them
Till now, it is three years!

The Song scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) notes in his *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳:⁴⁵⁵

The firewood [...] and the melons are trivial objects, but [The soldier] is excited to see them. From this we know how long he has been traveling and how deeply he is touched. 栗[...]與苦瓜皆微物也。見之而喜，則其行久而感深可知矣。

Now the speaker in the “*Xing* of ‘Suffering in the Cold’” suffers in the cold, desolate mountains. His only companions are the north wind and fierce beasts. When he gathers firewood and water to make gruel, he suddenly thinks of the “East Mountains:”

擔囊行取薪	Shouldering my sack, I go off to fetch firewood,
斧冰持作糜	Chopping ice, I take it to make my gruel.
悲彼東山詩	I am sad about the “East Mountains” poem—
24 悠悠使我哀	Longing and yearning, it makes me grieve.

The speaker could have just said that he is sad, but like Socrates, who chose to cite the *Iliad* to express his determination, he chooses to refer to the *Shi jing* poem to express his sorrow. When those who are familiar with the *Shi jing* poem—including us and the literary men at Cao Cao’s court—listen to his closing lines, they would feel the deep sorrow that Cao Cao shares with the ancient poet.⁴⁵⁶ Moreover, the Duke of Zhou reputedly assumes the voice of the returning soldier in the “East Mountains” and inherits the heroic tradition handed down by his ancestors. It is very likely that Cao Cao, who models himself on the Duke of Zhou in the “*Xing* of ‘Singing a Short Song,’” also imitates the Duke of Zhou in this poem. By citing Achilles, Socrates expresses his resolution to die for his duty. By imitating the Duke of Zhou, Cao Cao shows his aspiration to be a true hero in the Chinese tradition.

⁴⁵⁵ Zhu Xi, ed. and comm., *Shi jizhuan*, 8.537.

⁴⁵⁶ For a note on “augmenting metaphors” like this, see Yang Mu 楊牧, ed., *Tang shi xuanji* 唐詩選集 (Taipei: Hongfan shudian, 1993), preface 7-8.

Serving the Divine Militant: Wang Can, “*Shi* on Accompanying the Army” (five poems)

Wang Can has five poems titled “*Cong jun shi*” 從軍詩 (*Shi* on Accompanying the Army) in the *Wen xuan*. According to Li Shan’s commentary, the first poem celebrates the western expedition against Zhang Lu. The army set out in Jian’an 20 (215) and returned to Ye in the next year. In Jian’an 21 (216), Wang Can accompanied the army on the southwestern expedition against Sun Quan and wrote the other four poems.⁴⁵⁷

The clash of arms is still absent from these five poems, and the grief of the soldier is still an important theme in them. Wang Can also cites the *Shi jing* poem “East Mountains” in the second poem (lines 11-12). However, those poems differ from Cao Cao’s “*Xing* of ‘Suffering the Cold’” and the “East Mountains” in several aspects. First, Wang Can celebrates Cao Cao’s divine militancy and terrible wrath. Second, Wang Can describes a river voyage. Third, Wang Can displays his loyalty to Cao Cao. Before I discuss those aspects, I provide a translation of the five poems:⁴⁵⁸

I.

4	從軍有苦樂 但問所從誰 所從神且武 焉得久勞師 相公征關右	Accompanying the army there are hardship and joy, It depends on whom you accompany. If the one you accompany is divine and militant, How would he tire the troops for long? Our minister-lord launches an expedition to the right of the Pass [i.e. west of the Hangu Pass 函谷關],
8	赫怒震天威 一舉滅獯虜 再舉服羌夷 西收邊地賊	His terrible wrath thunders with heavenly might. With a single coup he extinguishes the Xun caitiffs, With another he subdues the Qiang tribes. In the west he rounds up the frontier bandits,

⁴⁵⁷ *Wen xuan*, 27.1269-70.

⁴⁵⁸ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 3.89-91. The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 156-70; Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 264-65 (poem V only); Fusheng Wu, *Written at Imperial Command* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 29-36.

	忽若俯拾遺	Swift as picking up an object.
	陳賞越丘山	Displayed largess is higher than the hills and mountains,
12	酒肉踰川坻	Ale and meat are more than rivers and isles.
	軍中多飫饒	In the army are much affluence and opulence,
	人馬皆溢肥	Men and horses are all full and plump.
	徒行兼乘還	Those who went on foot return on double chariots,
16	空出有餘資	Those starting empty-handed now have extra cash.
	拓地三千里	Expanding lands of three thousand <i>li</i> ,
	往返速若飛	We go and return as fast as in flight.
	歌舞入鄴城	Singing and dancing we enter Ye city,
20	所願獲無違	All our wishes are fulfilled.
	盡日處大朝	We spend the day at our lord's grand reception,
	日暮薄言歸	At sunset we return to our homes.
	外參時明政	Outside we participate in his enlightened rule
24	內不廢家私	Inside we do not neglect familial duties.
	禽獸憚為犧	Birds and beasts fear of being sacrificed,
	良苗實已揮	Fine shoots indeed have shone radiance.
	竊慕負鼎翁	Envyng the old man bearing the tripod,
28	願厲朽鈍姿	I would like to sharpen my decrepit, blunted mettle.
	不能效沮溺	I cannot model myself on [Chang]ju and [Jie']ni
	相隨把鋤犁	To follow them to take up hoe and plough.
	熟覽夫子詩	Having read over Confucius' verses,
32	信知所言非	I truly believe what he said is wrong.

II.

	涼風厲秋節	A cool breeze sharpens the autumn season,
	司典告詳刑	The judge announces his prudent punishments.
	我君順時發	Observing [the principles of the autumn] season, our lord sets out;
4	桓桓東南征	Martial and valiant, he launches a southeastern expedition.
	汎舟蓋長川	Floating boats cover the long river,
	陳卒被隰坳	Lined-up soldiers blanket the marshland.
	征夫懷親戚	Soldiers yearn for their family and kin,
8	誰能無戀情	Who could escape such longing thoughts?
	拊襟倚舟檣	Stroking my lapel I lean against the mast pole,
	眷眷思鄴城	Fondly, fondly I think of Ye city.
	哀彼東山人	Grieving for the singer of the "East Mountains,"
12	喟然感鶴鳴	I sigh, moved by the "crane's crying."
	日月不安處	The sun and the moon do not stay at rest—
	人誰獲常寧	Shall any man find constant repose?
	昔人從公旦	Men of antiquity accompanied Dan, the Duke [of Zhou];
16	一徂輒三齡	Once they went forth, it took three years [to come back].

	今我神武師	Now our divine, militant troops,
	暫往必速平	Temporarily going forth, must quickly pacify [the foes].
	棄余親睦恩	Putting aside my love for family and kin,
20	輸力竭忠貞	I exert myself to devote my loyalty.
	懼無一夫用	I fear that I do not have the use of a warrior,
	報我素餐誠	To repay my bread of idleness with sincerity.
	夙夜自併性	Day and night I strengthen my resolve,
24	思逝若抽縈	Thoughts pass like an unwinding coil.
	將秉先登羽	I will hold aloft the vanguard's feathered emblem,
	豈敢聽金聲	How dare I listen to the sound of the [retreating] bell?

III.

	從軍征遐路	I accompany the army to campaign on distant roads,
	討彼東南夷	To punish that southeastern tribe.
	方舟順廣川	The coupled boats glide on the broad river,
4	薄暮未安抵	At sunset we have not moored.
	白日半西山	The bright sun is half over the west mountains,
	桑梓有餘暉	There is an afterglow in the mulberry and catalpa.
	蟋蟀夾岸鳴	Crickets sing along the banks,
8	孤鳥翩翩飛	Fluttering, fluttering a lone bird flies by.
	征夫心多懷	Soldiers' hearts are full of yearning,
	惻愴令吾悲	Doleful and mournful, they make me grieve.
	下船登高防	Getting off the boat I climb a high dike,
12	草露沾我衣	Dew on the grass soaks my clothes.
	迴身赴床寢	I turn back and go to sleep in my bed—
	此愁當告誰	To whom shall I confide my sorrows?
	身服干戈事	When one shoulders a military task,
16	豈得念所私	How could he think of personal attachments?
	即戎有授命	Going to war one gives his life—
	茲理不可違	This principle cannot be violated.

IV.

	朝發鄴都橋	At dawn we set out from Ye city bridge,
	暮濟白馬津	At sunset we cross White Horse Ford.
	逍遙河隄上	Roaming and rambling on the river banks,
4	左右望我軍	Left and right I gaze upon our army.
	連舫踰萬艘	Boats sailing abreast number over ten thousands,
	帶甲千萬人	Men in armor amount to hundreds of thousands.
	率彼東南路	Going along that southeastern road,
8	將定一舉勳	We will win merit with a single coup.

	籌策運帷幄	Strategies are made in the command tent,
	一由我聖君	All follows my wise lord.
	恨我無時謀	I regret that I have no timely counsel,
12	譬諸具官臣	Like those nominal officials.
	鞠躬中堅內	I devotedly serve at the central headquarters,
	微畫無所陳	But have not even a small plan to offer.
	許歷為完士	Xu Li was an accomplished man,
16	一言猶敗秦	With a single utterance he defeated Qin.
	我有素餐責	I bear the blame of taking the “bread of idleness,”
	誠愧伐檀人	Indeed I am ashamed to face the singer of the “Cutting the sandalwood.”
	雖無鉛刀用	Although I do not have the use of a lead knife,
20	庶幾奮薄身	I would like to dedicate my humble life.

V.

	悠悠涉荒路	On and on, we fare down desolate roads;
	靡靡我心愁	Slowly, slowly [we move], my heart in sorrow.
	四望無煙火	When I look around, no hearth fires seen,
4	但見林與丘	All that I see are forests and mounds.
	城郭生榛棘	City walls grow with thickets and brambles,
	蹊徑無所由	Footpaths are lost, no way to get through.
	藿蒲竟廣澤	Canes and cattails cover the broad marsh,
8	葭葦夾長流	Reeds and rushes press both sides of the long stream.
	日夕涼風發	At sundown a cool breeze arises,
	翩翩漂吾舟	Fluttering, fluttering it wafts my boat.
	寒蟬在樹鳴	Wintry cicadas sing in the trees,
12	鸛鵠摩天遊	Cranes and swans soar, grazing the sky.
	客子多悲傷	A traveler’s sorrows are many,
	淚下不可收	Tears fall and cannot stop.
	朝入譙郡界	At dawn I enter the area of Qiao commandery—
16	曠然消人憂	Vast and broad, it dispels my cares.
	雞鳴達四境	The cocks’ crow reaches the four quarters,
	黍稷盈原疇	Millet and grain swell the level fields.
	館宅充廬里	Inns and houses fill the villages,
20	女士滿莊廬	Women and men throng the crossroads.
	自非聖賢國	If not in a state ruled by a wise, worthy man,
	誰能享斯休	Who could enjoy such bliss?
	詩人美樂土	The Poets once praised a “happy land”—
24	雖客猶願留	Though a stranger here, I would love to stay.

In the opening lines of the first poem, Wang Can characterizes Cao Cao as a divine, militant

(*shenwu* 神武) lord—as Cao Zhi does in the preface to his “*Fu* on the Eastern Expedition,” and as Chen Lin does in his “*Fu* on the Divine Militant.” Wang Can celebrates that it is because of Cao Cao’s divine militancy, terrible wrath and heavenly might that the expedition is successful and is quickly concluded. These qualities remind us of Achilles, who, outraged at his friend’s death at the Trojan hero Hector’s hand, kills the latter with divine aid.

In fact, the phrase “terrible wrath” (*henu* 赫怒) in line 6 comes from the *Shi jing* poem “Huangyi” 皇矣 (August, no. 241). In the fifth stanza (consisting of three rhyme groups), the *Shi jing* poet sings:⁴⁵⁹

52	帝謂文王 無然畔援 無然歆羨 誕先登于岸	The god told King Wen: “Be not obstinate and grasping, Be not covetous and envious.” Thereupon he ascended the height first.
56	密人不恭 敢距大邦 侵阮徂共	The people of Mi had the insolence To challenge so great a country; They invaded Ruan and pushed into Gong.
60	王赫斯怒 爰整其旅 以按徂旅 以篤于周祜 以對於天下	They king was terribly enraged, So he mobilized his armies To stop the enemies marching toward Lü— So he intensified the bliss of Zhou, And made himself known to the world.

The terribly enraged (*he si nu* 赫斯怒) king here is King Wen of Zhou. Although in many other places he is celebrated for his meekness and piety (and thus he is called *wen* 文 or “cultural elegance”), his wrath is also fearful.

Besides employing the *Shi jing* phrase “terrible wrath” in the first poem, Wang Can

⁴⁵⁹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 16d.9a-b (571-1). The translation is taken (with Romanization of the proper names changed to *pinyin*) from C. H. Wang, “Epic,” 96.

borrow the phrase “martial and valiant” (*huanhuan* 桓桓) from the *Shi jing* poem “Huan” 桓 (Martial, no. 294), which pays tribute to King Wu of Zhou, to praise Cao Cao’s militancy and his troops in the second poem. In the fourth poem, Wang Can writes:

IV.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| 4 | 逍遙河隄上
左右望我軍
連舫踰萬艘
帶甲千萬人 | Roaming and rambling on the river banks,
Left and right I gaze upon our army.
Boats sailing abreast number over ten thousands,
Men in armor amount to hundreds of thousands. |
|---|----------------------------------|---|

These lines read similar to the second and third stanzas of the *Shi jing* poem “Qing ren” 清人 (The Man of Qing, no. 79):⁴⁶⁰

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--|
| 8 | 清人在消
駟介麋麋
二矛重喬
河上乎逍遙 | The man of Qing is in Xiao,
Vigorous, vigorous is his armored four-horse team.
Two spears, hook topping hook;
Above the river he roams and rambles. |
| 12 | 清人在軸
駟介陶陶
左旋右抽
中軍作好 | The man of Qing is in Zhou,
Galloping, galloping is his armored four-horse team.
Circling [a banner] in his left hand, raising [a weapon] in his right,
He looks excellent in the army. |

Although the “Xiao xu” 小序 (Lesser Preface) and Zheng Xuan find these *Shi jing* lines satirical,⁴⁶¹ I believe Wang Can borrows phrases⁴⁶¹ from these lines simply to create a cheerful and eulogistic tone. In addition to these lines of praise, Wang Can writes about their victories in the first poem:

⁴⁶⁰ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 4b.13b-14a (165-1 to 165-2). The translation is based on Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 67. The translation of line 11 is based on Ma Ruichen’s 馬瑞辰 note. For his note, see Ma Ruichen 馬瑞辰, ed. and comm., *Mao shi zhuan jian tongshi* 毛詩傳箋通釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 8.262-63.

⁴⁶¹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 4b.12a-b (164-2).

I.

8	一舉滅獯虜 再舉服羌夷 西收邊地賊 忽若俯拾遺 陳賞越丘山	With a single coup he extinguishes the Xun caitiffs, With another he subdues the Qiang tribes. In the west he rounds up the frontier bandits, Swift as picking up an object. Displayed largess is higher than the hills and mountains,
12	酒肉踰川坻 軍中多飫饒 人馬皆溢肥 徒行兼乘還	Ale and meat are more than rivers and isles. In the army are much affluence and opulence, Men and horses are all full and plump. Those who went on foot return on double chariots,
16	空出有餘資	Those starting empty-handed now have extra cash.

These descriptions are pompous, deviating from the teachings of the “decorous classics” (*zhengjing* 正經). Therefore, the Qing scholar Wu Qi 吳淇 suspected that Wang Can is indirectly criticizing Cao Cao.⁴⁶² However, I believe that Wang Can writes in this eulogistic fashion to please Cao Cao. Kong Rong dared to ridicule Cao Cao whenever he had a chance, but Wang Can would not do so. Moreover, if we read Wang Can’s lines together with Chen Lin’s letter on behalf of Cao Hong to Cao Pi, which also celebrates their conquest of the west in Jian’an 20 (215), we can see that members of Cao Cao’s court were thrilled by the conquest.

Nevertheless, as a student of the classics, Wang Can does not forget to lament the plight of the soldiers away from home. He not only cites the “East Mountains” but also borrows phrases from his own writings to describe the river voyage. In the second “*Shi* of Seven Laments,” he combines his sorrow with a grand view of the landscape:

4	方舟溯大江 日暮愁我心 山岡有餘映 巖阿增重陰 狐狸馳赴穴	The coupled boat sails up the great Yangzi, The sun sets, saddening my heart. On mountain ridges there is lingering light, In craggy nooks grows a layered shadow. Foxes run to their caves,
8	飛鳥翔故林	Flying birds hover about their home groves.

⁴⁶² Wu Qi 吳淇, *Liuchao Xuan shi dinglun* 六朝選詩定論 (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2009), 6.133.

	流波激清響	Flowing waves stir up clear sounds,
	猴猿臨岸吟	Gibbons cry on the banks.
	迅風拂裳袂	A swift wind brushes the sleeves of my robe,
12	白露霑衣衿	White dew soaks the collar of my clothes.

In the third “*Shi* on Accompanying the Army,” Wang Can writes:

III.

	方舟順廣川	The coupled boats glide on the broad river,
4	薄暮未安坻	At sunset we have not moored.
	白日半西山	The bright sun is half over the west mountains,
	桑梓有餘暉	There is an afterglow in the mulberry and catalpa.
	蟋蟀夾岸鳴	Crickets sing along the banks,
8	孤鳥翩翩飛	Fluttering, fluttering a lone bird flies by.
	征夫心多懷	Soldiers’ hearts are full of yearning,
	惻愴令吾悲	Doleful and mournful, they make me grieve.
	下船登高防	Getting off the boat I climb a high dike,
12	草露沾我衣	Dew on the grass soaks my clothes,

The great river, lingering light, flying bird, mournful sounds and soaking dew together constitute a melancholic moment and here, a *déjà vu* experience. Although they read similarly, Wang Can alters some details in the latter poem. First, he adjusts the light. In the former poem, line 5 reads dark and gloomy. The layered shadow growing in craggy nooks seems to be an ominous sign of his fate. On the other hand, line 5 in the latter poem catches an afterglow in the mulberry and catalpa—the trees that represent home in the Chinese tradition—and thus gives the audience some warm feeling and a sense of hope. Second, Wang Can replaces the mournful cries of gibbons with silent sighs of soldiers in lines 9-10. In this way he signals the particular background of the latter poem: he is accompanying the army on expeditions. Similarly, he writes about other people in the second poem:

II.

8	征夫懷親戚 誰能無戀情	Soldiers yearn for their family and kin, Who could escape such longing thoughts?
---	----------------	---

As a servant of the Divine Militant, however, Wang Can cannot stop here. To answer his own question, he writes in the second and third poems:

II.

16	日月不安處 人誰獲常寧 昔人從公旦 一徂輒三齡 今我神武師 暫往必速平	The sun and the moon do not stay at rest— Shall any man find constant repose? Men of antiquity accompanied Dan, the Duke [of Zhou]; Once they went forth, it took three years [to come back]. Now our divine, militant troops, Temporarily going forth, must quickly pacify [the foes].
----	--	--

III.

16	身服干戈事 豈得念所私 即戎有授命 茲理不可違	When one shoulders a military task, How could he think of personal attachments? Going to war one gives his life— This principle cannot be violated.
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In the lines cited from the second poem, Wang Can makes two allusions. One allusion is Lady Jiang of Qi's 齊姜 advice to Duke Wen of Jin. To persuade Duke Wen of Jin—who was then a refuge in the state of Qi—to exert himself to return to Jin, she said:⁴⁶³

The sun and the moon do not stay—shall any man find rest?
日月不處，人誰獲安？

The other allusion is Duke of Zhou's three-year campaign associated with the "East Mountains." Wang Can expects their campaign to be much shorter than the ancient sage's. In the latter lines cited from the third poem, Wang Can combines Confucius' two expectations for a mature man:

⁴⁶³ Xu Yuangao, ed. and comm., *Guo yu jijie*, rev. ed., 10.324.

to be ready to take up arms, and to be ready to give his life in the face of danger.⁴⁶⁴ In this way

Wang Can stimulates his audience and himself while consoling them.

In the second and fourth poems Wang Can further devotes his loyalty to Cao Cao:

II.

20	棄余親睦恩 輸力竭忠貞 懼無一夫用 報我素餐誠	Putting aside my love for family and kin, I exert myself to devote my loyalty. I fear that I do not have the use of a warrior, To repay my bread of idleness with sincerity.
24	夙夜自併性 思逝若抽縈 將秉先登羽 豈敢聽金聲	Day and night I strengthen my resolve, Thoughts pass like an unwinding coil. I will hold aloft the vanguard's feathered emblem, How dare I listen to the sound of the [retreating] bell?

IV.

12	恨我無時謀 譬諸具官臣 鞠躬中堅內 微畫無所陳	I regret that I have no timely counsel, Like those nominal officials. I devotedly serve at the central headquarters, But have not even a small plan to offer.
16	許歷為完士 一言猶敗秦 我有素餐責 誠愧伐檀人	Xu Li was an accomplished man, With a single utterance he defeated Qin. I bear the blame of taking the “bread of idleness,” Indeed I am ashamed to face the singer of the “Cutting the sandalwood.”
20	雖無鉛刀用 庶幾奮薄身	Although I do not have the use of a lead knife, I would like to dedicate my humble life.

The “Cutting the Sandalwood” is the *Shi jing* poem “Fa tan” 伐檀 (no. 112) in which the following lines are repeatedly sung:⁴⁶⁵

彼君子兮	Oh, that lord!
不素餐兮	He does not take the bread of idleness!

We can imagine how anxious Wang Can is when he finds himself useless in the army. He is

⁴⁶⁴ *Lun yu zhushu*, 13/29, 13.10b (119-2); 14/12, 14.5b (125-1).

⁴⁶⁵ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 5c.10a (210-2).

neither a good fighter nor an important counselor. Ashamed, he can only have himself blamed by the ancient singer and express his loyalty with humility.

In the first and fifth poems Wang Can shows his loyalty with songs of praise. While the returning soldier in the “East Mountains” sees desolate scenes around his house, Wang Can finds Cao Cao’s court at Ye and ancestral hometown at Qiao (which was a prefecture but now a commandery) full of vitality. Cocks crow. Grain grows. Houses fill the villages. People throng the crossroads. Even birds and beasts sense the festive atmosphere and fear of being sacrificed. Scholar-officials like Wang Can would model themselves on Yi Yin 伊尹, referred to as the “old man bearing the tripod” in the first poem. Yi Yin bore a tripod to cook for the founder of Shang while advising him with metaphors of taste, and finally became his prime minister. Now scholars would also like to introduce themselves to Cao Cao and serve him.⁴⁶⁶ They would not follow the recluses Changju 長沮 and Jie’ni 桀溺 to hide away as mentioned in the *Lun yu*.⁴⁶⁷ They would not even agree with Confucius, who claimed to quit in several verses as accounted in the *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子.⁴⁶⁸

In the fifth poem, Wang Can concludes that Qiao commandery is the “happy land” for which the Poets (whose initial is capitalized because in Han times it specifically refers to the *Shi jing* singers) longed. They sing in the first stanza of the “Shuo shu” 碩鼠 (Big Rats, no. 113):⁴⁶⁹

碩鼠碩鼠	Big rat, big rat,
無食我黍	Do not gobble our millet!
三歲貫女	Three years we have slaved for you,

⁴⁶⁶ *Shi ji*, 3.94.

⁴⁶⁷ *Lun yu zhushu*, 18/6, 18.3b-4a (165-1 to 165-2).

⁴⁶⁸ Song Xian 宋咸, comm., *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子, in *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, first series (photo-reproduction of the woodblock edition prepared by Wang Lin 王蘭 in Song Chunxi *wushen* 宋淳熙戊申, i.e. 1188. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1919; rpt. 1929), 5.31a-33a.

⁴⁶⁹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 5c.12b (211-2). The translation is taken from Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 88.

4	莫我肯顧 逝將去女 適彼樂土 樂土樂土	Yet you take no notice of us. At last we are going to leave you And go to that happy land; Happy land, happy land,
8	爰得我所	Where we shall have our place.

This stanza reminds us of Achilles' threat to leave for his fertile Phthia because Agamemnon once took away his beloved Briseis. Now Wang Can, having seen many deserted cities and traveled a long way from home, suddenly comes to a fertile, lively place. With this allusion to the *Shi jing* poem, the ancient souls in pain and anger seem to find peace with Wang Can, and Wang Can once again sings Cao Cao's praises.

Surviving the War: Cao Pi, Wang Can, "Fu on the Willow"

When Cao Cao launched a western expedition against Zhang Lu in Jian'an 20 (215), Cao Pi also left Ye and went southwest. He stopped halfway to guard Mengjin, which was a ford of the Yellow River, an important pass northeast of Luoyang, and a stronghold west of the former battlefield at Guandu. In his "Liu fu" 柳賦 (*Fu on the Willow*), Cao Pi writes that he planted a willow fifteen years ago during the Guandu Battle against Yuan Shao. The willow survived, but some of them did not:⁴⁷⁰

Formerly, in Jian'an 5 (200), when His Highness [i.e. Cao Cao] and Yuan Shao did battle

⁴⁷⁰ For the preface, see *Yiwen leiju*, 89.1533. Also see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 132, 957.4a, which does not preserve the second half of the preface.

For the lines of the first rhyme group, see *Chuxue ji*, 28.692. Also see *Yiwen leiju*, 89.1533, which does not preserve the ninth and tenth lines of the first rhyme group.

For the lines of the second rhyme group, see *Yiwen leiju*, 89.1533-34. Also see *Taiping yulan*, vol. 132, 957.4a, which does not preserve the last six lines of the second rhyme group.

For the lines of the third rhyme group, see *Chuxue ji*, 28.692.

The variant marked here is based on Cao Pi; Zhang Pu, ed., *Wei Wendi ji*, 1.12a.

The translation of the preface and the lines is based on David R. Knechtges, "Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han," 17, 36-37.

at Guandu, I first planted this willow. Since then until now it has been fifteen years. Most of my attendants and coachmen from that time have passed away. Moved by such things, I am sad at heart, and I have thus written this *fu* as follows:

昔建安五年，上與袁紹戰于官渡，時余始植斯柳。自彼迄今，十有五載矣，左右僕御已多亡。感物傷懷，乃作斯賦曰：

伊中國之偉木兮	It is a grand tree of the Central Domain,
瑰姿妙其可珍	Its splendid appearance is precious indeed.
稟靈祇之篤施兮	Having received generous bounty from divine spirits,
與造化乎相因	It follows upon the fashioner of things.
四氣邁而代運兮	The four breaths swiftly pass moving in alternation,
去冬節而涉春	Leaving the winter season and edging into spring.
彼庶卉之未動兮	While the various plants have yet to stir,
因肇萌而先辰	It then begins to bud before the others.
盛德遷而南移兮	[Spring's] consummate power moves and shifts southward,
星鳥正而司分	The Astral Bird [i.e. the southern sky asterism], positioned correctly, takes charge of the equinox.
應隆時而繁育兮	In response to this flourishing season the tree luxuriates and grows,
揚翠葉之青純	It raises the verdant purity of its azure leaves.
脩榦偃蹇以虹指兮	Its long trunk, tall and towering, points like a rainbow;
柔條阿那而拖紳	Its tender branches, graceful and lovely, hang like girdles.
上扶疎而孳散兮	Above, lush and luxuriant, it spreads out;
下交錯而龍鱗	Below, it is imbricated like dragon scales.
在余年之二七	When I was age two-times-seven,
植斯柳乎中庭	I planted this willow in the courtyard.
始圍寸而高尺	At first it was a <i>cun</i> in diameter and a <i>chi</i> high,
今連拱而九成	Now it is two arm-spans round and nine-tiers tall.
嗟日月之逝邁	I sigh how the sun and the moon have gone their way;
忽躑躅以遄征	Without notice, relentlessly and inexorably they march on fast.
昔周遊而處此	Formerly traveling around I placed it in this place,
今條忽而弗形	Now suddenly it no longer has its previous form.
感遺物而懷故	Moved by this thing left, I think of old companions,
俛惆悵以傷情	Lowering my head, sad and sorrowful, I feel pain at heart.
於是曜靈次乎鶉首兮	Then the Blazing Spirit [i.e. the sun] is positioned at the Quail's Head [i.e. the top of the Astral Bird],
景風扇而增煖	The Effulgent Wind [i.e. the summer wind] fans everything and increases warmth.
豐弘陰而博覆兮	With its wide shade growing dense, it offers broad cover;
躬愜悌而弗倦	Relaxed and at ease, it never tires.
四馬望而傾蓋兮	Four-horse teams look up at it and tip their canopies to it,

行旅仰而迴睇	Travelers gaze upon it and look back with longing.
秉至德而不伐乎	Endowed with supreme virtue it does not boast,
豈簡卑而擇賤	How could it choose to be base or lowly?
含精靈而奇生兮	Containing a numinous essence and being wondrously born,
保休體之豐衍	It preserves its fine form that is lush and broad.
惟尺斷而能植兮	Indeed a <i>chi</i> -long cutting can be planted,
信永貞而可(美)[羨]	Truly it remains ever firm and admirable!

As Cao Pi writes in the penultimate line, willows can grow from cuttings. Moreover, the willow that he planted fifteen years ago during the Guandu Battle survived in his absence. With such adaptability, it contrasts with the orange tree that withers in the Bronze Bird Park in Cao Zhi's "Fu on the Orange," and the pagoda trees that are nourished by the rich soil in the palace in Cao Pi's "Fu on the Pagoda Trees."

Besides praising the willow, Cao Pi also sighs for the time gone by and the companions who have passed away. Because of these laments, Cao Pi's "Fu on the Willow" is associated in Song *shihua* 詩話 with the following passage from the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語:⁴⁷¹

When Huan Wen went on his northern expedition (369), as he passed by Jincheng (Jiangsu) he observed that the willows he had planted there earlier (in 341) while governing Langye Principality had all of them already reached a girth of ten double spans (*wei*). With deep feeling he said, "If mere trees have changed like this, how can a man endure it?" And pulling a branch toward him, he plucked a wand, while his tears fell in a flood.

桓公北征經金城，見前為琅邪時種柳，皆已十圍，慨然曰：「木猶如此，人何以堪！」攀枝執條，泫然流淚。

Thinking of all the changes in the past fifteen years, Cao Pi may have also "plucked a wand,

⁴⁷¹ Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, comp.; Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標, comm.; Yu Jiayi 余嘉錫, ed. and comm., *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 2/55, 1a.114. The translation is taken (with Romanization of the proper names changed to *pinyin*) from Liu Yiqing, comp.; Liu Xiaobiao, comm.; Richard B. Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2002), 2/55, 60.

For the Song *shihua*, see Wu Jian 吳玠, comp., *Yougutang shihua* 優古堂詩話, in *Dushuzhai congshu* 讀書齋叢書 (photo-reproduction of the woodblock edition prepared by Gu Xiu 顧修 during Qing Jiaqing 清嘉慶, i.e. 1796-1820, in *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成, series 39, vol. 8. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1968), 8b-9a; Wu Zeng 吳曾, comp., *Nenggaizhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), 8.225.

while his tears tell in a flood.” However, his “*Fu* on the Willow” reads very different from the *Shishuo xinyu* passage. First of all, the lines in the first rhyme group glow with the joy of the newborn. When the spring comes, the willow “begins to bud before the others,” “luxuriates and grows.” Its trunk points like a rainbow. Its branches hang like scholar-officials’ girdles. Its bark is imbricated like dragon scales. Although Cao Pi feels pain for the deceased, his admiration for the willow’s firmness increases all the more.

Note that Cao Pi was then twenty-nine years old and was still competing with Cao Zhi for being named heir designate. His age, vigor and enthusiasm would not allow him to conclude his *fu* with sighs or tears. Thus he does not tell of an aging tree but a full-grown one. It grew to maturity during wartime like him, survived, and is now able to offer a broad cover and win people’s hearts.

Wang Can understands Cao Pi’s sighs and aspirations, and further transforms them into his praise for Cao Pi.⁴⁷² He writes in his “*Fu* on the Willow:”⁴⁷³

<p>昔我君之定武 致天屈而徂征 元子從而撫軍 植佳木於茲庭</p>	<p>Formerly our lord settled the realm by martial might, Applying heaven’s punishment he went forth on an expedition. The eldest son [i.e. Cao Pi] accompanied him in the army, He planted a fine tree in this courtyard.</p>
<p>歷春秋以踰紀 行復出於斯鄉 覽茲樹之豐茂 紛旖旎以修長 枝扶疏而覃布 莖慘梢以奮揚</p>	<p>Through springs and autumns, more than a twelve-year cycle, He then returns to this hamlet. He views the luxuriance of this tree— Spreading lithely and lissomely, it is long and lank. Its branches, lush and luxuriant, broadly unfurl; Its stem, straight and tall, rises upward.</p>

⁴⁷² Chen Lin and Ying Yang also have “*Fu* on the Willow.” We are not sure whether they wrote for the same occasion because in the extant lines they do not mention that Cao Pi planted the willow. In addition, we know Chen Lin accompanied the army further west. He wrote a letter on behalf of Cao Hong from Hanzhong commandery to Cao Pi at Mengjin. (Although Wang Can writes about the expedition in his first “*Shi* on Accompanying the Army,” in the poem he does not mention that he went further west with the army.)

⁴⁷³ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 3.112-13. The translation is based on David R. Knechtges, “Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han,” 37-38.

人情感于舊物
心惆悵以增慮
行游目而廣望
覩城壘之故處
悟元子之話言
信思難而存懼
嘉甘棠之不伐
畏取累於此樹
苟遠迹而退之
豈駕遲而不屢

One is moved by a thing of the past,
The heart is sad and becomes all the more pensive.
Then wandering my gaze over a broad sweep,
I see the old site of the fortress.
I suddenly understand the words of the eldest son,
Truly he ponders the difficulties and keeps a sense of fear.
Delighted that the sweet pear-tree is not felled,
People fear that someone would do harm to this tree.
If they travel afar and depart this place,
How could they not slow the carriage and frequently [look back]?

Wang Can does not say what he sees on the old site of the fortress. It can be a fallen wall covered by brambles, or just an empty piece of ground that no one can identify except for Cao Pi. When seeing it, Wang Can suddenly understands Cao Pi's sighs: He sighs not only for the deceased, but also for the living. After fifteen years, the old fortress has collapsed. How fortunate he and the willow can find one another fine! Only when one ponders the difficulties that he has confronted could he keep a sense of fear, which is important for a wise leader.

At this point Wang Can cites the *Shi jing* again. This time he cites the “Gan tang” 甘棠

(Sweet Pear-Tree, no. 16):⁴⁷⁴

	蔽芾甘棠 勿翦勿伐 召伯所茆	Lush and luxuriant is the sweet pear-tree; Do not lop it or fell it, For the Lord of Shao took shelter under it.
4	蔽芾甘棠 勿翦勿敗 召伯所憩	Lush and luxuriant is the sweet pear-tree; Do not lop it or harm it, For the Lord of Shao rested under it.
8	蔽芾甘棠 勿翦勿拜 召伯所說	Lush and luxuriant is the sweet pear-tree; Do not lop it or uproot it, For the Lord of Shao reposed beneath it.

⁴⁷⁴ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 1d.9a-b (55-1). The translation is based on Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 16.

Urgently and repeatedly, the singers ask a stranger not to do any harm to the sweet pear-tree. It is not only because the tree is “lush and luxuriant,” but also because the Lord of Shao, a cultural hero of Zhou next to the Duke of Zhou, reposed beneath it. Now Wang Can observes that like the *Shi jing* singers, those who understand Cao Pi’s relation to the willow—he planted it and now has become as admirable as the full-grown tree—would also like to protect the tree.

Two years later (217), Cao Pi was named heir designate in the tenth month, but earlier in the spring Wang Can had died of illness on a southern expedition. Chen Lin, Xu Gan, Liu Zhen and Ying Yang also passed away in an epidemic during 217-218. In a letter to Wu Zhi, Cao Pi lamented their passing (including Ruan Yu’s passing in 212):⁴⁷⁵

Formerly, Bo Ya broke the strings of his zither at [the death] of Zhong [Zi]qi; Zhongni [i.e. Confucius] overturned his minced meat at [the death of] Zilu. The former was pained because it was difficult to meet with a man who understood his music; the latter grieved that his other disciples could not emulate [Zilu]. These [six] men may not emulate the ancients, but they were outstanding in their own times. Those who live today cannot emulate them! It is true that one should respect the young and that it is wrong to blame falsely those still to come, but I fear that you and I will not live to see them. I am already well advanced in years and am beset by a myriad cares. At times I worry so that I remain sleepless the whole night through. When will my spirit again be as it was? I am already an old man, although my hair is not yet white.

昔伯牙絕絃於鍾期，仲尼覆醢於子路，痛知音之難遇，傷門人之莫逮。諸子但為未及古人，自一時之雋也。今之存者，已不迨矣。後生可畏，來者難誣，然恐吾與足下不及見也。年行已長大，所懷萬端，時有所慮，至通夜不暝，志意何時復類昔日？已成老翁，但未白頭耳。

Wang Can demonstrates with his “*Fu on the Willow*” that he was indeed a sympathetic friend (*zhiyin* 知音) of Cao Pi. It is just that he could no longer bring comforts and delights to the heir designate Cao Pi, who would all of sudden feel like an old man with the best writers passing away and the best time forever gone.

⁴⁷⁵ *Wen xuan*, 42.1897-98. The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, “Literary Criticism at the End of the Eastern Han,” 1031-32; Donald Holzman, “Literary Criticism in China in the Early Third Century A.D.,” 124; Lois Fusek, “The Poetry of Ts’ao P’i (187-226),” 74-75.

Writing to the Front: Liu Zhen, “*Shi* Presented to the Leader of Court Gentlemen” (four poems)

In Jian’an 20 (215), when Cao Pi guarded Mengjin and composed the “*Fu* on the Willow,” Liu Zhen—who then served as scholar (*wenxue* 文學) at Cao Pi’s court—probably stayed at Ye because of illness. This assumption is based on the following four poems titled “Zeng Wuguan zhonglang jiang” 贈五官中郎將 (Presented to the Leader of Court Gentlemen for Miscellaneous Uses) in the *Wen xuan*. Li Shan notes that from Jian’an 16 (211) when Cao Pi was appointed the Leader of Court Gentlemen for Miscellaneous Uses to Jian’an 22 (217) when Liu Zhen passed away, Cao Pi left Ye only for Mengjin and Liyang. Therefore, Li Shan suspects that the “expedition” mentioned in line 11 of the third poem refers to Cao Pi’s going to Mengjin, and the “warfare” mentioned in the next line refers to his guarding Mengjin in Jian’an 20 (215).⁴⁷⁶ I agree with Li Shan and would like to read the four poems as a set that Liu Zhen sent to Cao Pi toward the end of the year.⁴⁷⁷

I.

	昔我從元后	Formerly I accompanied the great lord,
	整駕至南鄉	Preparing my carriage to the southern land.
	過彼豐沛都	Passing by that city Feng of Pei [commandery],
4	與君共翱翔	I roamed and rambled with you.
	四節相推斥	The four seasons pushed one another forward,
	季冬風且涼	In the last month of winter the wind was cool.
	眾賓會廣坐	Multitudinous guests gathered at the spacious seating,
8	明燈熺炎光	Bright lamps radiated fiery light.
	清歌製妙聲	Clear songs fashioned wondrous sounds,
	萬舞在中堂	The “dance of the myriad” was there in the hall.
	金罍含甘醴	Bronze beakers held sweet ales within,
12	羽觴行無方	Feathered bowls were passed around without set ceremony.

⁴⁷⁶ *Wen xuan*, 23.1112.

⁴⁷⁷ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 7.189-90. The variant marked here is provided in this edition. The translation of lines 9-14 of the first poem is based on Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 210-11.

16 長夜忘歸來
聊且為大康
四牡向路馳
(歎)[歡]悅誠未央
Through the long night we forgot to go home,
For the moment we had great merriment.
When our four-horse teams galloped onto the road,
Our joy indeed had not come to an end.

II.

4 余嬰沈痼疾
竄身清漳濱
自夏涉玄冬
彌曠十餘旬
常恐遊岱宗
不復見故人
所親一何篤
8 步趾慰我身
清談同日夕
情眇敘憂勤
便復為別辭
12 遊車歸西鄰
素葉隨風起
廣路揚埃塵
逝者如流水
16 哀此遂離分
追問何時會
要我以陽春
望慕結不解
20 貽爾新詩文
勉哉修令德
北面自寵珍
I suffer from lingering illness,
Hiding myself on the bank of the clear Zhang.
From summer to dark winter,
It has been long, more than ten ten-day cycles.
I always fear that I would travel to Daizong [i.e. Mount Tai, where
the dead go],
Not to see my old friend again.
How steadfast my dear one is—
You walked here to console me.
Engaging in pure conversation, we shared the day and night;
Looking at one another fondly, we related our cares and troubles.
Then again you bade farewell,
Driving your carriage to return to the western neighborhood.
White leaves rose with the wind,
On the broad road [your carriage] raised dust.
What passed away was like the following river,
I was sad that we were thus separated.
I further asked when we would meet,
You promised it would be in sunny spring.
Longing and admiring, unable to undo the knot,
I present you these new poems.
Please strive to cultivate fine virtues,
Face north [i.e. serve the lord] and take care of yourself.

III.

4 秋日多悲懷
感慨以長歎
終夜不遑寐
敘意於濡翰
明鐙曜閨中
清風淒已寒
白露塗前庭
8 應門重其關
四節相推斥
On autumn days I have many sad feelings,
Lamenting with long sighs.
Throughout the night I could not sleep,
But expressed myself with a moistered quill.
A bright lamp blazes in the inner chamber,
The cool breeze is chill and cold.
White dew spreads over the front courtyard,
The main gate is doubly barred.
The four seasons push one another forward,

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 12 | 歲月忽欲殫
壯士遠出征
戎事將獨難
涕泣灑衣裳
能不懷所歡 | Years and months suddenly come to an end.
The gallant man went on a distant expedition,
Military service shall be particularly hard.
Tears splash on my clothes—
How could I not yearn for the one I love? |
|----|---|--|

IV.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | 涼風吹沙礫
霜氣何皚皚
明月照緹幕
華燈散炎輝
賦詩連篇章
極夜不知歸
君侯多壯思 | Cool winds blow the sand and stones,
How white the frosty air!
The bright moon shines on the reddish tent,
Ornate lamps emit fiery radiance.
Composing poems one piece after another,
Throughout the night you do not care to return.
Milord the Marquis has many grand thoughts,
Your literary elegance is displayed at will. |
| 8 | 文雅縱橫飛
小臣信頑鹵
僂俛安能追 | This minor courtier is indeed stupid and slow,
Although exerting myself, how could I emulate you? |

Reading these four poems together, we can see two things reappearing: lamps and wind. In the first poem, lamps shone at a banquet while the winter wind brought cool air. Liu Zhen recalls a night on a southern expedition. He and Cao Pi attended a grand banquet in the “city Feng of Pei [commandery],” which was Liu Bang’s 劉邦 (r. 202-195 B.C.) hometown and here represents Cao Cao’s hometown Qiao. In the fiery light of the lamps, there were wondrous music and martial dancing, shining beakers and bowls passed around. While the banquet was over, the joy lasted. This unending joy suggests a mode of life that was full of promise.

The lamp is absent from the second poem, and the wind signals separation instead of gathering: white leaves rose with the wind, and the wind rose with Cao Pi’s departing carriage. Nevertheless, Cao Pi’s promise to visit Liu Zhen again in the next warm spring is like a lamp, giving hope to the ill poet. The poet then writes:

II.

20	望慕結不解 貽爾新詩文	Longing and admiring, unable to undo the knot, I present you these new poems.
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Reading this, his target reader Cao Pi would realize that the first poem, which reads so cheerfully, is part of Liu Zhen's ceaseless longing for the good old days with friends, especially with Cao Pi. Liu Zhen further compares his longing to a knot. He cannot undo it but write about it.

If this expression sounds feminine, the third poem is even more so. Sleepless on an autumn night, the poet "expressed myself with a moistered quill" (line 4) as follows:

III.

8	明鏡曜閨中 清風淒已寒 白露塗前庭 應門重其關	A bright lamp blazes in the inner chamber, The cool breeze is chill and cold. White dew covers the front courtyard, The main gate is doubly barred.
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The inner chamber (*gui* 閨), the front courtyard (*qianting* 前庭) and, in particular, the main gate (*yingmen* 應門) belong to an inner court. Like Qu Yuan in the "Encountering Sorrow," the poet describes himself as a concubine of his lord. He waits for him to return in the inner chamber lit by a bright lamp while the wind turns cold, white dew covers the front courtyard, and the main gate is firmly locked. In the *yuefu* poem "Xing of 'When Shall We': A Prelude," the female white swan has a similar expression when she becomes ill and has to stay behind:⁴⁷⁸

20	念與君離別 氣結不能言 各各重自愛 道遠歸還難 妾當守空房	Thinking on parting with you, Breath knots within, I cannot speak. Let each of us take heed to take care of himself, The journey is long, the return will be hard. Your wife will keep to my empty chamber,
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⁴⁷⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are several versions of the poem. For the version that has a dialogue, see *Song shu*, 21.618-19. The translation is based on Lois Fusek, "The Poetry of Ts'ao P'i (187-226)," 159; Anne Birrell, comp. and trans., *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 55; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 92-93.

閑門下重關

Shut the gate and let down the double bars.

The doubly barred gate represents the wife's loyalty to her husband. In Liu Zhen's poems written to the battlefield, it represents Liu Zhen's loyalty to Cao Pi. Moreover, just as the female swan expects how difficult it would be for her husband to return, Liu Zhen perceives the chill of winter and begins to worry about Cao Pi at the front:

III.

- | | | |
|----|-------|--|
| | 四節相推斥 | The four seasons push one another forward, |
| | 歲月忽欲殫 | Years and months suddenly come to an end. |
| | 壯士遠出征 | The gallant man went on a far expedition, |
| 12 | 戎事將獨難 | Military service shall be particularly hard. |
| | 涕泣灑衣裳 | Tears splash on my clothes— |
| | 能不懷所歡 | How could I not yearn for the one I love? |

In the *Shi jing* poem “Junzi yu yi” 君子于役 (My Lord is on Service, no. 66), the wife is waiting for her husband at a farmhouse. The roosting fowl and returning sheep and cows remind her of the end of another day, and another day she spent alone. When she sees that her husband is not coming, she can only hope that he gets drink and food:⁴⁷⁹

- | | | |
|----|------|--|
| | 君子于役 | My lord is on service, |
| | 不日不月 | Not a matter of days, nor months. |
| | 曷其有佺 | Oh, when will he be here again? |
| 12 | 雞棲于桀 | The fowl are roosting on their perches, |
| | 日之夕矣 | Another day is ending, |
| | 羊牛下括 | The sheep and cows have all come down. |
| | 君子于役 | My lord is on service, |
| 16 | 苟無飢渴 | Were I but sure that he gets drink and food! |

Although this *Shi jing* poem reads differently from Liu Zhen's poem in many ways, their concern

⁴⁷⁹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 4a.7a-b (149-1). The translation is based on Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 58.

for the one who went into military service are the same. By adapting the theme of a longing wife, Liu Zhen has a passionate dialogue with Cao Pi. He not only expresses his loyalty, but also shows his deep concern.

Showing his concern for Cao Pi at the front, Liu Zhen seems to hear the wind blowing on the sandy battlefield, and see a lamp shining in a reddish tent (*ti* 纒 or “reddish-yellow” is a military color). In the last poem, the cheerful tone is back. It is another night, as Liu Zhen imagines it, on which Cao Pi does not care to return but writes one poem after another. The fiery light that shone in his memory in the first poem now shines with the bright moon, whose light is shared by them in different locations. He concludes the poem by praising Cao Pi’s literary elegance as if he is composing poems with Cao Pi in the army as before. Cao Pi understands, however, what has changed. It is only with this poem, mixing memories with longings, that the separated friends could be brought together again, and the threats of war, disease and winter wind could be kept outside of the place where the lamp shines.

芙蓉散其華
菡萏溢金塘

Lotuses spread their blossoms,
The buds brim over the metal-strong dikes.

—Liu Zhen, “*Shi* on the Lord’s Feast”

Chapter 7. Writing about Symposia in Letters

Letters as Historical Sources

In his article “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” Professor Robert Joe Cutter introduces Cao Zhi’s *shi*, *fu*, and *yuefu* on symposia by citing the following texts: (1) the group compositions on the Bronze Bird Terrace recorded in the *Sanguo zhi* (also cited in Chapter 3), (2) Liu Xie’s comment on Jian’an *shi* in five-syllable lines in his *Wenxin diaolong* (also cited in Chapter 2), and (3) letters between Cao Pi, Cao Zhi and Wu Zhi.⁴⁸⁰ Through Jian’an poetry and letters, later historical accounts and literary criticism, we obtain a vivid picture of the symposia held in the Jian’an period.

Among the sources of information about Jian’an symposia, Jian’an poems and letters “make up the largest and most important source” as do Middle High German literary texts among the sources of information about the court culture in medieval Germany.⁴⁸¹ In his study on the latter topic, Joachim Bumke takes a positive attitude towards literary sources:⁴⁸²

Regardless of how unrealistic King Arthurs’s Round Table was, and how fantastic the battles against dragons and giants, in depicting the concrete details of social life the poets were apparently concerned to be accurate and up-to-date. A tendency towards idealization is not incompatible with realism in details.

⁴⁸⁰ Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 1-6.

⁴⁸¹ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courty Culture*, 7.

⁴⁸² Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courty Culture*, 8-9.

Then Joachim Bumke analyzes three levels of difficulty we would encounter when we use literature as a historical source:⁴⁸³

The degree of uncertainty varies depending on the object of our inquiry: the difficulties loom largest in the sphere of material culture. Many details are referred to only in literature, and it is impossible to prove that a given object every existed in real life. [...] The same methodological difficulties we have mentioned above apply to the ceremony of courtly etiquette, insofar as we are dealing with factual details, as for example tournament practice. Here the evidence of the literary texts can be supplemented with the accounts in historical sources of court feasts, tournaments, and ceremonies of knighthood. [...] The ideals of courtly society are reflected almost exclusively in literature. The new concept of courtly perfection in knighthood and love can be drawn directly from an analysis of the literary texts.

The level of difficulty, Joachim Bumke observes, depends on the questions we ask. If we wish to know about tableware or dining etiquette, for example, we cannot exclusively rely on literary texts. If we explore the ideals of a society such as their expectations for symposiasts, then literary texts would be excellent sources. Joachim Bumke concludes:⁴⁸⁴

While the literary texts thus differ in their evidentiary value in the various areas of cultural life, they all express the same thing. The reality to which they can be directly related is not that of material objects or actual events. Rather, it is the reality of ideas, expectations, and desires, the reality of social consciousness and cultural norms.

In Chapters 1 and 3, I have used historical accounts and occasionally literary texts to reconstruct Jian'an writers' travel and careers. In Chapter 5, I use literary texts more than historical accounts to examine two aspects of Jian'an writers' participation in military expeditions. The first aspect is the expeditions in which Jian'an writers participated. This information can be found mainly in the literary texts that are dated by the author, or by scholars according to certain "keywords" in the texts. The second aspect is the roles that Jian'an writers played in the army. The official role can be found in historical sources, but the ideal roles that they were expected to play or they

⁴⁸³ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 10-13.

⁴⁸⁴ Joachim Bumke; Thomas Dunlap, trans., *Courtly Culture*, 13.

expected themselves to play are reflected in literary texts. To illustrate these two aspects, I thus use literary texts more than historical accounts in Chapter 5.

I would like to examine Jian'an symposia in this chapter. Since Jian'an poems and letters make up the largest and most important source of information about Jian'an symposia, I will translate and discuss the letters in this chapter and the poems in the next. Unlike fictional writings, letters are dated and their dates are considered facts. Nevertheless, I will focus my attention on the "ideas, expectations, and desires" that they reflect, and supplement them with historical accounts when I come to the "material objects or actual events." The letters that I translate and discuss are numbered as follows. The titles are those given in the *Wen xuan*.

1. Cao Zhi, "Yu Wu Jizhong shu" 與吳季重書 (Letter to Wu Jizhong)
2. Wu Zhi, "Da Dong'e wang shu" 答東阿王書 (Letter Replying to the Prince of Dong'e)
3. Cao Pi, "Yu Zhaoge ling Wu Zhi shu" 與朝歌令吳質書 (Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of Zhaoge)
4. Cao Pi, "Yu Wu Zhi shu" 與吳質書 (Letter to Wu Zhi)
5. Wu Zhi, "Da Wei taizi jian" 答魏太子牋 (Memorandum Replying to the Heir Designate of Wei)

The Joy of Great Men: Letters Between Cao Zhi and Wu Zhi

Cao Zhi's "Letter to Wu Jizhong" (letter 1) and Wu Zhi's "Letter Replying to the Prince of Dong'e" (letter 2) were written for the same occasion. Wu Zhi, *zi* Jizhong 季重, was serving as administrator of Zhaoge 朝歌 (modern Qi 淇 county, Henan). As mentioned in letter 1.2, Wu Zhi visited Cao Zhi during the time of "routine reappointment" (*changdiao* 常調). This was the time when a local administrator went to the capital—which was Ye in Wu Zhi's case—to give reports

and wait for reappointment.⁴⁸⁵ Because of this opportunity, Cao Zhi and Wu Zhi engaged in convivial feast at Ye. After Wu Zhi returned to his post in Zhaoge, they wrote each other letters, which are dated by Shen Yucheng 沈玉成 and Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮 to Jian'an 20 (215).⁴⁸⁶ In the first halves of their letters, they mention the feast:

1. Cao Zhi, “Yu Wu Jizhong shu” 與吳季重書 (Letter to Wu Jizhong) (the first half)⁴⁸⁷

1.1 [Cao] Zhi states: To the Honorable Jizhong,
植白：季重足下。

1.2 In former days, although we were able to sit close together due to [your visit to Ye during the time of] routine reappointment, and we feasted and drank all day long, compared with the distance of our separation and the infrequency of our meetings, these still do not put an end to my many cares [for you].

前日雖因常調，得為密坐，雖燕飲彌日，其於別遠會稀，猶不盡其勞積也。

1.3 With the bowls and cups riding waves in front, and the panpipes and reed pipes playing music behind, you held your body like a soaring eagle, sang like a phoenix and glared like a tiger. I daresay even Xiao [He] and Cao [Shen] could not have equaled you, Wei [Qing] and Huo [Qubing] could not have matched you. When you looked left and glanced right, I daresay it was as though no one else was present. Was this not the grand aspirations of gentlemen? [I am like] one who vigorously chews while he passes the butcher shop—though he gets no meat, he prizes the feeling of contentment for the moment.

若夫觴酌凌波於前，簫笳發音於後，足下鷹揚其體，鳳(觀)[歎]虎視，調蕭曹不足儔，衛霍不足侔也。左顧右(盼)[眄]，謂若無人，豈非君子壯志哉！過屠門而大嚼，雖不得肉，貴且快意。

1.4 At such a moment, I would like to lift Mount Tai to use for meat, pour out the Eastern Sea to use for ale, fell the bamboo of Yunmeng to use for flutes, chop down the catalpas on the banks of the Si River to use for zithers, [so that we could] eat as though filling a great gorge, drink as though pouring into a leaking goblet. As described above, this joy

⁴⁸⁵ Gao Buying 高步瀛, ed. and comm., *Wei Jin wen juyao* 魏晉文學要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 44. Cao Zhi 曹植; Zhao Youwen, ed. and comm., *Cao Zhi ji jiaozhu*, 144 note 2.

⁴⁸⁶ Shen Yucheng 沈玉成 and Fu Xuancong 傅璇琮, “Zhonggu wenxue congkao” 中古文學叢考, in *Gudai wenxue yanjiu ji* 古代文學研究集, ed. Yu Guanying 余冠英, 142-85 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1985), 160-61.

Cao Zhi is called Prince of Dong'e in the title given in the *Wen xuan*, but Cao Zhi was not named Prince of Dong'e until 229. In Jian'an 20 (215), he was the Marquis of Linzi.

⁴⁸⁷ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.147-48. The variants marked here are provided in this edition. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Letters and memorials in the early third century,” 5-6; David R. Knechtges, “Letters in the *Wen xuan*,” in *Handbook of Chinese Letter Writing*, ed. Antje Richter (Boston: Brill, forthcoming).

would be truly hard to estimate. Would this not be the joy of great men?

當斯之時，願舉泰山以為肉，傾東海以為酒，伐雲夢之竹以為笛，斬泗濱之梓以為箏，食若填巨壑，飲若灌漏卮。如上言，其樂固難量，豈非大丈夫之樂哉！

- 1.5 But the days were not with us, and the Blazing Spirit [i.e. the sun] quickened its pace. Our encounters have a velocity faster than the passing light. Our partings have the same boundless space as between [the lunar mansion of] Shen [in Orion] and [the lunar mansion of] Shang [in Scorpio]. I long to hold back the heads of the six dragon steeds, stop the reins of [the sun's charioteer] Xihe, break off blossoms from the Ruo tree [where the sun sets], block the valley of the Bank of the Meng River [where the sun sets]. But the route to the heavens is high and distant. For a very long time I have had no way [to do so]. I toss and turn with nostalgic longing. What can be done? What can be done?
然日不我與，曜靈急節，面有過景之速，別有參商之闊。思欲抑六龍之首，頓羲和之轡，折若木之華，閉蒙汜[汜]之谷。天路高邈，良久無緣，懷戀反側，何如何如！

2. Wu Zhi, “Da Dong’e wang shu” 答東阿王書 (Letter Replying to the Prince of Dong’e) (the first half)⁴⁸⁸

- 2.1 [Wu] Zhi states: Your courier arrived.
質白：信到。
- 2.2 I respectfully received what you so kindly sent, opened the container, and spread out the paper. How extraordinarily beautiful your literary polish, and how earnest your solicitude! Only one who has climbed the eastern alp [i.e. Mount Tai] knows the twists and turns of the multitudinous mountains. Only one who has served the extremely exalted [i.e. Cao Zhi] knows the insignificance of [one who administers] a hundred *li* [i.e. Wu Zhi himself].
奉所惠贖，發函伸紙，是何文采之巨麗，而慰喻之綢繆乎！夫登東嶽者，然後知眾山之灑迤也；奉至尊者，然後知百里之卑微也。
- 2.3 After returning, your humble servant thought back for five or six days. At the end of ten days, his spirit was sapped and his thoughts scattered. He was dazed, as though he had suffered a loss. It is not that I dare covet the joys of favor and honor or envy the wealth of an Yi Dun. I honestly consider my status humbler than that of a dog or a horse, my virtue lighter than goose down, but I went so far as to pass under the dark watchtower, push open the gilded gate, ascend the jade hall, lean on the fretted railing at the front basilica, come to the winding pond and pour ale into my bowl.
自旋之初，伏念五六日，至于旬時，精散思越，惘若有失。非敢羨寵光之休，慕猗頓之富。誠以身賤犬馬，德輕鴻毛，至乃歷玄闕，排金門，升玉堂，伏虛檻於前殿，臨曲池而行觴。
- 2.4 My conduct was deficient and my words were indiscreet. Although I have relied on [your]

⁴⁸⁸ *Wen xuan*, 42.1909-11. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Letters and memorials in the early third century,” 7-8; David R. Knechtges, “Letters in the *Wen xuan*” (forthcoming).

grace [comparable to that of the Lord of] Pingyuan who provided for talented men, I am ashamed that I lack the talent [comparable to that of] Mao Sui [who distinguished himself like an awl piercing a sack with its] gleaming point. I have richly received [your] courtesy [comparable to that of] the Lord of Xue who demeaned himself, but I lack the meritorious service [comparable to that of] Feng Xuan [who devised the stratagem of] “three burrows.” I have repeatedly benefited from [your] kindness [comparable to that of the Lord of] Xinling who saved the left seat [for Master Hou], but I also lack the remarkable excellence [comparable to that of] Master Hou. These several examples are the reason why frustration grows in my breast, and why I am melancholic when recalling your affection.

既威儀虧替，言辭漏渫，雖恃平原養士之懿，愧無毛遂耀穎之才。深蒙薛公折節之禮，而無馮諼三窟之効。屢獲信陵虛左之德，又無侯生可述之美。凡此數者，乃質之所以憤積於胸臆，懷眷而悵邑者也。

- 2.5 As to thinking back to our former feast, I daresay you did not look into it. Pouring out the sea to use for ale, annexing the mountain to use for viands, felling bamboo at Yunmeng, chopping down catalpas on the banks of the Si River, and then pursuing elegant interests to the ultimate, carrying our joyful mood to the utmost—in truth these were milord’s grand visions and were not something to which I could aspire.

若追前宴，謂之未究，傾海為酒，并山為肴，伐竹雲夢，斬梓泗濱，然後極雅意，盡歡情，信公子之壯觀，非鄙人之所庶幾也。

- 2.6 With regard to my aspirations, they are in fact set on [serving you] who are as heaven to me. I long to cast off my seals and remove my seal cords, morning and night to sit in attendance, to delve into the teachings left by Confucius, to peruse the essential words of Laozi, to face clear ale yet not drink it, to withhold fine viands and not enjoy them, and to have Xishi leave the curtains [i.e. my room] but Momu to serve by my side—these are the ways that [men of] ample virtue take, and by which [men of] enlightened wisdom keep themselves intact.

若質之志，實在所天。思投印釋鞶，朝夕侍坐，鑽仲父之遺訓，覽老氏之要言，對清醑而不酌，抑嘉肴而不享，使西施出帷，嫫母侍側，斯盛德之所蹈，明哲之所保也。

- 2.7 As for that recent scene, it truly swayed my humble heart. Qin zithers were played; two octets performed in turn. Ocarinas and panpipes swelled in the ornate room; divine drums resounded to the right of the seating. My ears were dinned and deafened as though I lost my hearing; my feelings leapt and soared as though I was riding a horse. I daresay it could have intimidated the Sushen in the north and made them offer in tribute their thorn arrows, awed the Baiyue in the south and made them offer in tribute their white pheasants. Let alone [Sun] Quan and [Liu] Bei—how would they have been worth our consideration!

若乃近者之觀，實盪鄙心。秦箏發徽，二八迭奏。塤簫激於華屋，靈鼓動於座右。耳嘈嘈於無聞，情踴躍於鞍馬。謂可北懼肅慎，使貢其楛矢；南震百越，使獻其白雉；又況權備，夫何足視乎！

Cao Zhi describes an unusual feast, at which he saw Wu Zhi soaring like an eagle, singing like a

phoenix, and glaring like a tiger (letter 1.3). The first simile is borrowed from the *Shi jing* poem “Greatly Bright” (no. 236). In the last stanza, the *Shi jing* poet sings:⁴⁸⁹

	牧野洋洋	The field of Muye was vast,
	檀車煌煌	The strong chariots shone brightly.
	駟騶彭彭	And the teams of white-bellied horses were impetuous,
52	維師尚父	It was Shangfu the Master, it was he—
	時維鷹揚	Timely he soared like an eagle,
	涼彼武王	Rendering auspices to King Wu
	肆伐大商	To drive with all might against the great Shang.
56	會朝清明	The morning of the meet was clear and bright.

In the *Shi jing* poet’s eyes, Shangfu the Master was like a soaring eagle that attacked the Shang people with King Wu of Zhou. Cao Zhi and Wu Zhi were not on the battlefield, but when the goblets passed and the pipes sounded, Wu Zhi’s warlike spirit also soared like an eagle. As Wu Zhi writes in letter 2.7, the music of Qin zithers, ocarinas, panpipes and drums indeed aroused his military aspirations. When he drank and listened to this stirring music, the feast became his battlefield, his stage. Cao Zhi does not tell us what Wu Zhi did when he “held [his] body like a soaring eagle” (letter 1.3), but we can have the following assumptions.

First of all, he may have begun to debate with others on a variety of topics. His words were elegant. His look was intimidating. Thus Cao Zhi further compares him to a singing phoenix and a glaring tiger. Although Wu Zhi was merely an administrator of Zhaoge, he was like a minister and a commander at that moment. No one could compete with him—not even the great ministers Xiao He and Cao Shen 曹參 (d. 190 B.C.) or the great commanders Wei Qing and Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140-117 B.C.) (letter 1.3). Such a debate scene is illustrated in the following excerpts:

⁴⁸⁹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 16b.9b-10a (544-1 to 544-2). The translation is taken (with Romanization of the proper names changed to *pinyin*) from C. H. Wang, “Epic,” 106.

Cao Pi, “Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of Zhaoge” (letter 3.3)

Lofty talk gladdened our hearts. The mournful sounds of zithers were pleasing to our ears.
高談娛心，哀箏順耳。

Cao Zhi, “Yu bin fu” 娛賓賦 (*Fu* on Entertaining the Guests)⁴⁹⁰

辦中廚之豐膳兮	I have the inner kitchen make bountiful foods,
作齊鄭之妍倡	The alluring singing girls from Qi and Zheng perform.
文人騁其妙說兮	Literary men spew their marvelous talk,
飛輕翰而成章	Set flying light quills and complete compositions.
談在昔之清風兮	We speak of the “pure winds” that blew in former times,
總賢聖之紀綱	Coordinate the strands and mainstays of the worthies and sages.

Ying Yang, “Gongyan shi” 公宴詩 (*Shi* on Lord’s Feast)⁴⁹¹

開館延羣士	You open the lodge and invite scholars,
置酒于新堂	Preparing ale at the new hall.
辨論釋鬱結	We participate in discussions to dispel our gloom,
援筆興文章	Taking up a writing brush to compose texts.

As shown above, people in the Jian’an period participated in scholarly discussions and literary compositions when they were entertained with food and drink, music and dance. Their debates could have been fierce. The extant lines of Ruan Yu’s and Ying Yang’s “Wen zhi lun” 文質論 (Discourses on Refinement and Substance) still show their dissenting voices.⁴⁹² Their compositions could have been as competitive. In his “Da Dong’e wang jian” 答東阿王牋 (Memorandum Replying to the Prince of Dong’e), Chen Lin praises Cao Zhi’s writing by comparing his talent to a sharp, quick sword:⁴⁹³

Milord the Marquis demonstrates an outstanding talent and holds the swords [made by]

⁴⁹⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 1.11. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 11.

⁴⁹¹ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 6.171.

⁴⁹² *Jian’an qizi ji*, 5.169-70, 6.184-86.

⁴⁹³ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 2.53. For the allusions made in this passage, see Li Shan’s commentary to *Wen xuan*, 40.1823-24.

Qingping and Ganjiang. When you strike a bell, you make no clang. In response to a favorable situation, you cut promptly. This is an unusual inborn gift, which cannot be aspired to by those who gaze upon it and dig into it.

君侯體高世之才，秉青萍、干將之器，拂鐘無聲，應機立斷。此乃天然異稟，非鑽仰者所庶幾也。

Besides drinking, conversing and writing, Wu Zhi could also have displayed his high spirit in games such *weiqi* 圍碁 (go), *liubo* 六博 (six sticks), and *tanqi* 彈碁 (pellet chess). Cao Pi, a master of “pellet chess,”⁴⁹⁴ writes in letter 3.3:

Having deeply pondered the Six Classics and rambled among [the texts of] the Hundred Masters, we set up “pellet chess” boards at intervals and finished up with [the game] of “six sticks.”

既妙思六經，逍遙百氏；彈碁閒設，終以六博。

In the “Tanqi fu” 彈碁賦 (*Fu* on Pellet Chess) attributed to the Jian’an writer Ding Yi, the game is further associated with military practices:⁴⁹⁵

於是二物既設	And then having set up those two things [i.e. board and chessmen],
主人延賓	The host invites his guests.
粉石霧散	When the mist of powders and stones clears,
六師列陳	The six troops [i.e. the six chessmen on each side] are lined up.
跡行王首	Moving on the track of King the leader,
左右相親	The Left and the Right are close to each other.
成列告誓	Lined up they declare oaths,
三令五申	Commands are thrice issued, orders are five times proclaimed.
事中軍政	What they do conforms to military regimen,
言含禮文	What they say contains ritual patterns.
號令既通	When the orders are issued,

⁴⁹⁴ *Sanguo zhi*, 2. 90 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 2.343).

⁴⁹⁵ *Yiwen leiju*, 74.1275. For the *Zuo zhuan* passage alluded to in the line “Selling their spare wrath,” see Yang Bojun, ed. and comm., *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, Cheng 2.3, 791: “If someone wishes courage, I will sell him my spare courage” 欲勇者賈余餘勇. For the “Zhao hun” 招魂 passage alluded to in the line “[The leader] orders victory and obtains five [white sticks],” see Wang Yi 王逸, comm.; Hong Xingzu 洪興祖, subcomm., *Chu ci buzhu* 楚辭補注 (Taipei: Da’an chubanshe, 1995), 9.336: “One makes an owl and wins victory,/ Shouting for five-white” 成梟而牟，呼五白些. For notes on the terms *mou* 牟 and *wu* 五, see Lien-sheng Yang, “An Additional Note on the Ancient Game *Liu-po*,” 129; Song Huichun and Miao Xuelan, *Zhongguo boyi wenhua shi*, 36, 38.

兵碁啓路	The soldier chessmen clear the way.
運若迴飈	Moving like whirlwinds,
疾似飛兔	They are as fleet as dashing hares.
前中却舞	Those in the middle front recede but are inspirited,
賈其餘怒	Selling their spare wrath.
風馳火燎	Galloping like the wind, burning like fire,
令牟取五	[The leader] orders victory and obtains five [white sticks].
恍哉忽兮	Dazzling and confounding,
誠足慕也	They are indeed admirable.

When Cao Zhi writes in letter 1.3 that he is like “one who vigorously chews while he passes the butcher shop—though he gets no meat, he prizes the feeling of contentment for the moment,” he may refer to the feeling of contentment that he had when he watched Wu Zhi drinking and eating, speaking and playing a board game. At the feast, Wu Zhi was so confident that no one there could have intimidated him. “Was this not the grand aspirations of a gentleman?” sighs Cao Zhi.

Then in the epideictic style of “Sevens,” Cao Zhi writes that he would like to present Wu Zhi the Eastern Sea and Mount Tai as his ale and meat, and cut down the bamboos at the southern marshes of Yunmeng and catalpas by the eastern Si River to make him musical instruments. If we could feast and drink with such a heroic gesture, Cao Zhi claims, “Would this not be the joy of great men?” (letter 1.4). However, he cannot find the “route to the heavens” to stop the “six dragon steeds” of the sun from galloping west (letter 1.5). With these hyperbolic remarks, Cao Zhi expresses his regrets for their separation and unaccomplished merriment.

As expected, Wu Zhi denigrates himself when he expresses his admiration and gratitude for Cao Zhi (letter 2.2-4). His self-denigration even conflicts with Cao Zhi’s enthusiasm:

2.5 As to thinking back to our former feast, I daresay you did not look into it. Pouring out the sea to use for ale, annexing the mountain to use for viands, felling bamboo at Yunmeng, chopping down catalpas on the banks of the Si River, and then pursuing more elegant interests to the ultimate, carrying our joyful mood to the utmost—in truth these were milord’s grand visions and were not something to which I could aspire.
若追前宴，謂之未究，傾海為酒，并山為肴，伐竹雲夢，斬梓泗濱，然後極雅意，

盡歡情，信公子之壯觀，非鄙人之所庶幾也。

This passage reminds us of Song Yu's "*Fu on the Wind*," which I cited in Chapter 4 and would like to cite again for comparison:

King Xiang of Chu was amusing himself at the palace of Magnolia Terrace, with Song Yu and Jing Cuo attending him. A breeze suddenly blew in upon them. The king opened his lapel and faced the wind, saying, "How pleasant this wind! Do I share it with the common people?" Song Yu replied, "This is a wind for Your Majesty alone. How could the common people share it?"

楚襄王游於蘭臺之宮，宋玉景差侍。有風颯然而至，王迺披襟而當之曰：「快哉此風！寡人所與庶人共者邪？」宋玉對曰：「此獨大王之風耳，庶人安得而共之？」

Like Song Yu, Wu Zhi uses ostensible self-denigration to introduce a didactic message. Wu Zhi claims that he would like to give up his position as local administrator so that he could serve Cao Zhi. While serving Cao Zhi, he would not enjoy drink, food or beautiful women. He would rather keep the ugly Momu for his companion and concentrate on study, for this is something that "a man of ample virtue and enlightened wisdom" would choose to do (letter 2.6). In a mildly humorous vein, Wu Zhi again shows his appreciation for Cao Zhi's hospitality and his regret about having not served Cao Zhi well.

Finally, Wu Zhi puts his self-denigration aside and expresses his joy at the feast. He admits that he was stimulated by the musical performance. When the music thundered in his ears, he felt like riding on a horse and shaking the four corners with their army (letter 2.7). This expression echoes what Cao Zhi calls the "aspirations of gentlemen" and the "joy of great men" (letter 1.3-4).

As we shall see in the next chapter, Jian'an writers have different responses to a feast in their poems. Wu Zhi's self-denigration in his letter to Cao Zhi represents a voice that we can hear in other Jian'an writers' works (including Cao Zhi's): a concern for establishing virtue (*li de*

立德) and accomplishing feats (*li gong* 立功). This is why Wu Zhi claims that he prefers studying to feasting, and why he writes about intimidating their enemies.

On the other hand, Wu Zhi's impassioned spirit and Cao Zhi's admiration for this spirit show how their concern for establishing virtue and accomplishing feats turned into the "joy of great men" at a feast. In her article on the significance of Jian'an poems on "Lord's Feast," Professor Cheng Yu-yu observes:⁴⁹⁶

The works on the "Lord's Feast" [...] can no longer be viewed simply as [products] of entertainment or adulation. Instead, they clearly and vividly show how literary men of the Jian'an period formed a group and shared their ultimate values. [...] This "joy of great men" was not tantamount to common sensual pleasures or released emotions, but rather [arose when the literary men] concentrated their attention and applied deep thought. [...] Although they did not accomplish real feats, they experienced the confidence and passion that a commander and a minister had.

公讌諸作[...]不能再單單劃歸於休閒享樂或干諂應酬，而竟是整個建安文士集團如何存在及其終極價值最具體的表徵與最生動的演出。[...]這「大丈夫之樂」並非等同於一般的耳目娛悅、情靈搖蕩，而更加是一種心靈的專凝、意向的深化。[...]雖無實質勳功，卻也可以體驗如同出將入相般的尊貴昂揚，縱情豪放。

In other words, they did not simply enjoy food and drink, music and dance at a feast like most people. When they concentrated their attention in particular on literary composition, and applied deep thought especially in poetic imagination, their impassioned spirits soared like eagles. On this stage, they advanced like commanders and ministers. Thus they obtained recognition from each other and experienced the "joy of great men."

In the Warring States period, Mencius gave his definition of "great men" (*da zhangfu* 大丈夫) based on the rites:⁴⁹⁷

Jing Chun said, "Were not Gongsun Yan and Zhang Yi great men? As soon as they

⁴⁹⁶ Cheng Yu-yu, "Shilun gongyan shi zhiyu Yexia wenshi jituan de xiangzheng yiyi," 204, 214, 215.

⁴⁹⁷ *Mengzi zhushu*, 3B/2, 6a.4a-b (108-2). The translation is based on D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 3B/2, 107.

showed their wrath, the vassal lords trembled with fear. When they were still, [the realm] under Heaven was spared the conflagration of war.” “How can they be thought great men?” said Mencius. “Have you never studied the rites? [...] He cannot be led into excesses by fortune and fame. He cannot be deflected from his purpose by poverty and obscurity. He cannot be made to bow by might and force. This is what I would call a great man.”

景春曰：「公孫衍、張儀豈不誠大丈夫哉？一怒而諸侯懼，安居而天下熄。」孟子曰：「是焉得為大丈夫乎？子未學禮乎？[...]富貴不能淫，貧賤不能移，威武不能屈——此之謂大丈夫。」

In the Jian'an period, Cao Zhi further associated their great spirits at a feast with the “joy of great men,” showing the confidence and passion of Jian'an symposiasts. Writing with literary polish and sharing common sentiments, they found their values that were tantamount to the values of the political and military figures of past and present.

The Joy and Sorrow of Young Men: Letters Between Cao Pi and Wu Zhi

The next letters about symposia were exchanged between Cao Pi and Wu Zhi. Cao Pi wrote letter 3 (titled “Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of Zhaoge” in the *Wen xuan*) to Wu Zhi. We do not find Wu Zhi's reply to it. Cao Pi also wrote letter 4 (titled “Letter to Wu Zhi” in the *Wen xuan*) to Wu Zhi. Wu Zhi replied to it with letter 5 (titled “Memorandum Replying to the Heir Designate of Wei” in the *Wen xuan*).

According to the *Wei lüe* cited by Pei Songzhi, Wu Zhi served as administrator of Zhaoge (Zhaoge *zhang* 朝歌長), and then magistrate of Yuancheng (Yuancheng *ling* 元城令). After that—that is, after Wu Zhi was appointed magistrate of Yuancheng—Cao Cao launched a western expedition, and Cao Pi guarded Mengjin in Jian'an 20 (215). At this time Cao Pi wrote letter 3 to Wu Zhi. In Jian'an 23 (218), Cao Pi wrote letter 4 to Wu Zhi.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁸ *Sanguo zhi*, 21.607-9 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 21.1689-90).

Letter 3 is cited in the *Wei lüe* and included in the *Wen xuan*. Its title “Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of Zhaoge” given in the *Wen xuan* indicates when Cao Pi wrote letter 3 to Wu Zhi, Wu Zhi served as magistrate of Zhaoge (*Zhaoge ling* 朝歌令). However, according to the *Wei lüe*, when Cao Pi wrote letter 3, Wu Zhi served as magistrate of Yuancheng. Thus we find the first problem: When Cao Pi wrote letter 3 to Wu Zhi, did Wu Zhi serve as magistrate of Zhaoge or magistrate of Yuancheng?

Letter 4 is also cited in the *Wei lüe* and included in the *Wen xuan*. In this letter, Cao Pi writes that it has been four years since they parted. Wu Zhi writes in letter Z (titled “Zai Yuancheng yu Wei taizi jian” 在元城與魏太子牋 [Memorandum Written at Yuancheng to the Heir Designate of Wei] in the *Wen xuan*) that he feasted with Cao Pi when he was just appointed magistrate of Yuancheng and was going to report for duty. Here we find the second problem. If Wu Zhi served as magistrate of Zhaoge when Cao Pi wrote letter 3 to him (according to the *Wen xuan*), Wu Zhi must have feasted with Cao Pi after then (according to letter Z)—that is, after the fifth month (according to letter 3.1) of 215 (according to the *Wei lüe*). If letter 4 was written in the second month (according to letter 4.1) of 218 (according to the *Wei lüe*), there are less than three years between the feast and the date of letter 4. Why does Cao Pi write in letter 4 that they have not met for four years?⁴⁹⁹ In other words, the title of letter 3 given in the *Wen xuan*, the dates mentioned in the *Wei lüe*, and the received texts of the letters conflict with one another.

If we choose to base our arguments on the received texts of the letters, we can start with letter 5. Wu Zhi dates it “the second month, the eighth day of *gengyin*.” As Shen Yucheng, Fu Xuancong and Cao Daoheng point out, the eighth day of the second month of Jian’an 24 (219)

⁴⁹⁹ Shen Yucheng and Fu Xuancong raise this question. Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng continue the discussion. For their arguments, see Shen Yucheng and Fu Xuancong, “Zhonggu wenxue congkao,” 156-61; Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 81-83.

was a *gengyin* day, but that of Jian'an 23 (218) was not.⁵⁰⁰ From the texts we know that letter 5 was written in reply to letter 4. Since Cao Pi dates letter 4 “the second month, the third day,” and it is unlikely that Wu Zhi wrote letter 5 in “the second month, the eighth day” of the next year, both letter 4 and letter 5 must have been written in the the second month of Jian'an 24 (219). Neither of them was written in Jian'an 23 (218) as mentioned in the *Wei lüe*. This is part of our answer to the second problem.

From Jian'an 24 (219) when letters 4 and 5 were written, we can count four years back and make the following timeline:

Jian'an 20 (215)	Wu Zhi, letter Z	keys: feast with Cao Pi (at Ye); visit Yuancheng for the first time
5/18	Cao Pi, letter 3	keys: send the letter (from Mengjin) to Ye; detour by Wu Zhi (at Yuancheng)
Jian'an 24 (219)		
2/3	Cao Pi, letter 4	keys: write the letter on 2/3; have not seen Wu Zhi for 4 years
2/8 <i>gengyin</i>	Wu Zhi, letter 5	keys: write the letter on 2/8 <i>gengyin</i>

Our answer to the first problem—and partly to the second—is that as mentioned in the *Wei lüe*, Wu Zhi served as magistrate of Yuancheng when Cao Pi wrote letter 3. The title of letter 3 given in the *Wen xuan* should be “Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of Yuancheng.”⁵⁰¹ By accepting this account of the *Wei lüe*, we can assume that Cao Pi and Wu Zhi feasted before Cao Pi wrote letter 3. Thus we can find a four-year span between letter Z and letter 4. Moreover, Cao Pi mentions in letter 3.6 that he was sending a rider to Ye and had the rider detour by Wu Zhi. Indeed, to send a letter from Mengjin (southwest of Ye) through Ye to Yuancheng (east of Ye), the rider had to

⁵⁰⁰ Shen Yucheng and Fu Xuancong, “Zhonggu wenxue congkao,” 160; Cao Daoheng and Shen Yucheng, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao*, 83.

⁵⁰¹ This answer is different from Shen Yucheng, Fu Xuancong and Cao Daoheng's.

make a detour.⁵⁰² Letters 3-5 are translated as follows:

3. Cao Pi, “Yu (Zhaoge) [Yuancheng] ling Wu Zhi shu” 與(朝歌)[元城]令吳質書 (Letter to Wu Zhi, Magistrate of (Zhaoge) [Yuancheng])⁵⁰³

3.1 The fifth month, the eighteenth day, Pi states:
五月十八日，丕白：

3.2 I trust you are well. Though the road there is near, official duties are confining. My feelings of longing for you truly are unbearable. The place you administer is out of the way and our correspondence has dwindled. This increases my cares [for you] all the more. 季重無恙。塗路雖局，官守有限，願言之懷，良不可任。足下所治僻左，書問致簡，益用增勞。

3.3 Whenever I recall our former outings at Nanpi, [I find them] truly unforgettable. Having deeply pondered the Six Classics and rambled among [the texts of] the Hundred Masters, we set up “pellet chess” boards at intervals and finished up with [the game of] “six sticks.” Lofty talk gladdened our hearts. The mournful sounds of zithers were pleasing to our ears. We galloped in the northern fields and feasted in the southern lodges, floated sweet melons on clear springs and sank red plums in cold waters. 每念昔日南皮之遊，誠不可忘。既妙思六經，逍遙百氏；彈碁閒設，終以六博，高談娛心，哀箏順耳。馳騁北場，旅食南館，浮甘瓜於清泉，沈朱李於寒水。

3.4 When the bright sun hid away, we continued [our pleasures] under the bright moon. Riding together in the same carriage, we visited the rear park. The carriage wheels slowly moved, and the entourage did not utter a sound. A cool breeze arose in the night, and sad reed pipes softly moaned. As joy departed, sorrow arrived. Deeply grieved, we were all sad at heart. I looked back and said, “Such joy cannot long endure.” You all said I was right. Now we are really apart, each in a separate place. Yuanyu [i.e. Ruan Yu] has eternally gone, translated to something other. Every time I recall these things—but when will it be possible to speak with you? 白日既匿，繼以朗月，同乘竝載，以遊後園，輿輪徐動，參從無聲，清風夜起，悲笳微吟，樂往哀來，愴然傷懷。余顧而言，斯樂難常，足下之徒，咸以為然。今果分別，各在一方。元瑜長逝，化為異物，每一念至，何時可言！

3.5 Just now it is the time of the *ruibin* pitch [i.e. the second month of summer]. The Effulgent Wind fans everything. The weather is pleasantly warm, and the many kinds of fruit are thriving. Sometimes I harness up and take an excursion. To the north I skirt the edge of the Yellow River. Attendants sound reed pipes to clear the way, and my scholars ride in carriages behind. The season is the same, but the time is another. The externals are identical, but the people are different. How heavy my cares are!

⁵⁰² David R. Knechtges, “Letters in the *Wen xuan*” (forthcoming).

⁵⁰³ *Wen xuan*, 42.1895. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 3-4; and an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

方今蕤賓紀時，景風扇物，天氣和暖，眾果具繁。時駕而遊，北遵河曲，從者鳴笳以啓路，文學託乘於後車。節同時異，物是人非，我勞如何！

- 3.6 At present I am sending a rider to Ye and, so, will have him detour by you. Go, and take care of yourself. Pi states.

今遣騎到鄴，故使枉道相過。行矣自愛。丕白。

4. Cao Pi, “Yu Wu Zhi shu” 與吳質書 (Letter to Wu Zhi)⁵⁰⁴

- 4.1 The second month, the third day, Pi states:

二月三日，丕白：

- 4.2 The years and months pass quickly. It has been four years since we parted. Having not seen [his family] for three years, [the singer of] the “East Mountains” lamented how long the separation was. How much more [I shall lament] now that we have passed [three years]. How unbearable to think of it! Although letters come and go between us, they have not sufficed to undo the knot of my cares.

歲月易得，別來行復四年。三年不見，東山猶嘆其遠，況乃過之，思何可支！雖書疏往返，未足解其勞結。

- 4.3 In the former year’s epidemic, many of our friends and family met with disaster. Xu Gan, Chen Lin, Ying Yang and Liu Zhen all passed away then. How could one speak of the pain! In former days when we amused ourselves together, we went with our carriages one after another, and sat with our mats one next to another. Had we been apart for an instant? Whenever our bowls and cups were passed around, and the strings and winds played in unison, then tipsy and flushed, we would raise our heads and compose poems. At these times, heedlessly, we were unaware of our joy. We thought that a hundred years were allotted us and that we could always share [in joy] and care for one another. How could we have foreseen that within a few years nearly all of us would perish? It pains me to speak of it. Recently I have been editing the writings that they left behind and putting them together to make a collection. As I look over their names, it has already become a register of ghosts. Although they remain in my mind’s eye as I think back on our former outings, all these men have changed into muck and dirt. What more can I say?

昔年疾疫，親故多離其災，徐陳應劉，一時俱逝，痛可言邪！昔日遊處，行則連輿，止則接席，何曾須臾相失。每至觴酌流行，絲竹並奏，酒酣耳熱，仰而賦詩，當此之時，忽然不自知樂也。謂百年已分，可長共相保。何圖數年之間，零落略盡，言之傷心！頃撰其遺文，都為一集。觀其姓名，已為鬼錄。追思昔遊，猶在心目，而此諸子，化為糞壤，可復道哉！

⁵⁰⁴ *Wen xuan*, 42.1896-99. The variants marked here are provided in this edition. The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, “Literary Criticism at the End of the Eastern Han,” 1030-32; Donald Holzman, “Literary Criticism in China in the Early Third Century A.D.,” 123-25; Lois Fusek, “The Poetry of Ts’ao P’i (187-226),” 72-75; Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 4-5; Robert Joe Cutter, “To the Manner Born? Nature and Nurture in Early Medieval Chinese Literary Thought,” 54, 266 note 33; and an unpublished translation by David R. Knechtges with changes.

- 4.4 Examining the literary men of past and present, [I found that] as a group they did not bother about refined conduct. Few could stand on their reputation or moral integrity. Weichang [i.e. Xu Gan] alone possessed refinement and substance. Calm, simple, and of few desires, he set his mind on Mount Ji [where the ancient hermit Xu You 許由 went into reclusion]. It can be said that he was a gentleman of refinement and substance. He wrote the *Balanced Discourses* in more than twenty chapters and established a tradition of his own. Its diction and meaning are classical and elegant, worthy of being transmitted to posterity. This master will be immortal! Delian [i.e. Ying Yang] had exerted himself with the intention to compose a work. His talent and learning were sufficient [to enable him] to write books. It is truly to be bitterly regretted that he was unable to realize his fine aspirations. Recently, when I read through these masters' writings, I faced them wiping tears. I not only felt pain from those who have passed away, but also thought of myself.
- 觀古今文人，類不護細行，鮮能以名節自立。而偉長獨懷文抱質，恬淡寡欲，有箕山之志，可謂彬彬君子者矣。著中論二十餘篇，成一家之言，辭義典雅，足傳于後，此子為不朽矣。德璉常斐然有述作之意，其才學足以著書，美志不遂，良可痛惜。間者歷覽諸子之文，對之拭淚，既痛逝者，行自念也。
- 4.5 Kongzhang's [i.e. Chen Lin] petitions are especially vigorous, but a shade prolix. Gonggan [i.e. Liu Zhen] has an exceptional style, but it is not forceful. The finest of his *shi* in five-syllable lines are marvelous beyond those of his contemporaries. Yuanyu's [i.e. Ruan Yu] letters are graceful and elegant, delivering ample pleasure. Zhongxuan [i.e. Wang Can] alone excelled in *fu*. A pity his style was weak. It was inadequate to give impetus to his writing. Wherein he excelled, even among the ancients none far surpassed him.
- 孔璋章表殊健，微為繁富。公幹有逸氣，但未適耳；其五言詩之善者，妙絕時人。元瑜書記翩翩，致足樂也。仲宣(續)[獨]自善於辭賦，惜其體弱，不足起其文，至於所善，古人無以遠過。
- 4.6 Formerly, Bo Ya broke the strings of his zither at [the death] of Zhong [Zi]qi; Zhongni [i.e. Confucius] overturned his minced meat at [the death of] Zilu. The former was pained because it was difficult to meet with a man who understood his music; the latter grieved that his other disciples could not emulate [Zilu]. These [six] men may not emulate the ancients, but they were outstanding in their own times. Those who live today cannot emulate them! It is true that one should respect the young and that it is wrong to blame falsely those still to come, but I fear that you and I will not live to see them.
- 昔伯牙絕絃於鍾期，仲尼覆醢於子路，痛知音之難遇，傷門人之莫逮。諸子但為未及古人，自一時之雋也。今之存者，已不逮矣。後生可畏，來者難誣，然恐吾與足下不及見也。
- 4.7 I am already well advanced in years and am beset by a myriad cares. At times I worry so that I remain sleepless the whole night through. When will my spirit again be as it was? I am already an old man, although my hair is not yet white. Emperor Guangwu said, "I am over thirty years old and have spent ten of them in the army. The changes that I have been through are many." My virtue cannot emulate his, yet I am already of the same age.

[Being named heir designate I feel as if] I have the [humble] substance of dogs and sheep, but have been clad in the refined patterns of tigers and panthers; I lack the multitudinous stars' brilliance, but have been given the light of the sun and the moon. My every action attracts attention—when is it ever easy? I fear that never again will I be able to go roaming as in former days. When young and vigorous, one truly should strive hard, for once the years pass, how could they be retrieved? The ancients thought of “going roaming at night with a candle in hand.” Truly there is reason in this.

年行已長大，所懷萬端。時有所慮，至通夜不暝，志意何時復類昔日？已成老翁，但未白頭耳。光武言年三十餘，在兵中十歲，所更非一，吾德不及之，年與之齊矣。以犬羊之質，服虎豹之文，無眾星之明，假日月之光，動見瞻觀，何時易乎？恐永不復得為昔日遊也。少壯真當努力，年一過往，何可攀援！古人思(炳)[秉]燭夜遊，良有以也。

- 4.8 How do you amuse yourself now? Have you written anything? I gaze eastward and sob, composing this letter to reveal my heart. Pi states.

頃何以自娛？頗復有所述造不？東望於邑，裁書敘心。丕白。

5. Wu Zhi, “Da Wei taizi jian” 答魏太子牋 (Memorandum Replying to the Heir Designate of Wei)⁵⁰⁵

- 5.1 The second month, the eighth day of *gengyin*, your servant Zhi states:

二月八日庚寅，臣質言：

- 5.2 I respectfully hold your letter in my hands and read it. You recalled the deceased and thought of the living. Your great favor and deep sorrow are shown between the lines. The sun and the moon steadily move on. The years are not with us. Formerly when I attended you, I sat among the multitudinous fine men. Going out, we had the pleasure of traveling incognito. Coming in, we had the joy of winds and strings. We held feasts and merrily drank, composed poems and wished each other long life. We thought that we could care for one another from the beginning to the end, side by side give free rein to our talent, and render our service to the bright lord. How could we have foreseen that within a few years nearly all of us would die? What virtue does your servant have that enable him to live long?

奉讀手命，追亡慮存，恩哀之隆，形於文墨。日月冉冉，歲不我與。昔侍左右，廁坐眾賢，出有微行之遊，入有管絃之權，置酒樂飲，賦詩稱壽。自謂可終始相保，並騁材力，効節明主。何意數年之間，死喪略盡。臣獨何德，以堪久長？

- 5.3 As for Chen Lin, Xu Gan, Liu Zhen and Ying Yang, their notable talent and learning are indeed as you said. It is regretted that they were unable to realize [their aspirations]. This is bitterly lamentable. In serving as attendants with poise and composure, these men were truly such men. If there were troubles on the frontier, the subordinates were like boiling water in a tripod, military documents arrived like spokes [gathering at the center of a wheel], and feathered proclamations sped forth one after another, then those fine men

⁵⁰⁵ *Wen xuan*, 40.1825.

could not have undertaken any tasks.

陳徐劉應，才學所著，誠如來命，惜其不遂，可為痛切。凡此數子，於雍容侍從，實其人也。若乃邊境有虞，羣下鼎沸，軍書輻至，羽檄交馳，於彼諸賢，非其任也。

- 5.4 In the past during the reign of Filial Emperor Wu, writing flourished. Men like Dongfang Shuo and Mei Gao were unable to sustain an argument. They were of the same type as Ruan Yu and Chen Lin. Only Yan Zhu and [Yuqiu] Shouwang participated in and were informed about policy making, but they did not keep themselves from danger or offer good counsel to the state. They ended up being destroyed. Your servant feels shame for them. Sima Zhangqing [i.e. Sima Xiangru] avoided service on the grounds of illness and dedicated himself to composing works. Xu Gan was similar to him. Now they have all passed away, translated to something other. We truly should respect the young men.

往者孝武之世，文章為盛，若東方朔枚臯之徒，不能持論，即阮陳之儔也。其唯嚴助壽王，與聞政事，然皆不慎其身，善謀於國，卒以敗亡，臣竊恥之。至於司馬長卿稱疾避事，以著書為務，則徐生庶幾焉。而今各逝，已為異物矣。後來君子，實可畏也。

- 5.5 When your humble servant thinks of you who are as heaven to him, he finds that having had leisure in the field of classics and taken rest in the park of writings, you can put forward your arguments and exhaust the subtleties of things. When you display your verbal virtuosity and begin to write, the refined patterns of simurghs and dragons take wing. Although you are of the same age of the King of Xiao [i.e. Emperor Guangwu], your talent is truly a hundred times greater than his. This is why the public highly praises you, and why those far and near speak with one voice.

伏惟所天，優游典籍之場，休息篇章之囿，發言抗論，窮理盡微，摛藻下筆，鸞龍之文奮矣。雖年齊蕭王，才實百之。此眾議所以歸高，遠近所以同聲。

- 5.6 Nevertheless, the years [pass as fast as] falling [objects]. I am now already forty-two. White hair grows on my temples. My cares steadily increase. I am truly unlike what I used to be. I only wish I could keep myself intact and correct my conduct, never going into a place of wrongdoing or being a burden to my friends. The joy of excursions and feasts can be hardly found again. As soon as life's prime passes, it is truly difficult to get it back. Fortunately, your servant has the talent of the most stupid type and meets with the congregation of winds and clouds [i.e. a favorable time]. As time moves on, I am growing old, but I still hope to thrust out my chest and raise my head, putting [my talent like] a cutting [knife] to use.

然年歲若墜，今質已四十二矣，白髮生鬢，所慮日深，實不復若平日之時也。但欲保身勅行，不蹈有過之地，以為知己之累耳。遊宴之歡，難可再遇；盛年一過，實不可追。臣幸得下愚之才，值風雲之會，時邁齒載，猶欲觸匈奮首，展其割裂之用也。

- 5.7 With all my respects. Because your letter is detailed, I express some of my deepest feelings. On the penalty of death.

不勝悽悽，以來命備悉，故略陳至情。質死罪死罪。

If Cao Zhi and Wu Zhi express in their letters the joy of great men at their feast, Cao Pi and Wu Zhi further tell us about the joy and sorrow of young symposiasts.

In letter 3, Cao Pi recalls their excursion to Nanpi. Nanpi was a prefecture of the Bohai 渤海 commandery along the northeastern coast. In Jian'an 10 (205), Cao Cao defeated Yuan Shao's first son Yuan Tan at Nanpi and captured the prefecture. In Cao Pi's memory, it was the best place to pass summer time. In Mei Sheng's "Seven Stimuli," the ill prince was recommended to enjoy a musical performance and a lavish banquet, a chariot race and an excursion, a grand hunt and a view of the tidal bore, and a presentation of "essential words and marvelous doctrines." Cao Pi and his companions enjoyed them all—except for a grand hunt and a view of the tidal bore—plus the games of "pellet chess" and "six sticks" (letter 3.3-4). Of course, there is an obvious difference between Mei Sheng's "Seven Stimuli" and Cao Pi's letter: the former is much longer than the latter. With a simpler language, Cao Pi still conveys the sense of completeness—from scholarly studies to board games, from indoor activities to outdoor ones, from north to south, from day to night, from galloping fast in a field to roaming slowly in a park—as Professor Chu Hsiao-hai notes in his study on the letter.⁵⁰⁶ Most important of all, Cao Pi describes in detail their roaming at night:

- 3.4 When the bright sun hid away, we continued [our pleasures] under the bright moon. Riding together in the same carriage, we visited the rear park. The carriage wheels slowly moved, and the entourage did not utter a sound. A cool breeze arose in the night, and sad reed pipes softly moaned. As joy departed, sorrow arrived. Deeply grieved, we were all sad at heart. I looked back and said, "Such joy cannot long endure." You all said I was right. Now we are really apart, each in a separate place. Yuanyu [i.e. Ruan Yu] has eternally gone, translated to something other. Every time I recall these things—but when will it be possible to speak with you?
- 白日既匿，繼以朗月，同乘竝載，以遊後園，輿輪徐動，參從無聲，清風夜起，悲笳微吟，樂往哀來，愴然傷懷。余顧而言，斯樂難常，足下之徒，咸以為然。今果

⁵⁰⁶ Chu Hsiao-hai 朱曉海, "Du Wen xuan zhi 'Yu Zhao ge ling Wu Zhi shu' deng san pian shu hou" 讀《文選》之〈與朝歌令吳質書〉等三篇書後, *Guangxi shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 40.1 (Jan. 2004): 70.

分別，各在一方。元瑜長逝，化為異物，每一念至，何時可言！

Cao Pi tells of an excursion at night. The light was gentle. The pace was slow. The people were silent. Attuned to their surroundings, they could feel a rising cool breeze and hear the moaning reed pipes. At this moment, they all thought of the transience of joy and were full of sorrow.

This description of their gathering seems to contradict the following passage. In this passage, the strings and winds played in unison. Tipsy and flushed, they would raise their heads and compose poems. At these convivial times, they thought that they could stay together forever:

- 4.3 In the former year's epidemic, many of our friends and family met with disaster. Xu Gan, Chen Lin, Ying Yang and Liu Zhen all passed away then. How could one speak of the pain! In former days when we amused ourselves together, we went with our carriages one after another, and sat with our mats one next to another. Had we been apart for an instant? Whenever our bowls and cups were passed around, and the strings and winds played in unison, then tipsy and flushed, we would raise our heads and compose poems. At these times, heedlessly, we were unaware of our joy. We thought that a hundred years were allotted us and that we could always share [in joy] and care for one another. How could we have foreseen that within a few years nearly all of us would perish? It pains me to speak of it. Recently I have been editing the writings that they left behind and putting them together to make a collection. As I look over their names, it has already become a register of ghosts. Although they remain in my mind's eye as I think back on our former outings, all these men have changed into muck and dirt. What more can I say?
- 昔年疾疫，親故多離其災，徐陳應劉，一時俱逝，痛可言邪！昔日遊處，行則連輿，止則接席，何曾須臾相失。每至觴酌流行，絲竹並奏，酒酣耳熱，仰而賦詩，當此之時，忽然不自知樂也。謂百年已分，可長共相保。何圖數年之間，零落略盡，言之傷心！頃撰其遺文，都為一集。觀其姓名，已為鬼錄。追思昔遊，猶在心目，而此諸子，化為糞壤，可復道哉！

Thinking back on these times, Cao Pi realizes that “heedlessly, we were unaware of our joy.”

This was in fact the greatest joy.

When I pondered the contradiction between joy and sorrow in their writings, I recalled Yoshikawa Kōjirō's 吉川幸次郎 characterization of Tang poetry:⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁷ Yoshikawa Kōjirō 吉川幸次郎; Burton Watson, trans., *An Introduction to Sung Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.:

T'ang poetry burns with intensity. The moment in which the poem is born is one of the most vital instants in a man's life, in his headlong plunge toward death. He must fix his eyes upon the instant and pour his feelings into it. The emotion must cohere, it must jet forth, it must explode. And what he fixes eyes upon is merely the peak, the highest point of the experience.

I feel that this characterization also applies to Cao Pi's memories of their gatherings. To Cao Pi, those gatherings are especially memorable because the participants shared intense feelings. At the night at Nanpi, they all experienced deep sorrow. On other occasions, they all felt great joy. Together their passions "burned with intensity."

This intensity did not last long. As Cao Pi mentions in the passages cited above, many of them passed away in the Jian'an period: Ruan Yu died in Jian'an 17 (212), Wang Can in Jian'an 22 (217), Chen Lin, Xu Gan, Liu Zhen and Ying Yang in an epidemic during Jian'an 22-23 (217-218). Although Cao Pi found new companions and they went on excursion in the same season, he sighs that "the people are different" (letter 3.5), and "those who live today cannot emulate them" (letter 4.6). Two centuries later, Xie Lingyun wrote in Cao Pi's voice to express his nostalgia for those days with old companions:⁵⁰⁸

At the end of the Jian'an period, while I was at the Ye palace, we roamed in the day and feasted at night, enjoying ourselves to the utmost. The fair moments, beautiful landscapes, appreciative souls, and joyous events from all under Heaven: it is hard to have all four at once. Now my brothers and friends, those several fine men, enjoyed all four to the utmost. Examples of such pleasures cannot be seen in the texts from times past.

建安末，余時在鄴宮，朝遊夕讌，究歡愉之極。天下良辰美景，賞心樂事，四者難并。今昆弟友朋，二三諸彥，共盡之矣。古來此娛，書籍未見。

In Cao Pi's voice, Xie Lingyun further explained why examples of such pleasures cannot be seen in the texts from times past: some hosts were not literary. Others were mistrustful and envious.

Harvard University Press, 1967), 32.

⁵⁰⁸ Lu Qinli, ed., "Song shi," 3.1181. The translation is based on Nicholas Morrow Williams, "The Brocade of Words: Imitation Poetry and Poetics in the Six Dynasties," 179.

We believe the same criteria applied to the guests. They must have had literary talent and appreciated one another. Indeed, without artistic and appreciative souls, the night at Nanpi could have been another night of revelry, and their drinking parties would not have had any lofty conversations and literary competitions.

Furthermore, Cao Pi expresses nostalgia for his lost youth in letter 4. From his laments we know that his young spirit would be the fifth necessary condition for his ideal gatherings:

- 4.7 I am already well advanced in years and am beset by a myriad cares. At times I worry so that I remain sleepless the whole night through. When will my spirit again be as it was? I am already an old man, although my hair is not yet white. Emperor Guangwu said, “I am over thirty years old and have spent ten of them in the army. The changes that I have been through are many.” My virtue cannot emulate his, yet I am already of the same age. [As heir designate I feel as if] I have the [humble] substance of dogs and sheep, but have been clad in the refined patterns of tigers and panthers; I lack the multitudinous stars’ brilliance, but have been given the light of the sun and the moon. My every action attracts attention—when is it ever easy? I fear that never again will I be able to go roaming as in former days. When young and vigorous, one truly should strive hard, for once the years pass, how could they be retrieved? The ancients thought of “going roaming at night with a candle in hand.” Truly there is reason in this.
- 年行已長大，所懷萬端。時有所慮，至通夜不暝，志意何時復類昔日？已成老翁，但未白頭耳。光武言年三十餘，在兵中十歲，所更非一，吾德不及之，年與之齊矣。以犬羊之質，服虎豹之文，無眾星之明，假日月之光，動見瞻觀，何時易乎？恐永不復得為昔日遊也。少壯真當努力，年一過往，何可攀援！古人思(炳)[秉]燭夜遊，良有以也。

If Cao Pi wrote the letter in Jian’an 24 (219), he was thirty-three years old in the prime of his life. However, he already felt like an old man and sighed, “When will my spirit again be as it was?” I translate the word *zhiyi* 志意 as “spirit,” which is defined in the *Oxford Dictionaries* as “the quality of courage, energy and determination or assertiveness.”⁵⁰⁹ Men of this spirit are lively, passionate, fearless and careless of the consequences. It was with this spirit that Cao Pi and his old companions enjoyed themselves to the utmost. In Yoshikawa Kōjirō’s words, they fixed their

⁵⁰⁹ *Oxford Dictionaries Pro.*, April 2010 ed. (accessed April 4, 2013), available from <http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/spirit?region=us&rskey=7KL3pP&result=12>.

eyes upon the instant and poured their feelings into it.

With this spirit lost, Cao Pi was left alone with worries, fears, and longings for the past. He felt lost because he was not as young as before, and more importantly, he was officially named heir designate in Jian'an 22 (217) while his old companions had passed away. His every action attracted attention (letter 4.7), and he did not expect to see outstanding persons from the younger generation (letter 4.6). These changes and transitions were too abrupt for Cao Pi, making him old all of a sudden. "I fear that never again will I be able to go roaming as in former days," he writes to Wu Zhi.

In his reply, Wu Zhi repeats Cao Pi's words and confirms his assessment of the talent of the deceased literary men. However, he then writes about their limitations by comparing them to the *fu* writers at Emperor Wu's court during 140 and 87 B.C.: Ruan Yu and Chen Lin were like Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 and Mei Gao 枚皋, who were unable to sustain an argument. Others—whose names are not specified by Wu Zhi—were like Yan Zhu 嚴助 and Yuqiu Shouwang 吾丘壽王. They participated in policy making but were executed for their imprudence. Xu Gan was like Sima Xiangru 司馬相如, leaving the office and devoting himself to writing a major work. Wu Zhi implies that none of them was an ideal courtier. Now that they have all passed away, "we truly should respect the young men" (letter 5.4).

I believe that Wu Zhi writes this to console Cao Pi and to stir him to action. While Cao Pi laments that he is beset by a myriad cares these days, Wu Zhi observes that it is good to have them. Without worries and fears, one can be destroyed in shame (letter 5.4) and become a burden to his friends (letter 5.6). While Cao Pi does not expect to see outstanding persons from the younger generation, Wu Zhi assures him that he will find better military and political talents. From Wu Zhi's reply, we know that Cao Pi did not care military and political skills in his letter.

Who he yearned for were those who could share sorrow and joy with him, those who made his young, carefree years unforgettable.

The thought of “going roaming at night with a candle in hand” that Cao Pi mentions in letter 4 is found in the Han *yuefu* poem “Ximen xing” 西門行 (*Xing* of “West Gate”) and the fifteenth of the “Nineteenth Old Poems.” This shows “going roaming at night with a candle in hand” was a conventional phrase in this period. These two poems share the following lines (with minor variants):⁵¹⁰

人生不滿百
常懷千歲憂
晝短苦夜長
何不秉燭遊

Man's life does not reach a hundred [years],
Yet we always have a thousand years' cares.
When days are short and the nights too long,
Why not go roaming with a candle in hand?

When the thirty-three-year-old Cao Pi recalled these lines, he may have had some regrets.

However, as we have seen in his letters and we shall see in the next chapter, he did not waste his youth. His and his companions' writings about their symposia have become models of later writings on the *carpe diem* theme.

⁵¹⁰ Lu Qinli, ed., “Han shi,” 9.269, 12.333. The translation is based on Arthur Waley, comp. and trans., *Chinese Poems: Selected from 170 Chinese Poems, More Translations from the Chinese, the Temple and the Book of Songs* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946), 63; Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 261.

Chapter 8. Poetic Dialogues on Lighthearted Merriment

Sartorial Splendor: Cao Zhi, Second Enticement; Cao Pi, “Extended *Xing* of ‘Mugwort on the Wall’”

The beauty of men has been celebrated in Chinese literature since the *Shi jing* times. Take the poem “Bay of the Qi River” (no. 55) cited in Chapter 4 for an example. Aside from the lord’s elegance, the poet also praises his earplugs and cap in the second stanza:⁵¹¹

12	瞻彼淇奧 綠竹青青 有匪君子 充耳琇瑩 會弁如星	Look at that bay of the Qi River, Its green bamboos so luxuriant. Delicately fashioned is my lord, His earplugs are of precious stones, His [gem-]seamed cap [shines] like stars.
16	瑟兮僴兮 赫兮咺兮 有匪君子 終不可諼兮	Oh, the grace, oh, the elegance! Oh, the luster, oh, the light! Delicately fashioned is my lord, Never for a moment can I forget him.

It is understood that by praising the lord’s ornaments, the poet praises his virtue. Zhu Xi comments on this stanza:⁵¹²

[The poet] uses the toughness and luxuriance of the bamboos as evocative images of the dignity of [the lord’s] sartorial ornaments, and [uses the lords’ sartorial ornaments] to show their correspondence with his virtue.

以竹之堅剛茂盛，興其服飾之尊嚴，而見其德之稱也。

In his “Encountering Sorrow,” Qu Yuan develops this allegorical relationship between outward beauty and inward goodness into a metaphorical convention of “fragrant herbs and the fair one”

⁵¹¹ *Mao shi zhengyi*, 3b.12a-13a (127-2, 128-1). The translation is based on Arthur Waley, trans.; Joseph R. Allen, ed., *The Book of Songs*, 47.

⁵¹² Zhu Xi, ed. and comm., *Shi jizhuan*, 3.451.

(*xiangcao meiren* 香草美人). As Professor C. H. Wang observes, the fragrant herbs that Qu Yuan tends and wears are his “emblems of virtue.”⁵¹³

However, the “Bay of the Qi River” can be understood differently. The poet may emphasize the lord’s splendor rather than his goodness. In terms of Greek moral philosophy, the former is *kalon* whereas the latter is *agathon*. Allan Bloom explains:⁵¹⁴

Full humanity is not attained just by being good or possessing good things. There is a certain irreducible splendor without which man would not be quite man, and a utilitarian morality, which does not give any status to such splendor, seems to diminish man.

According to Allan Bloom, Socrates “always pursues the good” and “has a real difficulty with the beautiful.” He is “by nature or in the first place a lover not of the beautiful but rather of the good.”⁵¹⁵ However, in Plato’s “Symposium Socrates seemed different. Allan Bloom observes that he “is dedicated more to the beautiful than the good,” and thus “we find an adorned Socrates” at the beginning of the “Symposium.”⁵¹⁶

He [i.e. Aristodemus] said that Socrates met him freshly bathed and wearing fancy slippers, which was not Socrates’ usual way, and he asked Socrates where he was going now that he had become so beautiful [i.e. *kalos*]. And he said, “To dinner at Agathon’s [...] It is just for this that I have got myself up so beautifully—that beautiful I may go to a beauty.”

In third century China, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi were also interested in this kind of beauty. The swords, caps, pendants, robes, and slippers that they describe to their audience represent the splendor and power of a man. Cao Zhi’s descriptions are found in the second enticement of his

⁵¹³ C. H. Wang, “Allegory,” in his *From Ritual to Allegory: Seven Essays in Early Chinese Poetry*, 165-83 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988), 171.

⁵¹⁴ Allan Bloom, “The Ladder of Love,” 134.

⁵¹⁵ Allan Bloom, “The Ladder of Love,” 135.

⁵¹⁶ Allan Bloom, “The Ladder of Love,” 75. *Plato’s “Symposium,”* 3 (174A).

“Seven Enlightenments:”⁵¹⁷

鏡機子曰	Master Mirroring-motive-force said:
步光之劍 華藻繁縟 飾以文犀 雕以翠綠 綴以驪龍之珠 錯以荆山之玉	“The sword Walking Ray [Bears] numerous ornate designs. It is ornamented with patterned rhino horn, Embellished with blue and green, Adorned with the black dragon’s pearl, Inlaid with Mount Jing’s jade.
陸斷犀象 未足稱雋 隨波截鴻 水不漸刃	On land it severs rhinos and elephants— Yet this is not enough to be called excellent. Following the waves it cuts swans— The water does not wet its blade.
九旒之冕 散曜垂文 華組之纓 從風紛紜	A cap with nine tassels Spreads forth splendor and displays patterns. Cap ribbons with ornate strips Float and flutter in the wind.
佩則 結綠懸黎 寶之妙微 符采照爛 流景揚輝	Pendants are The Congealed Green [of Song] and Hanging Black [of Liang], Gems of the most exquisite kind. Their markings and colors glow, Their flowing light shines.
黼黻之服 紗縠之裳 金華之舄 動趾遺光 繁飾參差 微鮮若霜 緄佩綢繆 或彫或錯 薰以幽若 流芳肆布	A vestment with the zigzag and meander patterns, A robe of gossamer. Slippers with gold flowers— When you move your toes, their light is left behind. Rich ornaments are diversely disposed, Delicate and lustrous like frost. Ribbons and pendants are finely woven, Some carved, others inlaid. They are scented with polia, The flowing aroma wafts about.
雍容閒步 周旋馳曜	With poise and composure you walk leisurely, Moving around you radiate splendor.

⁵¹⁷ *Cao ji quanping*, 8.135.

南威為之解顏	For this Nanwei broadly beams,
西施為之巧笑	For this Xishi sweetly smiles.
此容飾之妙也	These are the best of ornaments.
子能從我而服之乎	Could you follow me to wear them?"
玄微子曰	Master Mysterious said:
予好毛褐	"I like wooly homespun.
未暇此服也	I have no spare time to wear them."

There is no enticement of sartorial ornaments in Mei Sheng's "Seven Stimuli" or Wang Can's "Seven Elucidations." Zhang Heng wrote about "attire and chariots" (*yufu* 輿服) in his "Qi bian" 七辯 (Seven Arguments), but his description of attire in the received text is short:⁵¹⁸

交趾緞絺	Dolichos and Kudzu cloth from Jiaozhi,
筒中之紵	Ramie in tubes,
京城阿縞	Thin and white silks from Jingcheng,
譬之蟬羽	Are like cicada wings.
製為時服	Tailor them into seasonal vestments
以適寒暑	To suit the winter's cold and summer's heat.

Taking Zhang Heng as one of his exemplary writers of "Sevens," Cao Zhi elaborates on the enticement of attire. Instead of soft, fragile clothes, Cao Zhi starts with a sword: the Walking Ray (Buguang 步光). Like Achilles is associated with his shield in the *Iliad*, the Walking Ray is associated with King Goujian of Yue 越王句踐 (r. 496-465) in the *Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋 and the *Yue jue shu* 越絕書, which were compiled in the Eastern Han. For example, when he captured King Fuchai of Wu 吳王夫差 (r. 495-473), he "carried the sword Walking Ray and held the spear [made by] Qu Lu" (*dai* Buguang zhi jian, zhang Qu Lu zhi mao 帶步光之劍，杖屈盧之矛). When he received Confucius, he also carried these weapons whereas Confucius held

⁵¹⁸ 57.1026. The translation is taken from Y. Edmund Lien, "Zhang Heng, Eastern Han Polymath, His Life and Works," 135.

an elegant zither.⁵¹⁹

In the voice of the fictional Master Mirroring-motive-force, Cao Zhi chooses to attract his audience with the sword and with its rich ornaments and sharpness. It is the emblem of a powerful lord, and Cao Zhi matches it with a cap with nine tassels and a vestment with the zigzag and meander patterns—both of which were also designed for a vassal lord. Moreover, like Socrates in Plato’s “Symposium,” the handsome one in Cao Zhi’s description wears fancy slippers. They are decorated with “gold flowers,” which is a type of gold now called “dendritic gold” produced in Zhuyai 珠崖 (Hainan Island).⁵²⁰ All the ornaments add splendor to one who wears it. As Cao Zhi concludes, he radiates splendor when he moves around.

Cao Pi writes about sartorial splendor in his song verse “Da Qiangshang hao xing” 大牆上蒿行 (Extended *Xing* of “Mugwort on the Wall”).⁵²¹ Yu Guanying divides it into six sections.

I mark his division with Roman numerals below:⁵²²

I.

陽春無不長成	In sunny spring all things grow to fullness,
草木羣類隨大風起	Plants and trees of all kinds rise with the great [autumn] wind.
零落若何翩翩	Nothing can stop them from fluttering as they shed leaves,
4 中心獨立一何瑩	How lonely the stalks stand by themselves!

⁵¹⁹ Zhao Ye 趙擘, comp.; Zhou Chunsheng 周春生, ed. and comm., *Wu Yue chunqiu jijiao huikao* 吳越春秋輯校彙考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), 5.95, 10.176-77. Also see Wu Ping 吳平 and Yuan Kang 袁康, comp.; Li Bujia 李步嘉, ed. and comm., *Yue jue shu* 越絕書 (Wuchang: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1992), 10.253, 8.196. For a translation of the *Yue jue shu* passages, see Wu Ping and Yuan Kang, comp.; Olivia Milburn, trans., *The glory of Yue: An Annotated Translation of the Yuejue shu* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 267, 226.

⁵²⁰ For a note on this type of gold, see Edward H. Schafer, *Shore of Pearls* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 36. Also see Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 1, 392 note on line 270.

⁵²¹ In this title, *da* 大 could be a modifier of the wall or a modifier of the song. Based on the *yuefu* title “Da Ziye ge” 大子夜歌 as opposed to “Ziye ge” 子夜歌, and the *yuefu* title “Xiao Changgan qu” 小長干曲 as opposed to “Changgan qu” 長干曲, I read *da* 大 in the title as a modifier of the song, which can be translated as “extended, enlarged, lengthened.”

⁵²² Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 4.396-97. The translation is based on Lois Fusek, “The Poetry of Ts’ao P’i (187-226),” 220-25; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 191-93. For Yu Guanying’s division, see Yu Guanying, ed. and comm., *Cao Cao, Cao Pi, Cao Zhi shi xuan*, 13-15.

- 8 四時舍我驅馳
今我隱約欲何為
人生居天壤間
忽如飛鳥棲枯枝
我今隱約欲何為
- The four seasons gallop on, abandoning me,
What do I want by living in obscurity and poverty?
To be born and live between Heaven and Earth,
It is as fleeting as a bird perching on a withered branch.
What do I want by living in obscurity and poverty?
- II.
- 12 適君身體所服
何不恣君口腹所嘗
冬被貂鼯溫暖
夏當服綺羅輕涼
- Suit yourself with things to wear,
Why not enjoy at will what your mouth and belly taste?
In winter put on warm sable and squirrel,
In summer you should wear light, cool silk gauze.
- 16 行力自苦
我將欲何為
- Striving to make myself miserable—
What do I want with this?
- 16 不及君少壯之時乘堅車策肥馬良⁵²³
- It is better to ride sturdy carriages and whip on sleek horses
when you are young and vigorous.
- 20 上有滄浪之天
今我難得久來視
下有蠕蠕之地
今我難得久來履
何不恣意遨遊
從君所喜
- Above there is dark green Heaven,
Now I have the rare chance to look on it long.
Below is wriggling Earth,
Now I have the rare chance to tread on it long.
Why not go roaming at will,
Do what you delight in?
- III.
- 24 帶我寶劍
今爾何為自低卬
悲麗平壯觀
白如積雪
利如秋霜
- Carry this precious sword of mine,
Why do you [thrust it] up and down alone?
I sigh at its beautiful balance and grand spectacle:
White as the drifting snow,
Sharp as the autumn frost.
- 28 駁犀標首
玉琢中央
帝王所服
辟除凶殃
- Horn of unicorn and rhino marks the hilt,
With jade chiseled in the middle.
This was worn by emperors and kings
To ward off misfortune.
- 32 御左右
- When it is used by your side,

⁵²³ I follow the Qing scholar Zhu Qian 朱乾 to read these fourteen characters as one long line. For his note, see Zhu Qian 朱乾, ed. and comm., *Yuefu zhengyi* 樂府正義, in *Kyōto daigaku Kanseki zenpon sōsho* 京都大學漢籍善本叢書, vol. 7-8 (Kyōto: Dōhōsha, 1980), 8.32a. Compare this line with line 42. Both lines have the sentence pattern “(A) 不及/不如 B 良” (A is not as good as B).

- 奈何致福祥
 吳之辟閭
 越之步光
 楚之龍泉
 韓有墨陽
 苗山之鋌
 羊頭之鋼
 知名前代
 咸自謂麗且美
 曾不如君劍良
 綺難忘
- 36
- Nothing can stop it from bringing you good fortune.
 The [sword] Gate Opener of Wu,
 The Walking Ray of Yue,
 The Dragon Spring of Chu,
 There were [swords made in] Moyang of Han.
 The ingots of Mount Miao,
 The steel of Sheephead,
 Known in ages past,
 All was claimed beautiful and fair—
 But none are as good as your sword,
 Whose beauty is hard to forget.
- 40
- IV.
- 44
- 冠青雲之崔嵬
 織羅為纓
 飾以翠翰
 既美且輕
 表容儀
 俯仰垂光榮
- 48
- Wear a cap that towers to the azure clouds,
 With delicate gauze as its ribbons.
 Ornamented with kingfisher feathers,
 It is fair and light.
 It shows your stylish demeanor,
 Whether you raise or lower your head, it sheds a glorious luster.
- 52
- 宋之章甫
 齊之高冠
 亦自謂美
 蓋何足觀
- The *zhangfu* cap of Song,
 The tall hats of Qi,
 Also were claimed fair—
 But how are they worth looking at?
- V.
- 56
- 排金鋪
 坐玉堂
 風塵不起
 天氣清涼
 奏桓瑟
 舞趙倡
- 60
- 女娥長歌
 聲協宮商
 感心動耳
 蕩氣回腸
- 64
- 酌桂酒
 鱠鯉魴
 與佳人期為樂康
 前奉玉卮
- Push open the gilded portals,
 Sit in the jade hall,
 The wind and dust do not rise,
 The weather is clear and cool.
 Tautly-strung zithers are played,
 Zhao performers dance,
 Maiden and Beauty sing loud and long,
 Their voices match the *gong* and *shang* notes.
 They arouse the heart, stir the ears,
 Wrench the bowels, sway the spirit.
 Pour the cinnamon ale,
 Slice carp and bream,
 Make a tryst with the fair one, have joy and merriment.
 She advances and presents a jade goblet,

- 68 為我行觴 Pouring ale for me.
- VI.
- 今日樂 The joy today
不可忘 Cannot be forgotten.
樂未央 The joy has not come to an end.
- 72 為樂常苦遲 It is always too late for finding joy.
歲月逝 The years and months pass on,
忽若飛 As fleeting as in flight.
何為自苦 Why make yourself miserable,
76 使我心悲 And make my heart grieve?

This song verse is distinguished by its entire length, variety of lengths of lines, and epideictic style. Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) perceived that by modeling their poems on this piece, Bao Zhao 鮑照 (d. 466) and Li Bo became the “lions and elephants of *yuefu*” (*yuefu shixiang* 樂府獅象).⁵²⁴ In the eighteenth century, Zhu Qian 朱乾 further noted that Cao Pi’s descriptions of clothes, caps and swords are very similar to Cao Zhi’s enticements in the “Seven Enlightenments.”⁵²⁵

Zhu Qian also observed that this song verse inherits the tradition of the “Zhao hun” 招魂 (Summoning the Soul) in the *Chu ci*. Although Zhu Qian’s emphasis was on their similarities in presenting enticements, we see that before presenting enticements, both poems depict threats to life. As the shaman in the “Summoning the Soul” enumerates dangers in the four directions, the speaker in the “Extended *Xing* of ‘Mugwort on the Wall’” describes the brevity of life: The plants grow to fullness but shed their leaves all of a sudden. A bird finds a place to rest but it rests on a withered branch. Living in this world, we are like the plants and the bird. Since life is

⁵²⁴ Wang Fuzhi 王夫之, ed. and comm., *Gushi pingxuan* 古詩評選, in *Chuanshan quanshu* 船山全書, vol. 14 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1996), 1.508.

⁵²⁵ Zhu Qian, ed. and comm., *Yuefu zhengyi*, 8.32b.

so short, “what do I want by living in obscurity and poverty?”

It is in this context that the speaker presents a precious sword:

24 帶我寶劍 Carry this precious sword of mine,
 今爾何為自低卬 Why do you [thrust it] up and down alone?

The speaker may suggest that he wants to fence with the audience, but before doing so he describes the wonders of the sword (section III). It is of course beautiful and sharp, but most important of all it was worn by emperors and kings “to ward off misfortune.” What matches the sword is a cap that “towers to the azure clouds” (section IV). To show their worth, the speaker lists famous swords (including the Walking Ray) and caps, claiming that none can compare with them. Now that “you” are dressed up like the beautiful Socrates, “you” are invited to “push open the gilded portals” and “sit in the jade hall” to join a merry banquet (section V). If this song verse was sung with dramatic performance, we can imagine how the host Cao Pi entertained his guests in the “jade hall.” He may have addressed them between the uneven lines, and showed them his sword and cap “ornamented” with those beautiful words.

In the “*Pian* of ‘A Famous Metropolis’” cited in Chapter 5, Cao Zhi illustrates the old capital Luoyang by describing its “bewitching girls and young men.”⁵²⁶

4 名都多妖女 A famous metropolis has many bewitching girls,
 京洛出少年 Luo capital produces its young men.
 寶劍直千金 Their precious swords are worth a thousand in gold,
 被服麗且鮮 The clothes they wear are beautiful and lustrous.

One might imagine that every famous city should have had at least one splendid figure as Cao Zhi ascribes to Luoyang. In Zhou times it might have been the lord of Wei 衛 with his distinctive

⁵²⁶ *Cao ji quanping*, 5.61. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 19.

earplugs in the capital Zhaoge by the Qi River.⁵²⁷ In ancient Athens it was Socrates wearing fancy slippers for a symposium at Athens. In the Jian'an period they could have been Cao Pi and Cao Zhi brandishing precious swords and wearing tall caps in their poems in the city of Ye.

The Wind and the Moon: Cao Pi, “*Shi* Written at the Lotus Pond;” Cao Zhi, “Lord’s Feast;” Liu Zhen, “*Shi* on the Lord’s Feast”

As mentioned in the introduction, when Liu Xie paid tribute to Jian'an *shi* in five-syllable lines, he wrote about the activities of the literary salon:⁵²⁸

Together they delighted in the wind and the moon, took excursions to ponds and parks,
gave account of the glories of enjoying favor, told of festively tipsy banquets.
并憐風月，狎池苑，述恩榮，敘酣宴。

When writing these lines, Liu Xie must have thought of the following poems: Cao Pi's “*Shi* Written at the Lotus Pond,” Cao Zhi's “Lord’s Feast,” and Liu Zhen's “*Shi* on the Lord’s Feast.” They are all in five-syllable lines. Because the poems have many descriptions in common, we assume that they were written for the same occasion: Cao Pi and his guests went roaming in the moonlit Western Park, also known as Bronze Bird Park, after a feast.

Cao Pi, “Furong chi zuo shi” 芙蓉池作詩 (*Shi* Written at the Lotus Pond)⁵²⁹

乘輦夜行遊
逍遙步西園
雙渠相溉灌

We take handcarts to roam at night,
Roaming and rambling in the Western Park.
Double canals irrigate one another,

⁵²⁷ The lord is identified as Duke Wu of Wei 衛武公 (r. 812-758 B.C.) in the Mao commentary. Zhu Xi agrees. For their notes, see *Mao shi zhengyi*, 3b.10a-11a (126-2, 127-1); Zhu Xi, ed. and comm., *Shi jizhuan*, 3.450-51.

⁵²⁸ Liu Xie; Zhan Ying, ed. and comm., *Wenxin diaolong yizheng*, 196. The translation is based on Liu Xie; Vincent Yu-chung Shih, trans., *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons by Liu Hsieh*, 35; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 50.

⁵²⁹ Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 4.400. The translation is based on Lois Fusek, “The Poetry of Ts’ao P’i (187-226),” 244-45; Fusheng Wu, *Written at Imperial Command*, 41.

- 4 嘉木繞通川 Fine trees meander along the free-flowing stream.
 卑枝拂羽蓋 Low boughs brush feathered canopies,
 脩條摩蒼天 Long branches graze the dark green sky.
 驚風扶輪轂 A startling wind carries our wheel hubs,
 8 飛鳥翔我前 Flying birds hover in front of us.
 丹霞夾明月 Cinnabar evening glow surrounds the bright moon,
 華星出雲間 Radiant stars emerge from the clouds.
 上天垂光彩 Heaven casts down splendid hues,
 12 五色一何鮮 How lustrous the five colors!
 壽命非松喬 Our life span is not like that of [Master Red] Pine and [Wangzi] Qiao
 誰能得神仙 Who could become an immortal?
 遨遊快心意 Let us roam and ramble to satisfy our hearts,
 16 保己終百年 Keep ourselves intact to enjoy the entire hundred years.

Cao Zhi, “Gongyan” 公讌 (Lord’s Feast)⁵³⁰

- 公子愛敬客 The young lord loves and honors his guests,
 終宴不知疲 The whole feast long he does not tire.
 清夜遊西園 In the clear night we tour the Western Park,
 4 飛蓋相追隨 Our flying canopies follow one another.
 明月澄清景 The bright moon glistens with clear ray,
 列宿正參差 The constellations lie scattered.
 秋蘭被長坂 Autumn thoroughwort blankets the long slopes,
 8 朱華冒綠池 Vermilion blossoms cover the green pond.
 潛魚躍清波 Submerged fish jump from clear ripples,
 好鳥鳴高枝 Fine birds sing from high boughs.
 神飈接丹轂 A prodigious gust catches up to our cinnabar hubs,
 12 輕輦隨風移 The light handcars move along with the wind.
 飄飄放志意 Whirled along we indulge our spirit—
 千秋長若斯 May it stay this way for a thousand autumns!

Liu Zhen, “Gongyan shi” 公讌詩 (*Shi* on the Lord’s Feast)⁵³¹

- 永日行遊戲 Throughout the day we sport and play,
 歡樂猶未央 Our joy has not come to an end.
 遺思在玄夜 We direct our thought to the dark night,
 4 相與復翱翔 Together we continue to roam and ramble.

⁵³⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 4.35. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 9-10; Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 282.

⁵³¹ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 7.188. The translation is based on Fusheng Wu, *Written at Imperial Command*, 41-42.

	輦車飛素蓋	Our handcarts fly with plain canopies,
	從者盈路傍	Followers crowd the sides of the road.
	月出照園中	The moon rises, shining in the park,
8	珍木鬱蒼蒼	Precious trees grow dark green.
	清川過石渠	The clear stream passes the stone-paved sluiceway,
	流波為魚防	Its flowing waters form fish weirs.
	芙蓉散其華	Lotuses spread their blossoms,
12	菡萏溢金塘	The buds brim over the metal-strong dikes.
	靈鳥宿水裔	Numinous birds inhabit the waterside,
	仁獸遊飛梁	Benevolent animals roam about the flying bridge.
	華館寄流波	An ornate lodge rests on the flowing waves,
16	豁達來風涼	Open and spacious, it brings in a cool breeze.
	生平未始聞	All my life I have never heard of [such beauty],
	歌之安能詳	How could it be fully conveyed in my song?
	投翰長歎息	I lay aside my quill and heave a a long sigh—
20	綺麗不可忘	This exquisite beauty cannot be forgotten.

As Professor Cheng Yu-yu observes, while the battlefield and the court were the stages of commanders and ministers, the literary symposia were the stage on which literary men in the Jian'an period performed.⁵³² These poems tell us that the literary men's stage was not limited to a dining hall. It extended to the moonlit Western Park with a beautiful lotus pond. As Liu Xie puts it, "together they delighted in the wind and the moon, took excursions to ponds and parks." They enjoyed their "play" on this stage. Meanwhile, they represented for one another the play and stage with their individual perceptions.

In his poem, Liu Zhen catches the changes of light. It was in the daylight (line 1), and then the dark night (line 3). Later "the moon rises, shining in the park" (line 7). Thus he sees the dark green color of the trees in the moonlight. The lotus pond also becomes visible. Liu Zhen describes the waters and lotuses, birds by the pond and animals on the bridge. In addition, there is a lodge bringing in a cool breeze from the waves. The middle couplets provide details of the "exquisite beauty" (line 20). In particular, lines 9-10 "The clear stream passes the stone-paved

⁵³² Cheng Yu-yu, "Shilun gongyan shi zhiyu Yexia wenshi jituan de xiangzheng yiyi," 216-17.

sluiceway,/ Its flowing waters form fish weirs” vividly depict how the fish avoid the rapids. Lines 11-12 “Lotuses spread their blossoms,/ The buds brim over the metal-strong dikes” blur the boundary between the pond and the land with lotuses. Like a still-life painter, Liu Zhen represents the perfect arrangement of objects with a single light source, which is the moon—although he sighs he could not convey all the beautiful details.

If Liu Zhen takes the moon as the single light source that brightens up the pond area, Cao Zhi sees the moon as part of the stage set. In Cao Zhi’s poem, the stage set consists of upper and lower parts, and it is presented in a balanced way: the moon and constellations decorate the upper part (lines 5-6), whereas the thoroughwort and lotuses (vermilion blossoms) embellish the lower part (lines 7-8). On the same lotus pond Cao Zhi sees fish jumping from the ripples (line 9), and then following the birdsong he moves his focus back to the upper part (line 10). Moreover, lines 7-8, 9-10 are parallel couplets. In particular, line 8 “Vermilion blossoms cover the green pond” catches the readers’ eyes with its internal parallelism. The brilliant red blossoms cover the green pond—this is the bold color combination that the Tang poet Wang Bo 王勃 (649-676; alt. 650-676) had in mind when he wrote the following lines from the “Qiuri deng Hongfu Tengwang ge jianbie xu” 秋日登洪府滕王閣餞別序 (Preface for the Farewell Banquet after Climbing on a Autumn Day the Pavilion of the Prince of Teng in Hongzhou):⁵³³

The green bamboos in the Sui Park [of King of Liang Liu Wu] have their spirit soar above the goblet of [the magistrate of] Pengze [i.e. Tao Yuanming]. The vermilion blossoms on the Ye water have their light shine on the writing brush of [the governor of] Linchuan [i.e. Xie Lingyun].

睢園綠竹，氣凌彭澤之樽；鄴水朱華，光照臨川之筆。

While Cao Zhi and his audience are comfortable—or bored—with the balanced and parallel

⁵³³ Wang Bo 王勃; Jiang Qingyi 蔣清翊, ed. and comm., *Wang Zi'an ji zhu* 王子安集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 232.

structure, a wind suddenly catches up to the light handcarts. Now the riders feel like the birds. Their carts move along with the wind. Their spirit also soars freely above the lower part.

The bird and the sudden wind also appear in Cao Pi's poem. Cao Zhi mention them in separate couplets, whereas Cao Pi puts them in one couplet:

8 驚風扶輪轂 A startling wind carries our wheel hubs,
飛鳥翔我前 Flying birds hover in front of us.

Compare this couplet with these lines from the "Encountering Sorrow."⁵³⁴

吾令鳳鳥飛騰兮 I bade my phoenixes mount up in flight,
繼之以日夜 Continue their going by day and by night.
飄風屯其相離兮 Then the whirlwinds massed, drawing together,
帥雲霓而來御 They marshaled cloud and rainbows, and came to greet me.

Attended by the phoenixes and whirlwinds, Qu Yuan reached the gate of the heavenly palace.

Cao Pi does not fly into the sky, but attended by the startling wind and flying birds, he takes in an unobstructed view of the night sky:

12 丹霞夾明月 Cinnabar evening glow surrounds the bright moon,
華星出雲間 Radiant stars emerge from the clouds.
上天垂光彩 Heaven casts down splendid hues,
五色一何鮮 How lustrous the five colors!

In Cao Pi's descriptions, the night sky does not only provide a single light source as in Liu Zhen's poem, but lets fall splendid hues from the moon, the stars, and the evening glow. Moreover, the night sky is no longer as flat as in Cao Zhi's poem. Radiant stars emerge from the clouds, and heaven casts down splendid hues. This heavenly scene seems to be fit for immortals,

⁵³⁴ *Chu ci buzhu*, 1.40. The translation is based on David Hawkes, trans., *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985; rpt. 2011), 73; Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 169.

and Cao Pi indeed thinks of the immortals Master Red Pine (Chisong zi 赤松子) and Wangzi Qiao 王子喬. Although we could not turn into immortals, we can still “roam and ramble to satisfy our hearts,/ Keep ourselves intact to enjoy the entire hundred years.”

If the Western Park was their stage and their roaming at night was the play, there were one stage and one play, but three different perceptions—or performances. One can imagine how they together “delighted in the moon and the wind” and appreciated one another’s excellent poetic perception and performance.

A Summer Dream: Group Composition on the Great Summer Heat

Two letters between Cao Zhi and Yang Xiu are included in Pei Songzhi’s commentary to the *Sanguo zhi* and in the *Wen xuan*. In the *Wen xuan*, they are titled “Yu Yang Dezu shu” 與楊德祖書 (Letter to Yang Dezu) and “Da Linzi hou jian” 答臨淄侯牋 (Memorandum Replying to the Marquis of Linzi). In the latter letter, Yang Xiu praises Cao Zhi’s writings and claims:⁵³⁵

That is why I declined to write one on the snow pheasant when I faced yours, and why I composed the “*Fu* on the Summer Heat” but did not present it all day long.
是以對鷓而辭，作暑賦彌日而不獻。

As mentioned in Chapter 3, when Cao Zhi wrote to Yang Xiu, he was twenty-five years old. Thus we know the group composition on the snow pheasant and the summer heat took place around Jian’an 21 (216). The group composition on the summer heat seemed to be especially grand. We find excerpts under the title of “Dashu fu” 大暑賦 (*Fu* on the Great Summer Heat) or “Shu fu” 暑賦 (*Fu* on the Summer Heat) by Cao Zhi, Wang Can, Liu Zhen, Po Qin and Chen Lin.

⁵³⁵ *Wen xuan*, 40.1819. Also see *Sanguo zhi*, 19.560 note 3 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1550). The translation is based on David R. Knechtges, “Group Literary Composition at the Court of Ye in the Later Eastern Han,” 24.

Cao Zhi and Wang Can write:

Cao Zhi, “Dashu fu” 大暑賦 (*Fu* on the Great Summer Heat)⁵³⁶

炎帝掌節	The Fiery Lord controls the season,
祝融司方	The Great Illuminator governs the domain.
羲和按轡	[The sun's charioteer] Xihe pulls the reins,
南雀舞衡	The southern bird dances on the crossbeams.
映扶桑之高熾	Glittering with the high flames of the Fusang tree,
燎九日之重光	Burning with the double light of the nine suns,
大暑赫其遂烝	The great summer heat blazes and rises,
玄服革而尚黃	Black vestments are replaced whereas the yellow color is revered.
蛇折鱗於靈窟	Serpents slough off scales in their numinous caves,
龍解角於皓蒼	Dragons shed their horns on the vast dark-green sky.
遂乃溫風赫曦	And then a warm wind blazes,
草木垂幹	Plants and trees droop their stems.
山坼海沸	Mountains crack, seas boil,
沙融礫爛	Sand melts, stones crumble.
飛魚躍渚	Flying fish jumps onto the isles,
潛龜浮岸	Submerged tortoises surface to the shores.
鳥張翼而(近)[遠]栖	Birds open their wings and rest afar,
獸交(游)[逝]而雲散	Beasts overtake one another and disperse like clouds.
於時黎庶徙倚	At this time, people pace to and fro,
棋布葉分	Scattering like chess pieces, separating like leaves.
機女絕綜	Weaving girls break the heddles,
農夫釋耘	Farmers give up hoeing.
背暑者不羣而齊跡	Those fleeing the heat leave the crowd but with identical movements,
向陰者不會而成羣	Those heading to the shade have no scheduled meetings but gather in groups.
於是大人遷居宅幽	And then the great man moves to a secluded place
緩神育靈	To relax his mind and nourish his spirit.
雲屋重構	Towering to the clouds, the roof is built in multiple layers;
閑房肅清	Built on the sides, the chambers are still and cool.
寒泉涌流	Cold springs gush and flow,
玄木奮榮	Somber trees display blossoms.

⁵³⁶ *Cao ji quanping*, 2.23-24. The variants marked here are provided in this edition. The lines in brackets are detached from the other lines and provided in this edition.

積素冰於幽館
氣飛結而為霜
奏白雪於琴瑟
朔風感而增涼

When white chunks of ice are piled in the secluded lodge,
The air moves and turns into frost.
When the “White Snow” is played on the zithers,
The north wind responds and increases coolness.

[壯皇居之瑰璋兮
步八閔而為宇
節四運之常氣兮
踰太素之儀矩]

I extol the magnificent wonder of the imperial lodge,
Which is constructed by pacing out the Eight Bonds.
Regulating the fixed air of the four movements [i.e. four seasons],
It oversteps the lines of Grand Simplicity.

Wang Can, “Dashu fu” 大暑賦 (*Fu* on the Great Summer Heat)⁵³⁷

惟林鍾之季月 In the last month [of summer, which is the time of] the *linzhong* pitch,
重陽積而上昇 The double *yang* force accumulates and rises.
烹潤土之溽暑 The humid heat that scorches the moist earth
扇溫風而至興 Fans everything with warm winds and grows strong.
或赫熾以瘴炎 Some [winds] blaze with brimming flames,
或鬱術而燠蒸 Others swell and turn steaming hot.

獸狼望以倚喘 Beasts with wolfish gaze rest panting,
鳥垂翼而弗翔 Birds with feathers limp do not fly.
根生苑而焦炙 Roots grew lush but now are scorched—
豈含血而能當 How could blooded creatures endure this?
遠昆吾之中景 Distant is the midday light from the Kunwu volcano [in the south],
天地翕其同光 Yet Heaven and Earth are bright, sharing its light.
征夫瘼於原野 Wayfarers are wilted on the plains and wilds,
處者困于門堂 Those at home are oppressed within the gates and halls.
患衽席之焚灼 They suffer the burning heat on the sleeping mats,
譬洪燎之在牀 As if having great torches on the beds.
起屏營而東西 They rise pacing, from east to west;
欲避之而無方 They wish to escape, but have nowhere to go.
仰庭槐而嘯風 Gazing upon the courtyard pagoda trees they whistle for wind,
風既至而如湯 When the wind comes it is like boiling water.
氣呼吸以祛裾 Inhaling and exhaling, breath loosens the lapels;
汗雨下而沾裳 Pouring down, sweat soaks the robe.
就清泉以自沃 Going to a clear spring to wash themselves,
猶澆澀而不涼 They still sweat and swelter, not cool at all.
體煩茹以於悒 Suffering discomfort, they sigh and sob;
心憤悶而窘惶 Feeling disquiet, they are troubled and frightened.

⁵³⁷ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 3.95-97. The lines in brackets are detached from the other lines and provided in this edition. The translation is based on Ronald C. Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry*, 243-45.

於是帝后順時	And then the emperor, observing the season,
幸九嶷之陰岡	Favors the shady hills of the Nine Peaks with a visit,
託甘泉之清野	Entrusts himself to the fresh countryside at the Sweet Springs,
御華殿于林光	Arrives at a bright hall in the Forest Light Palace,
潛廣室之邃宇	Hides himself below the deep roof of the spacious chambers,
激寒流於下堂	Stirs cooling currents under the halls.

重屋百層	A tiered roof of a hundred layers
垂陰千廡	Casts shade to a thousand verandas.
九闔洞開	The nine gates open one upon another,
周帷高舉	The curtains around are lifted high.
堅冰常奠	Hard chunks of ice are regularly offered,
寒饌代斂	Cold viands are served in turn.

[雄風颯然兮	The masculine wind suddenly blows,
時動帷帳之織羅]	From time to time it stirs the curtains of delicate gauze.

Summer heat seems to us a strange topic for group composition. It brings discomfort and even horror. When sweltering in the hot humid air, one would not consider it merriment. According to the “Yiwen zhi” 藝文志 (Monograph on the Arts and Letters) in the *Han shu*, there are *fu* on rain and drought as early as in the Western Han:⁵³⁸

Miscellaneous *fu* on mountains and hills, waters and foam, clouds and air, rains and drought: sixteen pieces.
 雜山陵水泡雲氣雨旱賦十六篇。

We do not know for what occasions these *fu* were written, but we can imagine when Jian’an writers discussed a new topic to write on, some of them may have recalled those less popular topics. Others may have complained what a bad idea it was to write on such topics, just as Phaedrus in Plato’s “Symposium” complained to Eryximachus:⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ *Han shu*, 30.1753. Jia Yi is attributed with a *fu* on drought: the “Hanyun fu” 旱雲賦 (*Fu* on Dry Clouds). For a study on it, see David R. Knechtges, “The *Fu* on Dry Clouds by Chia I,” in his *Parerga 1: Two Studies on the Han Fu*, 45-60 (Seattle: Far Eastern and Russian Institute, University of Washington, 1968).

⁵³⁹ Plato’s “Symposium,” 6 (177B-C).

I have even come across a volume of a wise man in which salt got a marvelous puff for its usefulness, and you might find many other things of the kind with eulogies. So they employ much zeal in things like that, yet to this day not one human being has dared to hymn Eros in a worthy manner; but so great a god lies in neglect.

Eryximachus thus proposed praising love at the symposium. On the other hand, one of the Jian'an writers may have been inspired by those topics about rain and drought. "Why don't we write *fu* on the great summer heat," he may have excitedly proposed, "since we have complained much about it but no one has written a *fu* on it?" They may have found this idea intriguing and thus they took up their brushes and dashed off a piece on this subject.

Some of the extant lines begin with deities and legends of summer, fire, the sun and the south. For example, Liu Zhen writes:⁵⁴⁰

其為暑也	Building up heat,
羲和總駕發扶木	Xihe harnesses the team and sets out from the Fusang tree,
太陽為輿達炎燭	With the great <i>yang</i> force as its carriage he transports the fiery torch [i.e. the sun],
靈威參乘步朱轂	The Divine Might [i.e. the god of the east] attends the chariot and walks onto [the chariot with] vermilion hubs.

This is a vivid description of the chariot of the sun. Here the sun is referred to as the "fiery torch" (*yanzhu* 炎燭). Xihe as the charioteer and the Fusang tree as the place where the sun rises are told of in ancient legends, but Liu Zhen adds the god of the east to the team and has him attend the sun, implying that spring is inferior to summer now. Further, he integrates them into his seven-syllable lines with consecutive entering-tone rhymes. In this way he creates a tense, oppressive atmosphere.

Cao Zhi also mentions Xihe and the Fusang tree. In his imagination, Xihe pulls the reins—presumably in the sky—to slow the chariot and prolong the day. The Fusang tree grows

⁵⁴⁰ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 7.196.

like fire, increasing heat with its “high flames.” Moreover, Cao Zhi includes all the important deities and symbols of summer, fire, and the south: the Fiery Lord (Yan di 炎帝), Great Illuminator (Zhurong 祝融), southern bird, and yellow vestments.⁵⁴¹ In particular, the southern bird, which was a decoration on the crossbeams, now dances freely, whereas other divine creatures such as dragons and serpents shed their horns and scales. These are Cao Zhi’s “grand visions” (*zhuangguan* 壯觀). Even when he moves his focus from the celestial beings to those on earth, he still takes a bird’s eye view to describe how the mountains crack, seas boil, animals migrate, and human beings scatter like chess pieces.

Wang Can seems to take a different approach. He begins by borrowing the traditional characterization of the last month of summer: the solar term *dashu* 大暑, the *linzhong* 林鍾 pitch, and the “moist earth” (*ruen tu* 潤土), “humid heat” (*ru shu* 溽暑) and “warm winds” (*wen feng* 溫風).⁵⁴² Then he writes about the heat within the gates and halls, on the sleeping mats and beds, and people’s breath and sweat, discomfort and disquiet. In particular, he praises the shade trees in his “*Fu* on the pagoda trees,” but here he writes:

仰庭槐而嘯風	Gazing upon the courtyard pagoda trees they whistle for wind,
風既至而如湯	When the wind comes it is like boiling water.

Wang Can catches a dramatic detail in the mundane world. Here we see again that he observes the world from below while Cao Zhi observes from above.

⁵⁴¹ Summer is usually associated with red. However, according to the *Hou Han shu*, black vestments were dressed to pray for rain, and yellow vestments were dressed in the last month of summer. Wang Can and Po Qin mention in their *fu* that it is in the last month of summer. This may explain why Cao Zhi writes “Black vestments are replaced whereas the yellow color is revered.” For the passages on the black and yellow vestments dressed in summer, see *Hou Han shu*, *zhi* 5.3117.

⁵⁴² Lü Buwei 呂不韋, comp.; Xu Weiyu 許維燾, ed. and comm., *Lüshi chunqiu jishi* 呂氏春秋集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 6.129-32. Also see Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, comm.; Kong Yingda 孔穎達, subcomm., *Li ji zhushu* 禮記注疏 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 16.8a-b (318-2), 16.11b (320-1).

The extant *fu* of Liu Zhen, Po Qin and Chen Lin are too short to see their overall approach,⁵⁴³ but interestingly, Liu Zhen, Po Qin and Chen Lin all have extant lines on a feast. Po Qin laments:⁵⁴⁴

雖託陰宮	Although entrusting oneself to a cool chamber,
罔所避旃	There is nowhere to escape it.
粉扇靡(救)[效]	The white fan has no effect,
宴戲渺歡	There is little joy at feast and play.

The others celebrate a merry feast. Liu Zhen has this line:⁵⁴⁵

實冰漿於玉盤	They fill an iced beverage into the jade basins.
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Chen Lin has these:⁵⁴⁶

樂以忘憂	He is so full of joy that he forgets his cares,
氣變志遷	His spirit changes, his mind alters.
爰速嘉賓	Thereupon he invites fine guests
式燕且殷	To feast and extend his hospitality.

The merry feast may be held in a summer resort as described in the extant *fu* of Cao Zhi and Wang Can. The host is called a great man (*daren* 大人) in Cao Zhi's work, an emperor (*dihou* 帝后) in Wang Can's. There is "air-conditioning" with chunks of ice piled in the lodge and cooling currents under the halls. Then the song "White Snow" is played on the zithers, and cold viands are served. A feast is ready for the fine guests.

Wang Can specifies the place that the emperor visits: It is the Forest Light Palace (Linguang 林光) in the countryside at the Sweet Springs (Ganquan 甘泉) among the Nine Peaks

⁵⁴³ For Po Qin's *fu*, see *Yiwen leiju*, 5.89; *Chuxue ji*, 3.51; *Beitang shuchao*, 135.14b.

⁵⁴⁴ *Yiwen leiju*, 5.89. The variant marked here is based on *Beitang shuchao*, 135.14b.

⁵⁴⁵ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 7.196.

⁵⁴⁶ *Jian'an qizi ji*, 2.37.

(Jiuzong 九嶷). Note that the palace complex of the Sweet Springs was the most famous summer resort in the Western Han. Emperor Wu established the altar to the heavenly deity Grand Unity (Taiyi 太一) there and visited the complex on numerous occasions. During and after the reign of Emperor Cheng, the sacrifices were moved to the capital suburbs several times. Since Wang Mang 王莽 (45 B.C.-A.D. 23) argued for moving the sacrifices to the capital suburbs in A.D. 5, the sacrifices to Heaven seemed to have never been restored in the Sweet Springs complex.⁵⁴⁷ It is very likely that since then the complex was left unattended, and lay in ruins in the Jian'an period. Thus we can say that Wang Can uses his imagination to write about this summer resort in his *fu* on the summer heat. While common people have no choice but to suffer from the hot humid wind, there is cool, pleasant “masculine wind” (*xiong feng* 雄風)—a motif borrowed from Song Yu’s “*Fu* on the Wind”—in the imperial summer resort.

Since the visit to the Sweet Springs complex is imagery, we can infer that the “great man” in Cao Zhi’s *fu* is not necessarily Cao Cao as Zhao Youwen claims,⁵⁴⁸ but rather a legendary figure such as Emperor Wu of Han—who reputedly felt himself soaring into the air after he read Sima Xiangru’s “Daren fu” 大人賦 (*Fu* on the Great Man).⁵⁴⁹ Moreover, there may have been no disastrous heat wave at all. The horrors and comforts described in their *fu* are nothing but a dream, part of their a literary imagination.

The writers may have participated in a feast on a summer day. They had an uncommon

⁵⁴⁷ For accounts of the movements of the sacrificial site, see *Han shu*, 25b.1253-65; *Hou Han shu*, zhi 7.3157-59; He Qinggu 何清谷, ed. and comm., *Sanfu huangtu jiao shi* 三輔黃圖校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 5.321-23. Also see Xiao Tong, comp.; David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 2, 16 notes 3-4; Yao Shengmin 姚生民, “Yunyang gong Linguang gong Ganquan gong” 雲陽宮、林光宮、甘泉宮, *Wenbo* 4 (2002): 50-54.

⁵⁴⁸ For Zhao Youwen’s note on the “great man,” see Cao Zhi; Zhao Youwen, ed. and comm., *Cao Zhi ji jiaozhu*, 150 note 23.

⁵⁴⁹ *Shi ji*, 117.3056-62; *Han shu*, 57b.2592-96. For translations of this *fu*, see Sima Qian, comp.; Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1691; rev. 1993), 296-300; Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 182-84.

topic to write on, literary masters to compete with, and most important of all, a banquet host to please. On that day, Cao Zhi told of the mighty summer deities, Liu Zhen told of the chariot of the sun, and Wang Can told of pitiful human beings. Despite their different depictions of the summer scene, they concluded with a merry feast to honor the host. The feast thus became an integral part of their *fu*, and the “summer heat” turned into a perfect topic for convivial group composition. They were certainly better than the carpenter, joiner, weaver, bellows-mender, tinker and tailor who performed a stage play for an aristocratic wedding in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Yet while the workmen gave their performance and entertained their audience anyway, Yang Xiu chose not to present his work but to yield to Cao Zhi’s presentation of grand visions.

The Immortals in the Mortal World: Cao Cao, “*Xing* of Qiu Hu” (I of two), “*Xing* of ‘Walking Out the Xia Gate’”

In his “Memorandum Replying to the Heir Designate of Wei,” Wu Zhi relates how a symposium in the Jian’an period reached its climax (letter 5.2):

We held feasts and merrily drank, composed poems and wished each other long life.
置酒樂飲，賦詩稱壽。

This merry scene of drinking, composing and wishing each other long life is also described in Cao Zhi’s “Konghou yin” 箜篌引 (Harp Song):⁵⁵⁰

樂飲過三爵
緩帶傾庶羞

Drinking merrily we exceed the three-cup limit,
Loosening our belts we empty the numerous delicacies.

⁵⁵⁰ *Cao ji quanping*, 5.55. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi’s (192-232) Symposium Poems,” 22; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 203.

12 主稱千金壽
賓奉萬年酬

The host wishes everyone long life with a thousand in gold,
The guests propose a toast of “May you live a myriad years!”

Aside from the poems discussed above, it is very likely that banquet participants also composed and presented poems on “wandering into transcendency” (*you xian* 遊仙). In their imaginary flight, they visited magic places such as Mount Kunlun and the islands on the Eastern Sea, met with immortals such as Master Red Pine and Wangzi Qiao, and finally attained the Way to immortality. “Wandering into transcendency” was an important *yuefu* theme. Although we do not find any poems on this theme among the extant works of the “Seven Masters,” we find a lot among the extant works of Cao Cao, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi. This could imply that the Cao family had a stronger interest in this theme. Moreover, according to Zhang Hua’s 張華 (232-300) *Bowu zhi* 博物志 (Treatise on Manifold Subjects), Cao Pi’s *Normative Discourses*, and Cao Zhi’s “Bian dao lun” 辯道論 (Discourse on Analyzing the Way), the Cao family seemed to have had some knowledge of religious Taoism.⁵⁵¹

Interestingly, Cao Cao writes about how he failed—or rejected—becoming an immortal by combining the theme of wandering into transcendency with his experience of military campaign in the following poems:

“Qiu hu xing” 秋胡行 (*Xing* of Qiu Hu) (I of two)⁵⁵²

⁵⁵¹ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.54 note 2, 29.805-6 note 1 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.216, 29.2127-28). For a translation of Cao Pi’s and Cao Zhi’s discourses on religious Taoism cited in the *Sanguo zhi*, see Kenneth J. DeWoskin, comp. and trans., *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-Shih* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 150-152.

For other translations of Cao Zhi’s “Discourse on Analyzing the Way,” see Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 300-3; Donald Holzman, “Ts’ao Chih and the Immortals,” *Asia Major*, third series 1.1 (1988): 16-23.

⁵⁵² Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 1.349-50. The translation is based on Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao,” 257-61; Hans H. Frankel, “The Development of Han and Wei *Yüeh-fu* as a High Literary Genre,” 270-72; Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 174-75.

The translation of sections 3-4 is also based on Donald Holzman, “Immortality-Seeking in Early Chinese Poetry,” in *The Power of Culture: Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, eds. Willard J. Peterson, Andrew H. Plaks, Ying-shi Yü, 103-18 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1994), 113.

- 4 晨上散關山
此道當何難
晨上散關山
此道當何難
- 8 牛頓不起
車墮谷間
坐盤石之上
彈五弦之琴
作清角韻
意中迷煩
- 12 歌以言志
晨上散關山
- 16 有何三老公
卒來在我傍
有何三老公
卒來在我傍
- 20 負揜被裘
似非恒人
謂卿云何
困苦以自怨
徨徨所欲
來到此間
- 24 歌以言志
有何三老公
- 28 我居崑崙山
所謂者真人
我居崑崙山
所謂者真人
- 32 道深有可得
名山歷觀
遨遊八極
枕石漱流飲泉⁵⁵³
- At dawn I climb Mount Sanguan,
How hard can this road be?
At dawn I climb Mount Sanguan,
How hard can this road be?
- Oxen collapse and do not get up,
Chariots fall into the valley.
Sitting upon a boulder,
I play a five-stringed zither.
I make the *qingjue* tones,
My mind is confused and troubled.
- I sing to speak my mind.
At dawn I climb Mount Sanguan. (一解 section 1)
- Who are those three old men,
Suddenly coming to my side?
Who are those three old men,
Suddenly coming to my side?
- Putting on overcoats, donning furs,
They seem not to be ordinary men.
They say to me: “Why have you
Been troubled and pained, full of remorse,
Agitated about what you want,
And come to this place?”
- I sing to speak my mind.
Who are those three old men? (二解 section 2)
- “We live on Mount Kunlun,
Known as the True Men.
We live on Mount Kunlun,
Known as the True Men.
- “The Way is profound yet there is a means to attain it:
Visit all the famous mountains,
Roam and wander to the eight limits,
Make rocks your pillow, rinse in currents, drink from springs.”

For a French translation and a study on this poem, see Jean-Pierre Diény, *Les Poèmes de Cao Cao*, 91-96.

⁵⁵³ I follow Zhu Qian to read these six characters as one line. For his note, see Zhu Qian, ed. and comm., *Yuefu zhengyi*, 7.15b. Ting Pang-hsin also reads *quan* 泉 as a rhyming word. For his list of this set of rhyming words, see Ting Pang-hsin, *Chinese Phonology of the Wei-Chin Period*, 162.

- 沉吟不決
遂上升天
I brood on it, undecided,
Then they ascend to the heavens.
- 36 歌以言志
我居崑崙山
I sing to speak my mind.
We live on Mount Kunlun. (三解 section 3)
- 40 去去不可追
長恨相牽攀
去去不可追
長恨相牽攀
Gone, gone, they cannot be pursued,
I always regret to have been pulled back [by my worldly affairs].
Gone, gone, they cannot be pursued,
I always regret to have been pulled back.
- 44 夜夜安得寐
惆悵以自憐
正而不譎
乃賦依因
經傳所過
西來所傳
Night after night, how am I to gain sleep?
Sad and sorrowful, I am full of self-pity.
Upright and not deceitful,
I then compose a poem dependable and reliable.
The Classics hand down what has passed before,
From the west comes what has been handed down.
- 48 歌以言志
去去不可追
I sing to speak my mind.
Gone, gone, they cannot be pursued. (四解 section 4)

“Bu chu Xiamen xing” 步出夏門行 (*Xing* of “Walking Out the Xia Gate”)⁵⁵⁴

- 4 雲行兩步
超越九江之臯
臨觀異同
心意懷遊豫
不知當復何從
經過至我碣石
心惆悵我東海
Like clouds I travel, like rain I walk,
Crossing the swamp of the Nine Rivers,
Coming to view the strange and similar.
Undecided in my mind,
I do not know which I should follow.
Passing through [many lands] I have come to my Mount Jieshi,
My heart is sad at my Eastern Sea.
(雲行至此為豔 From “Like clouds I walk” to here is the prelude.)
- 8 東臨碣石
以觀滄海
水何淡淡
山島竦峙
Eastward I have come to Mount Jieshi
To gaze upon the dark green sea.
How calm and full the water is!
Mountainous islands rise lofty.

⁵⁵⁴ Lu Qinli, ed., “Wei shi,” 1.353-54. The variant marked here is based on *Song shu*, 21.619; *Yuefu shiji*, 37.545. The translation is based on Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao,” 93-95; Hans H. Frankel, “The Development of Han and Wei *Yüeh-fu* as a High Literary Genre,” 265-67; Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 237-39. The translation of the prelude and section 1 is also based on Donald Holzman, *Landscape Appreciation in Ancient and Early Medieval China: The Birth of Landscape Poetry* (six lectures given at National Tsing Hua University, February-March 1995. Hsinchu: National Tsing Hua University, 1996), 75-80. For a French translation and a study on this poem, see Jean-Pierre Diény, *Les Poèmes de Cao Cao*, 130-39.

- 12 樹木叢生
百草豐茂
秋風蕭瑟
洪波湧起
16 日月之行
若出其中
星漢燦爛
若出其裏
20 幸甚至哉
歌以言志
孟冬十月
北風徘徊
24 天氣肅清
繁霜霏霏
鷓鴣晨鳴
鴻雁南飛
28 鷙鳥潛藏
熊羆窟栖
錢鏹停置
農收積場
32 逆旅整設
以通賈商
幸甚至哉
歌以詠志
36 鄉土不同
河朔隆寒
流澌浮漂
舟船行難
40 錐不入地
藟(籟)[藟]深奧
水竭不流
冰堅可蹈
44 士隱者貧
勇俠輕非
- Trees grow in thick clumps,
The hundred plants are luxuriant.
The autumn wind sighs and sighs,
Huge waves surge up.
The sun and the moon in their movements
Seem to rise from their midst.
The starry Han River [i.e. Milky Way] glitters and glistens,
Seem to rise from within them.
So fortunate, so perfect!
I sing to speak my mind.
(觀滄海 一解 “Gaze upon the dark green sea.” section 1)
In the tenth month, the onset of winter,
The north wind lingers.
The weather is still and cold,
Heavy frost falls thick and fast.
Great fowl call at dawn,
Geese fly south.
Birds of prey hide away,
Bears rest in their caves.
Spades and hoes are set aside,
The harvest is piled up on the threshing floor.
Inns make ready,
So that traders and merchants can travel.
So fortunate, so perfect!
I sing to express my mind.
(冬十月 二解 “In the tenth month in winter:” section 2)
Each region is different,
It is extremely cold north of the Yellow River.
Floes of ice drift about,
Boats move with difficulty.
Drills cannot pierce the earth,
Turnip and mugwort grow deep.
Water stops flowing,
Ice is firm enough to walk on.
Men who seclude themselves are poor,
Bold outlaws take the wrongs light.

	心常歎怨 戚戚多悲	Their hearts constantly lament and grieve, Sad, sad, so much sorrow.
48	幸甚至哉 歌以詠志	So fortunate, so perfect! I sing to express my mind. (河朔寒 三解 section 3)
52	神龜雖壽 猶有竟時 騰蛇乘霧 終為土灰	The sacred tortoise, though long-lived, Still comes to an end. The soaring serpent rides the mist, But eventually turns into dirt and ash.
56	驥老伏櫪 志在千里 烈士暮年 壯心不已	A fine steed, aging, lying in the stable, Sets its mind on running a thousand <i>li</i> . A man of honor in his evening years Has grand aspirations that never end.
60	盈縮之期 不但在天 養怡之福 可得永年	Whether the lifespan would be full or shortened Is not determined by Heaven alone. With blessings of fostered harmony, One can prolong his years.
	幸甚至哉 歌以詠志	So fortunate, so perfect! I sing to express my mind. (神龜雖壽 四解 “The sacred tortoise, though long-lived.” section 4)

Like his “*Xing* of ‘Suffering the Cold,’” these two poems are associated with Cao Cao’s military expeditions because a certain mountain is mentioned. The former poem “*Xing* of Qiu Hu” (I of two) mentions Mount Sanguan (lines 1, 3 and 12), which was on Cao Cao’s route to Yangping Pass against Zhang Lu in Jian’an 20 (215).⁵⁵⁵ The latter poem “*Xing* of ‘Walking Out the Xia Gate’” mentions Mount Jieshi (lines 6 and 8), which supposedly was on Cao Cao’s route along the northeastern coast against the Yuan brothers and Wuhuan people in Jian’an 12 (207).⁵⁵⁶ Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between the “*Xing* of ‘Suffering the Cold’” and these two poems. In these two poems, Cao Cao integrates elements of the “wandering into

⁵⁵⁵ *Sanguo zhi*, 1.45 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 1.183).

⁵⁵⁶ For a map of the route, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 232.

transcendancy” theme, but these elements are not found in the “*Xing* of ‘Suffering the Cold.’”

The “*Xing* of Qiu Hu” (I of two) is a song-verse drama. It consists of four sections (*jie* 解) of a musical performance. Each section is like an act of a drama, presenting how the speaker met with three old men from Mount Kunlun. At the beginning of the first act, the speaker is so confident of crossing the mountain that he says “How hard can this road be?” Soon he finds the difficulties. The oxen collapse and the chariots fall. Then the speaker takes the role of a musician. He sits down and plays a five-stringed zither. This zither seems to have some significance since the *Li ji* 禮記 writes that it was invented by the ancient sage Shun 舜. However, the *qingjue* tones that the speaker plays vex him all the more. According to the Eastern Han scholar Xu Shen’s 許慎 commentary to the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, the *qingjue* tones are played fast and at a high pitch.⁵⁵⁷ More importantly, according to the *Han Feizi*, these tones are not fit for the ears of men deficient in virtue.⁵⁵⁸

In the second act, three characters enter and surprise the speaker—as well as the audience. Like the three child-spirits in Mozart’s “Magic Flute,” they seem to come to his aid in response to the special tones played on the special musical instrument.⁵⁵⁹ They first identify themselves, and then give advice to the protagonist in the third act:

道深有可得	“The Way is profound yet there is a means to attain it:
名山歷觀	Visit all the famous mountains,
遨遊八極	Roam and wander to the eight limits,
32 枕石漱流飲泉	Make rocks your pillow, rinse in currents, drink from springs.”

Upon hearing this advice, the speaker hesitates and the three old men abandon him:

⁵⁵⁷ *Wen xuan*, 4.157. Also see Liu An, comp.; He Ning, ed. and comm., *Huainanzi jishi*, 2.109.

⁵⁵⁸ Wang Xianshen, ed. and comm., *Han Feizi jijie*, 3.65.

⁵⁵⁹ This observation is based on Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao,” 259 note 4.

沉吟不決
遂上升天

I brood on it, undecided,
Then they ascend to the heavens.

The speaker must have become wide-eyed and open-mouthed when he saw the three old men ascending to the heavens. In the last act, he regrets having been pulled back—presumably by his worldly affairs:

40 去去不可追 Gone, gone, they cannot be pursued,
長恨相牽攀 I always regret to have been pulled back.

夜夜安得寐 Night after night, how am I to gain sleep?
惆悵以自憐 Sad and sorrowful, I am full of self-pity.

The speaker may have consoled himself with lines 43-46. It is just that these lines are incomprehensible now.⁵⁶⁰

The “*Xing* of ‘Walking Out the Xia Gate’” integrates elements of the “wandering into transcendency” theme in a more subtle way. There are no immortals, but the speaker travels through the mortal world like the three old men:

雲行兩步 Like clouds I travel, like rain I walk,
超越九江之臯 Crossing the swamp of the Nine Rivers,
臨觀異同 Coming to view the strange and similar.

In his dissertation “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao: Literary Studies on the Man and the Myth,” Paul W. Kroll has a note on the third line:⁵⁶¹

Huang’s [i.e. Huang Jie 黃節] notion that 臨觀異同 refers to Ts’ao’s examination of the differing opinions of his military advisors over whether to first take the troops south against Liu Piao or north against the Wu-huan seems to me far-fetched. In context, I am sure that Ts’ao is referring to the “strange and similar” features of the northern landscape.

⁵⁶⁰ For a summary of unlikely interpretations, see Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao,” 260-61 notes 10-11.

⁵⁶¹ Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts’ao Ts’ao,” 115 note 152.

He further gives this inspiring observation:⁵⁶²

Ts'ao's journey north was not the fabulous progress of a Taoist, but it did bring him, the foremost lord of the State, to lands which seemingly appeared as strange and awful as those visited by a dream-wanderer.

I agree that the “strange and similar” in the prelude refers to the varying northern landscape—from the sea vista to the surroundings of farmers, traders, recluses and outlaws—as described in the four sections. In fact, the speaker makes this explicit in line 36: “Each region is different.” Yet I believe the speaker in this song verse travels more freely than Paul W. Kroll observes. It is a fabulous progress of a Taoist if we have a performative scene in mind. The speaker plays an immortal, traveling like clouds and walking like rain, crossing the swamp of the Nine Rivers in the south and passing through the frozen lands in the north. When he travels through the realm, comes to Mount Jieshi and gazes upon the Eastern Sea, he says:

4	心意懷遊豫	Undecided in my mind,
	不知當復何從	I do not know which I should follow.
	經過至我碣石	Passing through [many lands] I have come to my Mount Jieshi,
	心惆悵我東海	My heart is sad at my Eastern Sea.

Like the speaker in Cao Cao's “*Xing of Qiu Hu*,” this speaker hesitates and grieves. Because Huang Jie puts these lines in the context of Cao Cao's military expedition, he believes the speaker hesitates about military strategies. However, if we put these lines in the same context of the “*Xing of Qiu Hu*,” we know that the speaker hesitates about wandering into transcendence. Moreover, the speaker calls Mount Jieshi “my Mount Jieshi” and the Eastern Sea “my Eastern Sea” as if he came from the magic sea. The speaker in Cao Zhi's “*Yuanyou pian*” 遠遊篇 (*Pian*

⁵⁶² Paul W. Kroll, “Portraits of Ts'ao Ts'ao,” 93.

of “Far Roaming”) has a similar expression:⁵⁶³

12 崑崙本吾宅 Mount Kunlun was originally my abode,
 中州非我家 The central realm is not my home.

Cao Zhi’s speaker claims that he will “return” to the immortal world, but Cao Cao’s speaker hesitates. He has come to Mount Jieshi like the First Emperor of Qin and Emperor Wu of Han.⁵⁶⁴ He can just sail home while the emperors could only send an expedition team to the Eastern Sea. However, he grieves as if he cannot go either. This melancholic prelude suggests that this song verse is not about an immortal going home.

It is rather about his journey in the mortal world. Note that when the speaker refers to the Eastern Sea in the first section, he does not mention the magic islands such as Yingzhou 瀛洲, Penglai 蓬萊, or Fangzhang 方丈 at all. Instead, he is interested in the trees and plants growing on the islands, and the sun, moon and milky way rising from the waves. These are common objects, but they become uncommon in his eyes and descriptions. He sees simplicity: the horizontal line of calm, full water and the vertically rising islands. He sees life: the lush trees and plants. He observes the breathing of the sea: the wind sighs and the waves surge up. He wonders at its grandeur: the celestial bodies seem to rise from its midst.

The second section is similar to the *Shi jing* poem “Qi yue” 七月 (The Seventh Month, no. 154). It starts with the month and the weather, and then writes about the activities of birds, beasts and common people. Again the speaker sees simplicity and life. Such objective descriptions continue to the next section about a place in harsh conditions.

In his study on Cao Cao’s other poems of “wandering into transcendence,” Stephen

⁵⁶³ *Cao ji quanping*, 5.67. The translation is based on Robert Joe Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192-232) and His Poetry,” 298.

⁵⁶⁴ *Shi ji*, 6.251, 12.476.

Owen observes that “such songs could be performed in the court for visitors with Daoist interests with a full knowledge that Cao Cao composed them.”⁵⁶⁵ The audience of Cao Cao’s “*Xing of ‘Walking Out the Xia Gate’*” would also have expected to hear Daoist descriptions of celestial places and beings, but the speaker does not mention any of those until the last section. Moreover, in his eyes, those sacred, soaring creatures eventually turn into dirt and ash, whereas the mortal creatures still have grand, undying aspirations in their last days:

	神龜雖壽 猶有竟時	The sacred tortoise, though long-lived, Still comes to an end.
52	騰蛇乘霧 終為土灰	The soaring serpent rides the mist, But eventually turns into dirt and ash.
	驥老伏櫪 志在千里	A fine steed, aging, lying in the stable, Sets its mind on running a thousand <i>li</i> .
56	烈士暮年 壯心不已	A man of honor in his evening years Has grand aspirations that never end.

Finally, he assures his audience that our lifespan is not determined by Heaven alone. With blessings of fostered harmony, we can prolong our years. We can imagine that at this time, the host would have risen from his seat, asking the guests to enjoy themselves and wishing them long life.

It would have been a fresh experience for the guests to follow a “wandering immortal” to see the “strange and similar” sights of the mortal world. If they further reflected on the connections between the prelude and the four sections, the audience may have found the reason why the wanderer cannot return to his celestial home: there is much to explore in the mortal world, and there is an undying heart in a mortal man.

In the chapter of “virility and boldness” (*haoshuang* 豪爽) of the *Shishuo xinyu*, there is a

⁵⁶⁵ Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 162.

famous passage that cites this song verse:⁵⁶⁶

After he drank, Wang Chuzhong [i.e. Wang Dun] had always intoned the song: “An aging fine steed lying in the stable/ Sets its mind on running a thousand *li*./ A man of honor in his evening years/ Has grand aspirations that never end.” With his *ruyi* baton he beat time on a spittoon until the mouth of the spittoon was completely in shards.

王處仲每酒後輒詠「老驥伏櫪，志在千里。烈士暮年，壯心不已」。以如意打唾壺，壺口盡缺。

When the general Wang Dun 王敦 (266-324) sang this verse, he might have seen that Cao Cao *was* the aging fine steed as the Greeks saw that Achilles *was* the lion. They confronted death, and thus they are remembered and become immortal in the mortal world.

⁵⁶⁶ Liu Yiqing, comp.; Liu Xiaobiao, comm.; Yu Jiayi, ed. and comm., *Shishuo xinyu jianshu*, 13/4, 2c.598. The translation is based on Liu Yiqing, comp.; Liu Xiaobiao, comm.; Richard B. Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, 2nd ed., 13/4, 323.

	丁年難再遇	Adolescence is hard to encounter again,
	富貴不重來	Fortune and fame will not come a second time.
	良時忽一過	Once the good time passes all of a sudden,
4	身體為土灰	The body becomes dirt and ash.
	冥冥九泉室	The chamber under the dark, dark Nine Springs,
	漫漫長夜臺	The mound in the long, long lasting night.
	身盡氣力索	The life ended, the energy spent,
8	精魂靡所能	The spirit and soul can do nothing.
	嘉肴設不御	Fine viands are set out but not enjoyed,
	旨酒盈觴杯	Tasty ale brims the bowls and cups.
	出壙望故鄉	Going out the tomb-vault and gazing homeward,
12	但見蒿與萊	I only see mugwort and goosefoot.

This is the first of two “*Shi* of Seven Laments” by Ruan Yu,⁵⁶⁷ who passed away five years earlier than Wang Can, Chen Lin, Ying Yang and Liu Zhen. As mentioned in Chapter 2, “Seven Laments” could have been a popular *yuefu* title. Cao Zhi and Wang Can also have *shi* under this title. We have read that Wang Can writes about the downfall of Chang’an and his flight to Jingzhou in his first two “*Shi* of Seven Laments.” Here Ruan Yu writes about death: The deceased may have spirit and soul, but with his energy spent he can do nothing. He cannot even enjoy the food and drink that are offered to him. As a result, the bowls and cups overflow with ale, never emptied. In the final couplet, Ruan Yu further views death from the perspective of the deceased. He leaves his tomb-vault and gazes homeward. He may hope to find a way home, but all he sees is mugwort and goosefoot.

Both mugwort (*hao* 蒿, genus *Artemisia*) and goosefoot (*lai* 萊, genus *Chenopodium*) are weedy plants.⁵⁶⁸ In Han times, a burial ground was called “mugwort village” (*haoli* 蒿里), which

⁵⁶⁷ *Jian’an qizi ji*, 5.160. The translation is based on Stephen Owen, *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, 188-89.

⁵⁶⁸ Pan Fujun 潘富俊, *Shi jing zhiwu tujian* 詩經植物圖鑑 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2003), 220-21, 226-27.

is also the title of a Han burial song:⁵⁶⁹

	蒿里誰家地	Whose land is the mugwort village?
	聚斂魂魄無賢愚	It gathers souls and spirits of the wise and the fool.
	鬼伯一何相催促	How the Lord of Ghosts hurries them along!
4	人命不得少踟躕	Man's doom does not waver a moment.

In Qu Yuan's "Encountering Sorrow," the plants *xiao* 蕭 and *ai* 艾 belong to the same genus as *hao*.⁵⁷⁰ As opposed to thoroughwort (*lan* 蘭) and patchouli (*hui* 蕙), these species of mugwort are considered "bad" ones.⁵⁷¹

	何昔日之芳草兮	How have all the sweet herbs of the past
	今直為此蕭艾也	Turned to be the mugwort of today?

The deceased in Ruan Yu's poem may have worn sweet herbs like Qu Yuan in the "Encountering Sorrow," but now he has no choice but to stay among the weeds that overgrow the burial ground and obstruct his way home.

At the beginning of each part of this dissertation, I cite the lines of a Jian'an writer on a plant to represent an aspect of their lives and poetic dialogues. The plants are 1) an orange tree in the Bronze Bird Park, 2) the pagoda trees in the Ye palace, 3) the willow at Mengjin, and 4) the lotus blossoms in the Western Park. The orange tree, which was transplanted to a foreign land, represents them as warlords and travelers. The pagoda trees, which took root in the new palace, represent them as lords and retainers. The willow, which grew during wartime, represents them as commanders and aides. The lotuses, whose red blossoms cover the moonlit pond, represent their great joy as hosts and guests.

⁵⁶⁹ Lu Qinli, ed., "Han shi," 9.257. The translation is based on Arthur Waley, comp. and trans., *Chinese Poems*, 56; Anne Birrell, comp. and trans., *Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China*, 98; Stephen Owen, comp. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, 278.

⁵⁷⁰ Pan Fujun, *Chu ci zhiwu tujian*, 70-71, 64-65.

⁵⁷¹ *Chu ci buzhu*, 1.57. The translation is taken from C. H. Wang, "Allegory," 177.

I have discussed their poems on these plants in even-numbered chapters as part of their poetic dialogues. Having these beautiful plants in my mind as concrete images of Jian'an writers and their poetry, I came to Ruan Yu's first "*Shi* of Seven Sorrows" about death and weeds. When Qu Yuan sees his fragrant herbs turning into weeds, he sighs "How have all the sweet herbs of the past/ Turned to be the mugwort of today?" as cited above. When reading Ruan Yu's descriptions of death and weeds, I also sighed: "How have all the beautiful trees and flowers of the past turned to be the mugwort and goosefoot of today?" In the Jian'an period, the writers often drank together and composed poems together. In Ruan Yu's imagination, the ale cannot be enjoyed. Only the weeds on the funeral ground keep the deceased company.

We do not know when Ruan Yu wrote this poem. The desolate scene seems to foreshadow his death—as well as the end of Jian'an literature. We do know, however, that Cao Zhi wrote the following in Taihe 太和 5 (231) during the reign of Cao Rui:⁵⁷²

Whenever it was the time for seasonal gathering, I dwelled all alone. By my side were only servants and slaves. What I faced were only my wife and sons. When I gave lofty talks, I had no one to display it to. When I put forward my arguments, I had no one to show them to. When I listened to the music and faced the bowls of ale, I put my hand on my heart and heaved sighs.

每四節之會，塊然獨處，左右唯僕隸，所對惟妻子，高談無所與陳，發義無所與展，未嘗不聞樂而撫心，臨觴而歎息也。

This passage is cited from his petition titled "Qiu tong qin qin biao" 求通親親表 (Petition for Meeting with Kin) in the *Wen xuan*.⁵⁷³ A decade earlier, many Jian'an writers died in an epidemic or were executed. Now Cao Zhi had no companions. He was not even allowed to meet with his brothers to celebrate the festivals. He alone moved on to another stage of his life and another page of Chinese poetry.

⁵⁷² *Cao ji quanping*, 7.116. Also see *Sanguo zhi*, 19.570-71 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1590). For the date of this petition, see *Sanguo zhi*, 19.569 (*Sanguo zhi jijie*, 19.1589).

⁵⁷³ For the petition included in the *Wen xuan*, see *Wen xuan*, 37.1685-90.

Nevertheless, Jian'an writers' practice of group composition persisted. Later court poets continued to read and imitate them. Even great novels such as *The Story of the Stone* have many episodes of group composition by the members of the Jia family. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that by reading Jian'an writers' group compositions—as well as the works that seem to be isolated from the others—as their poetic dialogues, we can give a vivid picture of Jian'an literary salons and enhance our understanding of Jian'an poems. We may take the same approach when we read other works. We may also explore how later courts modeled themselves on the court of the Cao family while establishing a tradition of their own.

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