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Cao Zhi's (192–232) Symposium Poems

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One of the first incidents related in Cao Zhi's 曹植 standard biography in the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* is an excursion Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) led to Bronze Bird Terrace.¹ He took his sons along and commanded them to write rhapsodies, presumably to commemorate the occasion and to extol his creation of that marvelous scenic spot.² The rhapsody Cao Zhi wrote on that day in 212 A.D. follows here. We are told that Cao Cao marveled at the speed with which Cao Zhi wrote it. We might also infer that he was mightily pleased with its contents, for while the first half of the piece is a not very original description of the scene from Bronze Bird Terrace, the second half is fully given over to a eulogy of Cao père.

Ascending the Terrace³

Accompanying our enlightened lord we wander happily,
And mount awhile this terrace to gladden our feelings.
We see the Storehouse of Heaven open wide,⁴

¹This article is a revised version of a part of chapter two of my dissertation "Cao Zhi (192–232) and His Poetry," diss., U of Washington, 1983, 67–193. An early version was presented at the Western Branch Meeting of AAS in Boulder, Colorado, September 18–19, 1982. The editors of *CLEAR* have requested that the Chinese texts of the poems translated herein not be included.

²*San guo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 19:557. On Bronze Bird Terrace, see note 52.

³"Deng tai fu" 登臺賦 ; see Jean-Pierre Diény et al., comps., *Concordance des oeuvres complètes de Cao Zhi* (Paris: l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, Collège de France, 1977) 2:20. The *Concordance*, as it shall henceforth be called, is based on and includes Ding Yan 丁晏 (1794–1875), ed., *Cao ji quan ping* 曹集鉅評 (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanxing she, 1957 rev. ed.). Ding used the version of the *fu* found in Yin Dan's 陰澹 *Wei ji* 魏記 to collate the one in the Ming edition of Cao's works that served as his base text. The *Wei ji* version comes from Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (373–451) commentary in *San guo zhi* 19:558. On the dating of the rhapsody to 212, see Cutter, "Cao Zhi (192–232) and His Poetry" 507–08.

Since the completion of this article a very valuable new tool has appeared, an annotated version of Cao's complete works. It is Zhao Youwen 趙幼文, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 曹植集校注 (Beijing: Renmin wuxue chubanshe, 1984). Although not perfect, this work is a boon to students of Cao Zhi.

"Storehouse of Heaven" (*tian fu* 天府) is a term that refers to a place, or even a person, in which everything is to be found. Sometimes it means a region of great natural richness. See, for example, Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1918), comp., *Xun zi ji shi* 荀子集釋 19:332, *Xinbian Zhuzi jicheng* 新編諸子集成; Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 (1844–1896), comp., *Zhuang zi ji shi* 莊子集釋 2:42, *Xinbian Zhuzi jicheng*; Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia U P, 1968) 45; *Zhan guo ce* 戰國策 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978) 3:78; and the biography of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) in *San guo zhi* 35:912. But Cao Zhi may very well be alluding to Wenchang 文昌, the principal palace of Ye 鄴, in which city the terrace was located. The reason this is possible is that Wenchang, "Literary Glory" in Edward Schafer's translation, is also the name of an asterism; see Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1977) 121. And when we look into Sima Zhen's 司馬貞 Tang dynasty commentary to *Shi ji* 史記, we find him quoting a work entitled *Apocryphon to the Spring and Autumn Annals: The Patterned and Radiant Hook* (*Chun qiu: wen yao gou* 春秋文耀鉤), which says, "Literary Glory is the Storehouse of Heaven." See *Shi ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 27:1294.

View all his sage virtue has built.
 He raised lofty basilicas jagged and peaked,⁵ 5
 Floated twin watchtowers in the Greatest Clarity,
 Reared floriate lodges that surge to the sky,
 Linked flying galleries to the west city wall.⁶
 I overlook the Zhang River's long course,
 Gaze afar at the burgeoning splendor of untold fruits, 10
 Lift my face to the softness of the spring breeze,
 Hear the sad cry of a hundred birds.
 The efforts of heaven will perpetuate what he has built;
 The wishes of his house, attained, achieve display.
 He spreads his humanizing influence in the world, 15
 Is totally reverent and solemn toward the capital.
 Even the way Dukes Huan and Wen prospered.
 Cannot compare with his sage enlightenment.
 O excellent, O beautiful,
 His kind favor extends afar. 20
 He aids our august house,
 Pacifies the four directions.
 His compass equals heaven and earth,
 His brilliance matches the sun and moon.
 May he ever be esteemed and honored without limit, 25
 And live as long as the King of the East.⁷

One writer thinks this rhapsody, though still not free of the epideictic tendencies characteristic of many Han rhapsodies, shows talent.⁸ Whether or not that is true, it is significant as a kind of introductory piece to a Jian'an phenomenon. Like many poems

⁵Instead of "lofty basilicas" (*gao dian* 高殿) one edition has "tall gates" (*gao men* 高門); see Zhu Xuzeng 朱緒曾 (fl. 1837), ed., *Cao ji kao yi* 曹集考異 3:14b, *Jinling congshu* 金陵叢書. *Notes on Things in Ye* (*Ye zhong ji* 鄴中記), a work recovered from the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典, says:

To the south side of Ye palace were three gates. Fengyang 鳳陽, the westernmost one, was twenty-five *zhang* [60.3 m] tall. Above there were six levels. The upturned eaves faced the sun. Below two gateways opened. Furthermore, a great bronze phoenix was set on top and reared its head one *zhang* six *chi* [3.9 m]. . . . While yet seven or eight *li* from Ye, one saw this gate in the distance; *Ye zhong ji* 1, *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成.

The *Water Classic Commentary* (*Shui jing zhu* 水經注) says that this gate was thirty-five *zhang*, the discrepancy apparently resulting from an addition carried out in the Later Zhao (319–351). See Wang Xianqian, ed., *Wang shi he jiao Shui jing zhu* 王氏合校水經注 10:8b, *SPPY*. This discrepancy might be even larger than it looks due to the tendency of units of measure to increase in size during the period; see William Gordon Crowell, "Government Land Policies and Systems in Early Imperial China," *diss.*, U of Washington, 1979, 404-10.

⁶The existence of at least a partial western city wall is implied in *Shui jing zhu*. See Wang, *Wang shi he jiao Shui jing zhu* 10:8b. See also Miyagawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, *Rikuchō shi kenkyū: seiji shakai hen* 六朝史研究: 政治社會篇 (Tokyo: Nihon gakujutsu shinkokai, 1956) 537.

⁷Dong wang 東王 (King of the East), also known as Dong fu 父, Dong wang gong 公, and Dong wang fu, etc., is a deity associated with immortality. He appears in iconography of Han and Three Kingdoms date together with the Western Queen Mother (Xi wang mu 西王母). See Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979) 121-26; Yang Lien-sheng, "A Note on the So-called TLV Mirrors and the Game *Liu-po* 六博," *HJAS* 9 (February 1947): 206 and plate I; Yang Lien-sheng, "An Additional Note on the Ancient Game *Liu-po*," *HJAS* 15 (June 1952): 138-39; and Stephen Shih-tung Wang, "Tsaur Jyr's Poems of Mythical Excursion," M.A. thesis, U of California, 1963, 108-09.

⁸Huang Ruhui 黃如卉, *Zhongguo lidai jiu shiren* 中國歷代九詩人 (Hong Kong: Shanghai shuju, 1976) 17.

of the period, it is an occasional poem. As was often the case, others wrote pieces on the same theme at the same time. And furthermore, Cao's *fu* adopts a eulogistic tone that is seen again and again in works of that age. The nature of the occasion is also significant; excursions and symposia (convivial gatherings for drinking, conversation, and so forth) were often a time for rhapsodies and poems. In fact, the poets who lived during the Jian'an period (196–219) spent a fair amount of time feasting and drinking and going on entertaining little excursions through beautiful gardens and parks. So many poems were written either as a result of these occasions or refer to them that the most important early Chinese literary critic mentions them among the characteristics of Jian'an verse:

Lingering over "wind" and "moon," dallying by ponds and gardens, telling of the glory of princely favor, describing wine-flowing banquets, the poets were unrestrained in giving rein to their *ch'i*, openhearted in displaying their talents.⁹

This aspect of their social life is also expressed in prose of the period. Letters by Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) and by Cao Zhi himself to Wu Zhi 吳質 (177–230) speak of the pleasures of eating, drinking, and touring with friends. Sometime after the year 212 Cao Pi wrote the following letter to Wu Zhi:

Letter to Wu Zhi, Prefect of Zhaoge¹⁰

Fifth month, the eighteenth

From Pi,

I trust you are well. Though the road there is near, official duties are confining. My feelings of longing for you truly are unbearable.¹¹ The place you administer is out of the way and our correspondence has dwindled, so I am increasingly troubled.¹²

I often think of our past outings in Nanpi.¹³ They were genuinely unforgettable. We wonderfully contemplated the Six Classics and loitered among the hundred philosophers.

⁹The statement is from Liu Xie's 劉勰 (ca. 465–ca. 520) *Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龍, and the translation is from David Pollard, "Ch'i in Chinese Literary Theory," *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, ed. Adele Austin Rickett (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1978) 47. The passage is in Fan Wenlan 范文瀾 ed., *Wen xin diao long zhu* 文心雕龍注 (Beijing: Renmin wuxue chubanshe, 1978 rpt.) 2:66 (see also 9:673-74). See also Ronald Miao, "Literary Criticism at the End of the Eastern Han," *Literature East and West* 16.3 (September 1972): 1014-15.

¹⁰The letter is in Xiao Tong's 蕭統 (501–531) *Wen xuan* 文選. See Xiao Tong, comp., *Wen xuan*, comm. Li Shan 李善 (d. 689) (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1971) 42:7b-8b. Subsequent references to *Wen xuan*, unless otherwise specified, are to this edition. On this edition, see David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1982), 1: 59-60, 524. The letter also appears in Yu Huan's 魚豢 (fl. third century) *Wei lue* 魏略, quoted in Pei Songzhi's commentary in *San guo zhi* 21:608. There are minor textual variants.

Zhaoge 朝歌 was to the west of modern Jun 潘 County, Henan. The year is not given. *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 六臣注文選 (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1964 rpt.) 42:784 has "twenty-eighth day." The *Wei lue* omits any date at all. The letter must come from a few years after the death of Ruan Yu 阮瑀 in 212. See Li Baojun 李寶均, *Cao shi fu zi he Jian'an wenxue* 曹氏父子和建安文學 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 30.

¹¹Cf. *Mao shi* 30/4. On *yan yan* 願言, see Bernhard Karlgren, *Glosses on the Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1964) nos. 81 and 126.

¹²A fragment of a letter attributed to Du Yu 杜預 (222–284) is in the early Song calligraphic compilation *Chunhua ge tie* 淳化閣帖. I quote from this fragment as it appears in *Chunhua ge tie shiwen* 釋文, a recension of the Song work done in response to an imperial command of 1769: "The year is suddenly at its end. The length of our separation increases its misery. The road is far and our correspondence, moreover, has dwindled"; *Chunhua ge tie shiwen* 2:21, *Congshu jicheng*.

¹³Nanpi 南皮 was a prefecture in Bohai 渤海 Commandery in what is now Henan. There is a modern county by the same name.

Pellet chess was set up at intervals, and we finished with *liubo*.¹⁴ Lofty conversation gladdened the heart, and the mournful music of zithers was pleasing to the ear. We galloped the fields to the north and feasted in the lodges south,¹⁵ floated sweet melons on clear springs and sank red plums in cold waters. When the white sun disappeared, we carried on by the bright moon. Riding together we roamed the rear gardens. The carriage wheels moved slowly, and the entourage was silent. Cool breezes arose in the night, and a sad reed whistle softly moaned. Happiness left and sorrow came, leaving us woeful and melancholy. I would look back and say that such joy cannot endure. You and the others thought I was right.

Now we are really apart, each in a separate place. Ruan Yu has eternally gone, translated to something other.¹⁶ Every time I recall these things—but when will it be possible to speak with you? Just now it is the season of the *ruibin* note.¹⁷ A southerly breeze 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 river. Attendants sound reed whistles to clear the way, and my Literary Scholars ride in carriages behind. The season is the same, but the time is another; the externals are right, but the people are wrong. How disturbed I am!¹⁸

At present I am sending a rider to Ye and, so, will have him detour by you. Go, and take care of yourself.¹⁹

Pi

In another letter to Wu, this one datable to March 18, 218, he wrote in part:

In last year's epidemic many of our friends and family met with disaster. Xu Gan 徐幹 (171–218), Chen Lin 陳琳 (d. 217), Ying Yang 應瑒 (d. 217), and Liu Zhen 劉楨 (d. 217)

¹⁴On "pellet chess" (*tan qi* 彈碁), see Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962) 4.1: 327. Pellet chess was a favorite game of Cao Pi's. See Cao Pi, *Wei Wendi ji* 魏文帝集 1:4b, 24a, *Han Wei Liu chao baisan ming jia ji* 漢魏六朝百三家集, ed. Zhang Pu 張溥 (1602–1641) (Taipei: Wenjin chuban she, 1979 rpt.). See also Richard B. Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976) 363–64.

On *liubo*, see the two articles by Yang Lien-sheng, "A Note on the So-called TLV Mirrors and the Game *Liu-po*" 202–06 and "An Additional Note on the Ancient Game *Liu-po*" 124–39. See also Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* 4.1: 327.

¹⁵*Lü shi* 旅食, which I have translated as "feasted," is a term that appears in *Yi li* 儀禮, where its basic meaning is, according to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), "eat (or feast) in a group." See *Yi li Zheng zhu* 鄭注 6:1b–2a, SPPY. See also John Steele, trans., *The I-li or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (1917; rpt. Taipei: Cheng wen, 1966) 1: 122–23, 140.

¹⁶The phrase "translated to something other" (*hua wei yi wu* 化爲異物) also occurs, for instance, in Jia Yi's 賈誼 (ca. 200–168 B.C.) rhapsody "Owl" ("Funiao fu" 鵩鳥賦), a work in which it may be understood to refer to death and what comes after. See *Shi ji* 84:2500.

¹⁷*Ruibin* 蕤賓 is one of the twelve notes of the classical Chinese gamut. See Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* 4.1: 170–71. The "Monthly Ordinances" ("Yue ling" 月令) chapter of the *Record of Rites* says that this note belongs to the second month of summer; see *Li ji Zheng zhu* 禮記鄭注 5:11b, SPPY. See also James Legge, trans., *Li Chi: Book of Rites*, ed. Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (Hyde Park: University Books, 1967) 1: 272.

¹⁸Cf. *Mao shi* 230/1.

¹⁹The translation "Go" for *xing yi* 行矣 derives from a passage in *Han shu* 漢書 and the commentary to it. The passage has to do with Emperor Wu's (reg. 140–87 B.C.) acquisition of Wei Zifu 衛子夫, the future Empress Wei. She was a singer in the household of the Princess of Pingyang when the Emperor saw her. "As Zifu got in the carriage the princess patted her back and said, 'Go, and force yourself to eat and give it your best. When you are esteemed, I hope you will not forget me.'" Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–654) explains, "Xing yi is like the modern *hao qu* 好去 ('go well');" see *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 97A:3949–50.

all passed away then. How can I speak of the pain? In days past if we went roaming, we went with our carriages one after another; if we stayed in, we sat on mats placed together. We would not be separated for an instant. Whenever the wine goblets and ladles were moving freely and the strings and bamboos played together, we felt tipsy from the wine and warm about the ears and, lifting our heads, composed poems.²⁰

Wu Zhi had an enviable correspondence. Cao Zhi's letter to him contains the following:²¹

From Zhi

Dear Jizhong,

Even though in days past by routine transfers²² we were able to be close companions, and even though we spent whole days drinking and feasting, when this is put up against our distant separation and infrequent meetings, it still does not dispel my anxieties.

With cups and ladles bobbing about in front and flutes and whistles issuing sounds behind, you would raise your body like a hawk in flight, gaze like a phoenix and glare like a tiger.²³ I would say that even Xiao and Cao could not have equaled you, Wei and Hou would have been no match.²⁴ When you looked left and glanced right, I would say it was as if no one was about. This surely was due to your grand aspirations.²⁵ Munching while passing a butcher's door: though I got no meat, I prized it and it made me happy. At those times you wanted to pick up Mount Tai to use for meat, pour out the eastern sea to use for wine, cut the bamboo of Yunmeng to use for flutes, chop down the catalpas on the banks of the Si to use for zithers.²⁶ You ate as if we were filling a great gully, drank as if pouring into a leaky cup. From what I have said above,²⁷ this joy was absolutely incalculable. It surely was the joy of a real man.

But the days are not with us, and the Radiant Numen quickens its pace.²⁸ Our meetings have all the speed of fleeting lights, our separation the vast distances of Triaster and Shang.²⁹

²⁰*Wen xuan* 42:9a. The letter is also quoted from the *Wei lue* in Pei's commentary in *San guo zhi* 21:608-09. The *Wei lue* provides the year, the *Wen xuan* version gives the day.

²¹Cao Zhi's letter appears in *Concordance* 8:147-49 and *Wen xuan* 42:15a-17a. Its title is "Yu Wu Jizhong shu" 與吳季重書.

²²Cf. the explanation of Lu Xiang 呂向, who reads *chang tiao* 常調, meaning *chang xi* 戲 ("often teased"); *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 42:790.

²³Li Shan (*Wen xuan* 42:15a) says "phoenix" (*feng* 鳳) is a symbol for what is civil or literary, and "tiger" (*hu* 虎) is a symbol for what is martial. I follow *Concordance* 8:147.10 in reading *feng guan* 觀 ("gaze like a phoenix") instead of the *feng tan* 歎 of Li Shan's *Wen xuan*.

²⁴Xiao He 蕭何 (d. 193 B.C.) and Cao Shen 曹參 (d. 190 B.C.) were famous officials. Wei Qing 衛青 (d. 106 B.C.) and Huo Qubing 霍去病 (d. 117 B.C.) were famous generals.

²⁵*Wen xuan* 42:15b reads *wu zi zhuang zhi* 吾子壯志 ("your grand determination") instead of the *junzi* 君子 *zhuang zhi* of *Concordance* and the *liu chen* text of *Wen xuan*.

²⁶On Mount Tai (Tai shan 泰山), see Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1910).

Yun 雲 and Meng 夢 were originally two marshes that straddled the Yangtze, with Yun to the north and Meng to the south of the river. Their location was in the south of present Anlu 安陸 County, Hubei. See Hu Daojing 胡道靜, ed., *Mengxi bitan jiaozheng* 夢溪筆談校證 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1961 rpt.) 1:200 (no. 81). See also Qu Wanli 屈萬里, *Shang shu jin zhu jin yi* 尚書今註今譯 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1979 rpt.) 37.

The Si River (Si he 泗河) rises in Sishui 泗水 County, Shandong. Both the marshes of Yun and Meng and the banks of the Si are mentioned in the "Yu gong" 禹貢 ("Tribute of Yu") chapter of the *Classic of Documents*. See *Shang shu Kong zhu* 尚書孔傳 3:2b, 3b, *SPPY*.

²⁷Some texts, including *Wen xuan*, do not have this phrase.

²⁸Cf. *Lun yu* 17.1. I have translated Yaoling 曜靈 (sometimes 耀靈) as "Radiant Numen," following Edward

I want to press down the heads of the six dragon steeds, stop the reins of Xihe, break the blossoms from the Ruo tree, and block the valley Meng si.³⁰ But the road in the sky is high and far and has not been followed for a good long time. I toss and turn with nostalgic yearnings. What shall I do? What shall I do?

These letters are quoted to dramatize the importance Jian'an writers attached to time in convivial symposia with friends. Of course, such contact is a nearly universal need, but that it became an integral part of Jian'an literary life is perhaps best accounted for by the tenor of the times. A common feature of most discussions of Jian'an poetry is the belief that the years of political disorder and military strife that characterized the end of the Han dynasty exerted a strong influence on literature. Not only did the general populace have a precarious hold on life in such times, but the literary figure, whether he was Cao Cao's son or a relatively minor official, was not immune from danger either. This congruity of history and literature is not a fiction.³¹ The last of the Han was a dangerous time, with war, politics, and disease all taking their toll, and one of the ways poets dealt with these stern realities was by joining together to feast and drink. There seems to have been a genuine concern with the ephemeral and transient nature of life, and this resulted in a kind of *carpe diem* mentality, which we see reflected in the symposium poems. This attitude appears in various forms; for instance, in the use of conventionally phrased expressions of reluctance to end the festivities.

Cao Zhi's symposium poems seem mainly to have been written in the early half of his life; that is, before Cao Pi formally dispatched the Han dynasty and became emperor of the Wei in 220. By most accounts, these were happier, less trying years.³²

Schafer. Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090–1155) quotes the *Bo ya* 博雅 (*Guang ya* 廣雅) as saying, "Zhuming 朱明, Yaoling, and Dongjun 東君 all refer to the sun"; *Chu ci bu zhu* 楚辭補注 5:3b, SPPY. See Zhang Ji 張揖 (fl. late fifth century), comp., *Bo ya* 9:4b, *Zeng ding Han Wei congshu* 增訂漢魏叢書, comp. Wang Mo 王謨 (Jinxi: Wang shi, 1791) ce 21. For these terms Schafer offers the translations "Vermilion Luminosity," "Radiant Numen," and "Lord of the East." See Schafer, *Pacing the Void* 167.

²⁹Edward Schafer writes of Shen 參 and Shang 商:

Then there were the two sons of a sky god, Shen and Shang, who have a number of distinct myths: they are sometimes Hesperus and Lucifer, but in a different tradition they are Orion (my Triaster) and Scorpio (Antares)—bitter rivals, each always out of the other's sight at opposite ends of the sky; Schafer, *Pacing the Void* 127.

See also Gustave Schlegel, *Uranographie chinoise* (1875; Taipei: Cheng wen, 1967) 1: 395-96, Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1959) 3: 242, 249, 282.

³⁰This sentence is a series of *Chu ci* allusions. The idea is that Cao Zhi wishes he could hold back time. The first comes from Liu Xiang's 劉向 (77–6 B.C.) "Jiu tan" 九歎, the piece entitled "Roving Afar" ("Yuan you" 遠遊); *Chu ci bu zhu* 16:28a. David Hawkes translates: "I drove my six dragons to the mountain of Three Perils"; David Hawkes, trans., *Ch'u Tz'u, The Songs of the South* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1959) 167. The mountain is explained by Wang Yi 王逸 (ca. 89–ca. 158) as a mountain in the west.

Xihe 羲和 and the Ruo 若 tree are both mentioned, for example, in "Encountering Sorrow" ("Li sao" 離騷); *Chu ci bu zhu* 1:21a-b. The first passage goes, "I ordered Hsi-ho to stay the sun-steed's gallop," and the second says, "I broke a sprig of the Jo-tree to strike the sun with"; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 28. See also the passage on Xihe and the Ruo tree in "Tian wen" 天問; *Chu ci bu zhu* 3:7b; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 49. Cf. Sarah Allan, "Sons of Suns: Myth and Totemism in Early China," *BSOAS* 44.2 (1981): 296-301.

Meng si 蒙巳 comes from "Tian wen"; *Chu ci bu zhu* 3:3b. Hawkes translates it as "Vale of Darkness": "The Sun sets out from the Valley of Morning and goes to rest in the Vale of Darkness"; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 47. See also Allan, "Sons of Suns" 301.

³¹See Liu Jihua 劉紀華, *Han Wei zhi ji wenxue de xingshi yu neirong* 漢魏之際文學的形式與內容 (Taipei: Shiji shuju, 1978) 121-22.

³²See, for instance, Li, *Cao shi fu zi he Jian'an wenxue* 34-35; Huang, *Zhongguo lidai jiu shiren* 17; Chen

One is always a little suspicious of such categorizing, yet it is a fact that certain of the symposium poems can be generally dated to that time. Although the feast figures to a greater or lesser extent in all of the poems in this article, these compositions do not form a strictly homogeneous group. They include some of Cao Zhi's most and least important poems, span the genres of *fu*, *shi*, and *yuefu*, and have meters ranging from mixed line lengths to the five-word line that the Jian'an poets did so much to popularize. One title is even in the relatively rare six-word line. The first four poems we shall examine seem to form a special subgroup that I call eulogistic symposium poems. Occasional poetry is functional poetry, and the eulogistic symposium poems are no exception.³³ In their case function defines form. The ingredients may include a description of the affair, an expression of gratitude or appreciation, and praise.

Cao Zhi's "Lord's Feast" ("Gong yan" 公宴) is one such poem. In *Wen xuan* this title became the name of a thematic sub-genre. The "Lord's Feast" section of *Wen xuan* includes four Jian'an period poems, one each by Cao Zhi and his contemporaries Wang Can 王粲 (177–217), Liu Zhen, and Ying Yang.

Cao Zhi's "Lord's Feast" is generally accepted as having been written for a banquet in Ye with Cao Pi, who at the time was General of the Gentlemen-of-the-Household for All Purposes.³⁴ We surmise the poem is addressed to Cao Pi for a couple of reasons. First, Cao Zhi's first line is the same as line 19 of Ying Yang's poem in the Lord's Feast group,³⁵ indicating it may have been composed on the same occasion. The title of this poem by Ying, "In Attendance at the Jianzhang Terrace Gathering of the General of the Gentlemen-of-the-Household for All Purposes" ("Shi wuguan zhonglang jiang Jianzhang tai ji shi" 侍五官中郎將建章臺集詩), makes it clear he means Cao Pi.³⁶ Second, Cao Zhi's poem may be a matching poem to Cao Pi's own "Written at the Lotus Pond" ("Furong chi zuo" 芙蓉池作).³⁷

Several scholars date Cao Zhi's "Lord's Feast" to 211, on the basis of Cao Pi's appointment to office.³⁸ But it has been correctly pointed out by Xu Gongchi 徐公持

Yicheng 陳義成, *Han Wei Liu chao yuefu yanjiu* 漢魏六朝樂府研究 (Taipei: Jiaxin shuini gongsi wenhua jijinhui, 1976) 129-30.

³³See the entry by A. J. M. Smith in Alex Preminger, ed., *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1974 enlarged ed.) 584.

³⁴See Li Shan's commentary (*Wen xuan* 20:12b). Lü Yanji 呂延濟 says, "The term *gong yan* means subjects attend a feast at the home of the lord. This feast was at a Ye palace. He feted with his elder brother Pi"; *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 20:368. Cao Pi was appointed to the office in Jian'an 16 (211); *San guo zhu* 1:34.

³⁵Ying Yang's poem is in *Wen xuan* 20:14a-15a. There are other similarities, too.

³⁶Jianzhang Terrace has been identified as "a tall terrace of the Jianzhang Palace outside the city wall of Chang'an and west of the Everlasting (Weiyang 未央) Palace"; see Obi Kōichi 小尾交一 and Hanabusa Hideki 花房英樹, trans., *Monzen* 文選, Zenshaku Kambun taikai, 26-32 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1974-1976) 3: 95. This is doubtful for the poem. The Jianzhang Palace was built on command of Emperor Wu to replace Cypress Beams (Bo liang 柏梁) Terrace, which was destroyed by fire on January 15, 104 B.C.; *Shi ji* 28:1402; Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia U P, 1961), 2: 66; *Han shu* 6:199; Homer H. Dubs, trans., *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 3 vols. (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1944-55) 2: 98-99; *Han shu* 25B:1244-45. As we have seen, the outing that occasioned Ying's poem some three hundred years later was probably in Ye.

³⁷*Wen xuan* 22:5b-6a. There is a translation by Ronald Miao in Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo, eds., *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana U P, 1975) 45.

As far as I know, the idea that the two are matching poems originated with Huang Jie 黃節 (1874–1935), *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 曹子建詩注 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957 rev. ed.) 1:3. Others who have adopted this idea include Itō Masafumi 伊藤正文, *Sō Shoku* 曹植 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1964) 28, and Yu Guangying 余冠英, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 曹操曹丕曹植詩選 (Hong Kong: Daguang chubanshe, 1976) 101.

³⁸Ding, *Cao ji quan ping* 218; Itō, *Sō shoku* 28, 207; Uchida Sennosuke 內田泉之助 and Ami Yūji 網祐次,

that there is no real foundation for that date.³⁹ Because of similarities among them, Xu thinks Liu Zhen's "Lord's Feast," Cao Zhi's poem by the same title, and Cao Pi's "Written at the Lotus Pond" were all done at the same time; and Liu, it will be remembered, died in 217.⁴⁰ At any rate, it seems reasonable to assume that Cao Zhi's poem was composed between 211 and 217.⁴¹

The question then arises as to whether or not all of the Jian'an Lord's Feast poems in *Wen xuan* were, along with Cao Pi's poem, written at the same time. I am prepared to accept the possibility that Cao Pi's "Written at the Lotus Pond," Cao Zhi's "Lord's Feast," Liu Zhen's "Lord's Feast," and Ying Yang's poem were written to commemorate the same affair. Some would go much further. Fang Zushen, for instance, thinks that in addition to the poems by Cao Zhi and Liu Zhen, Wang Can's "Lord's Feast," Ruan Yu's "Lord's Feast," and Chen Lin's two "Sightseeing" ("Youlan" 遊覽) poems and one "Feast" ("Yanhui" 宴會) poem all come from the same occasion and were all meant to match Cao Pi, too.⁴² But it does not seem likely that Wang Can's poem, at least, was written at the same time as Cao Zhi's.⁴³ Both Li Shan and Zhang Xian 張銑 say it was written on the occasion of a feast held by Cao Cao.⁴⁴ The apparently aestival imagery of Wang Can in his lines 1-4 ("A bright, summer sky sheds rich bounties,⁴⁵ / All plants erupt lush and luxuriant.⁴⁶ / A cool wind dispels the steaming heat, / Fresh

trans., *Monzen (shihen)* 文選 (詩篇), Shinshaku Kambun taikai, 14-15 (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1963-1964), I, 59. The last mistakenly converts Jian'an 16 to 221.

³⁹Xu Gongchi, "Cao Zhi shige de xiezuo niandai wenti" 曹植詩歌的寫作年代問題, *Wen shi* 文史 6 (June 1979): 156-57.

⁴⁰Liu's poem is in *Wen xuan* 20:13b-14a.

⁴¹One other opinion should be mentioned, that of Fang Zushen 方祖燊. Fang also sees 217, the year both Liu Zhen and Ying Yang died, as the latest possible date for Cao's poem. However, Fang brings the earliest date down to 214. According to Fang, the West Garden in Cao Zhi's line 3 and the Jianzhang Terrace of Ying's title were both constructed in that year. I have not been able to verify this information. See Fang Zushen, *Han shi yanjiu* 漢詩研究 (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1969 rpt.) 255, 257.

⁴²Fang, *Han shi yanjiu* 255-56. Wang Can's poem is in *Wen xuan* 20:13a-b. It is translated, discussed, and annotated by Ronald Miao in his *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry: The Life and Verse of Wang Ts'an* (A.D. 177-217) (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982) 179-82 and his dissertation, "A Critical Study of the Life and Poetry of Wang Chung-hsuan," diss., U of California, 1969, 167-70, 258-62. The Ruan Yu fragment may be seen in Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952), comp., *Quan San guo shi* 3:10b, in his *Quan Han San guo Jin Nanbei chao shi* 全漢三國晉南北朝詩 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, n.d. repro. of 1916 ed.). Chen's are in Ding, *Quan San guo shi* 3:5b-6a.

⁴³See also Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry* 220n.

⁴⁴*Wen xuan* 20:13b; *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 20:369.

⁴⁵What I have translated as "bright, summer sky" is *hao tian* 昊天. The term is explained by Li Shan with a quote from *Er ya*: "Summer constitutes a *hao tian*"; *Wen xuan* 20:13a. See Hao Yixing 郝懿行 (1757-1825, ed.), *Zuben Er ya Guo zhu yishu* 足本爾雅郭注義疏 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1972) B:4.1. Guo Pu's 郭璞 (276-324) commentary says that *hao tian* refers to the refulgency of the atmosphere. This explanation is rejected by Miao, who understands it to mean "the vastness of Heaven, both in a physical and cosmological sense," citing *Mao shi* 271 as an example of this usage; see Miao, "A Critical Study of the Life and Poetry of Wang Chung-hsuan" 259. The imagery of the poem seems to support Li Shan's interpretation, but I suspect the full import of the term encompasses both meanings.

In the present instance I think we may ignore those sources that say *hao tian* refers to the sky of spring. See *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 說文解字注 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1974 rpt.) 10B:17a-b; Tjan Tjoe Som, trans., *Po Hu T'ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1949-52) 2: 597.

⁴⁶*Weirui* 葳蕤 ("lush and luxuriant") appears in "When First Exiled" ("Chu fang" 初放), one of the "Seven Remonstrances" ("Qi jian" 七諫), of *Chu ci*; *Chu ci bu zhu* 13:3a. Wang Yi's commentary says, "Weirui is

clouds repulse the blazing sunlight"⁴⁷) does not seem to fit with the explicit references to autumn in Cao Zhi's lines 7 and 14. The date of Wang's poem, however, is about the same. It must have been written between 208, when he became associated with Cao Cao, and 217, the year of Wang's death.⁴⁸

Lord's Feast⁴⁹

The young lord honors and loves his guests;⁵⁰
The whole feast long he does not tire.⁵¹
In the clear night we tour West Garden;⁵²
Our flying canopies follow one another.

the appearance of luxuriance." Hong Xingzu's subcommentary says it is "the appearance of vegetation hanging down." *Weirui* also appears in Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 (179–117 B.C.) "Master Imaginary" ("Zixu fu" 子虛賦) (*Wen xuan* 7:21b). Yves Hérvouet comments:

"L'expression forme un impressif à rime. Le second élément est certainement significatif et donne le sens de végétation luxuriante; le premier caractère n'a pris de sens qu'à partir de l'expression totale. Je pense que c'est par dérivation que l'expression a servi à décrire ce qui tombe; "Yves Hérvouet, trans., *Le Chapitre 117 du Che-ki* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972) 40n.

⁴⁷On "blazing sunlight" (*yan hui* 炎暉) Li Shan says, "the south is fire and rules the summer. Fire by nature blazes upwards. It is the reason he refers to the summer sky as *yan hui*;" *Wen xuan* 20:13a.

⁴⁸Miao, *Early Medieval Chinese Poetry* 179.

⁴⁹"Gong yan 公宴;" see *Concordance* 4:35; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 5:5a; *Wen xuan* 20:12b; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:1-2; Gu Zhi 古直, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 曹子建詩箋 (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1976 rpt.) 1:1a-b; Yu, *Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 37, 100-101; Itō, *Sō Shoku* 27-29.

⁵⁰*Wen xuan* 20:12b has "honors and loves" (*jing ai* 敬愛) instead of the *ai jing* in *Concordance*.

⁵¹Huang Jie annotates this line with a *Hou Han shu* description of how Emperor Guangwu (reg. 25–57) worked every day from dawn till dusk and often half the night. When questioned about working so hard, the emperor replied that he delighted in it and that it was not something that fatigued him; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:1. See *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963) 1B:85. The *Hou Han shu* was compiled later than the writing of the poem and the resemblance between the poem and the passage stops at "fatigue" (*pi* 疲). What we may have here is Huang in his role as an erudite "Confucian pragmatic critic," exploring the moral implications of tireless devotion to public or private duty and seeing a parallel between the *Hou Han shu* treatment of Guangwu, the energetic founder of the Later Han, and Cao Zhi's line to his brother, the future first emperor of the Wei. On Huang's critical stance, see James J. Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1975) 114-16.

⁵²West Garden (Xi yuan 西園) is mentioned in line 2 of Cao Pi's "Written at the Lotus Pond." It must be the same as Bronze Bird Garden (Tong que yuan 銅爵園, 銅雀園) and it is so identified by Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:1 and others. Huang quotes Zhang Zai's 張載 (d. ca. 304) commentary to the "Wei du fu" 魏都賦 by Zuo Si 左思 (250?-305?): "West of Literary Glory (Wenchang) Palace is Bronze Bird Garden;" *Wen xuan* 6:10b. Fang Zushen says, without citing a source, that the garden was built in 214 (see note 41). We might assume a connection with the construction of Bronze Bird Terrace (Tong que tai 臺), but the terrace was built in 210; see *San guo zhi* 1:32.

Zhang Zai (*Wen xuan* 6:10b) says,

West of Bronze Bird Garden are the Three Terraces. In the center is Bronze Bird Terrace, with Golden Tiger Terrace to its south and Ice Well Terrace to its north. Bronze Bird Terrace has one hundred and one spaces, Golden Tiger one hundred and nine, and Ice Well one hundred forty-five, plus ice chambers. The Three Terraces all interconnect with the principal palace by raised galleries. . . . Bronze Bird Terrace was built in 210.

Zhang's description is quite similar to the slightly later one in the *Ye zhong ji* 2. By that time certain differences can be noted, due to modifications made by the rulers of the Later Zhao (319–51). The name of Golden Tiger was changed to Golden Phoenix, no doubt to avoid the name of the ruler, Shi Hu 石虎 (d. 349). See also *Wang shi he jiao Shui jing zhu* 10:7a-8a and Timoteus Pokora, "A Mobile Freezer in China in B.C. 99?" *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31 (1977): 331-32.

The bright moon purifies the clear scene; 5
 The constellations are scattered.
 Autumn thoroughwort blankets the long slopes;
 Vermillion blossoms cover the green pond.⁵³
 Submerged fish jump from clear ripples;
 Pretty birds sing from high limbs.⁵⁴ 10
 A prodigious gust strikes the cinnabar hubs,⁵⁵
 And the light carts shift with the wind.⁵⁶
 Buoyantly we indulge our wishes and feelings,
 May a thousand autumns always be this way.

This is not simply a more or less objective poem about the outing part of a feast. In addition, it reflects the poet's personal enjoyment of the occasion, and it serves a social function, expressing his respect for and gratitude to the host. This was expected, and all of the Jian'an Lord's Feast poems do it. In Cao Zhi's poem only the first two lines directly praise Cao Pi, attributing to him the admirable behavior of gracious and untiring devotion to his guests. The rest of the poem consists mainly of a description of the outing in West Garden. What we know about the garden suggests that at least some of what the poem describes was before the poet's eyes,⁵⁷ but he orders the reader's experience. The excellence of the scene works to reflect upon the host and reinforce the direct praise and implied gratitude of the first two lines. Something striking about this description is the repetition of the adjective *qing* ("clear," "fresh," "pure") three times. Now, *qing* is an extremely common word, and its repetition could be the result of extemporaneous composition. But Cao Zhi was a fine poet, and we have every reason to expect that he used this word three times because it best expressed some image or mood he wanted to convey. I think the idea was to imbue the evening's outing with purity and clarity for a eulogistic purpose, a use of *qing* not without literary precedent.⁵⁸

⁵³Li Shan says, "Red blossoms' (*zhu hua* 朱華) means the lotus"; *Wen xuan* 20:12b.

⁵⁴In Li Zhouhan's 李周翰 interpretation the fish and the birds are the speaker and the clear ripples and high limbs are the young lord; *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 20:368.

⁵⁵On "cinnabar hubs" (*dan gu* 丹轂), Li Shan quotes from Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 B.C.–A.D. 18) "Jie chao" 解嘲 (*Wen xuan* 45:6b). The line reads, in David Knechtges' translation, "You only want to vermilion my wheel hubs." Knechtges notes that "vermeil cinnabar" (*zhu dan* 朱丹) was "the color of the wheel hubs of high officials and nobility"; David R. Knechtges, *The Han Rhapsody: A Study of the Fu of Yang Hsiung* (53 B.C.–A.D. 18) (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1976) 98, 135. See also David R. Knechtges, trans., *The Han Shu Biography of Yang Xiong* (53 B.C.–A.D. 18) (Tempe: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State U, 1981) 47.

⁵⁶The carts were *nian* 輦, what Needham and Wang call the "shafted hand-cart," which were used primarily within the palaces in Han times. See Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1965) 4.2: 257-58.

⁵⁷See Liu Weichong 劉維崇, *Cao Zhi ping zhuan* 曹植評傳 (Taipei: Liming wenhua shiye gongsi, 1977) 28-30.

⁵⁸C. H. Wang has noted such a use of the word *qing* in two of the poems from the "Eulogies of Zhou" ("Zhou song" 周頌) section of the *Classic of Songs*. He thinks it is very important as an attribute of King Wen and says,

Poem 268 . . . uses the word *clear* to praise the ordinance, hence to eulogize the charisma of King Wen. . . . In Poem 266, furthermore, the temple is called the "Clear temple" 清廟, which represents the apotheosis originated in the very simple motivation of posterity to visualize and feel its glorious ancestor"; C. H. Wang, "The Countenance of Chou: *Shih Ching* 266-296," *The Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 7.2 (December 1974): 431.

The poem ends with a wish that such joys could last forever. This is also to the host's credit and is a kind of praise. But another meaning may be present. The acute awareness in Jian'an times of life's uncertainty and brevity has already been mentioned. This last line hints at a theme developed more fully in other feast poems, where the passage of time plays a major role. Here, the poet knows full well the good feeling cannot hold, but what is important is to depict the joys and express his enjoyment of the moment, both for himself and for his host. This concern with time is largely absent from the next piece, a rhapsody, in which the eulogistic element is more prominent.

Entertaining Guests⁵⁹

Stirred by the summer day's blazing sunlight,
 I wander in the fresh coolness of winding towers.⁶⁰
 I go with happy guests to join a sublime feast,
 Where cinnabar curtains hang brightly on every side.
 The bountiful foods of the inner kitchen are made; 5
 Alluring singing girls from Qi and Zheng perform.
 Writers spew their marvelous talk,
 Set flying light quills and complete compositions.
 We speak of the "pure winds" that blew in former times,⁶¹
 And coordinate the strands and mainstays of the worthies and sages. 10
 We delight in the sublime righteousness of our young lord;⁶²
 His virtue is as fragrantly perfumed as thoroughwort.
 He extends his humaneness and kindness to simple homes,
 And surpasses the Duke of Zhou's missed meals.⁶³

⁵⁹"Yu bin fu" 娛賓賦; *Concordance* 1:11-12; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 2:5a-b.

⁶⁰Lines 1-2 are not in the *Concordance* text. Zhu Xuzeng supplies them from *Chu xue ji* 初學記; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 2:5a. They do not appear with the rest of the rhapsody in Xu Jian 徐堅 (659–729) et al., comps., *Chu xue ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 14:349; however, they do appear at 10:240.

⁶¹"Pure winds" (*qing feng* 清風) here refers to moral qualities. Xue Zong's 薛綜 commentary to Zhang Heng's "Dong jing fu" 東京賦 says, "This wind of pure kindness is the same as natural virtue (*tian de* 天德)"; *Wen xuan* 3:15a.

⁶²"Young lord" (*gong zi* 公子) refers to Cao Pi; see Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 2:5a.

⁶³The *Shi ji* has the Duke of Zhou saying:

However, every time I wash my hair I must squeeze it out three times, and every time I eat I must spit out three mouthfuls to rise and be courteous to someone, for I still fear missing the worthy men of the empire; *Shi ji* 33:1518.

This information also appears in *Han shi wai zhuan* 韓詩外傳; see James R. Hightower, trans., *Han Shih Wai Chuan: Han Ying's Illustrations of the Didactic Applications of the Classic of Songs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U P, 1952) 114. Famous lines in a poem by Cao Cao also draw on the story. See Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 6. In addition, there is a *yuefu* poem which has the lines "The Duke of Zhou went down into simple homes,/Spit out his food with no time to eat,/Squeezed out his hair three times in one washing . . ." This *yuefu* is entitled "Junzi xing" 君子行, and it appears in *Concordance* 5:66-67, but its authorship is in doubt. For example, it is not in the Li Shan *Wen xuan*, but it is in the *liu chen* text and is called an anonymous *yuefu*; see *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:510-11. Ding Fubao also treats it as such. See Ding, *Quan Han shi* 4:67-68, in Ding, *Quan Han San guo Jin Nanbei chao shi*. See also Hans H. Frankel, "The Problem of Authenticity in the Works of Ts'ao Chih," *Essays in Commemoration of the Jubilee of the Fung Ping Shan Library* (1932-1982), ed. Chan Ping-leung et al. (Hong Kong: Fung Ping Shan Library, Hong Kong U, 1982) 194-95.

Yan Shigu glosses *bai wu* 白屋 as follows: "*Bai wu* refers to the commoners' use of floss grass (*bai mao* 白茅) to cover houses"; *Han shu* 78:3272, 99A:4059. However, Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123–1195) disagrees. He says Yan Shigu was wrong to say *bai wu* means a house covered with floss grass. For him, the term has

In this air of goodwill I forget my cares;
The fine wine is pure and the viands sweet.

15

This short rhapsody is a kind of literary thank-you note, perhaps written on the spot. The date of composition is certainly pre-220, and perhaps pre-217.⁶⁴ In accordance with its function, the *fu* includes a description of the feast and the obligatory good words about the host, in this case, again, probably Cao Pi. If Zhu Xuzeng's addition of the first two lines is correct, then it is an apt beginning. The poet/speaker journeys out of the heat of the day into the "fresh coolness" of the towers. We cannot say definitely that his escape from the heat into the shade was meant as an analogy to his being entertained by his brother, but that does not preclude our seeing the contribution of these two lines to the overall poem in these terms.

The feast section is composed of a short description of the pleasures of the feast and the activities of the guests. Cao Zhi used adaptations of line 5 more than once, and these will be mentioned when we take up the poem "Harp Song" ("Konghou yin" 箏篋引) below. Line 6 fits in with what will be said about lines 5-6 of the poem "For Ding Yi" ("Zeng Ding Yi" 贈丁廙); that is, that the use of place names in this way gives a sense of completeness to the kinds of music offered for the entertainment of the guests. As we might expect of such an affair, the writers present turn their hands to their craft and, in a line (8) that would do credit to any traditional Chinese biographer, "Set flying light quills and complete compositions."⁶⁵

Lines 9-10 provide a transition between the description of the feast and the praise of the host. But they are in themselves encomiastic, for in the very next line he is mentioned, as though there were a natural connection between talking about the ideal ages of the past and the kindness and virtue of Cao Pi. In lines 13-14 he is even compared to the culture hero the Duke of Zhou. The closing lines combine the notions of the fineness of the banquet and the goodness of the host. It is just because he is so considerate and such a moral host that the poet is swept along by his influence and is able to forget his cares and fully enjoy the good food and drink.

A banquet with Cao Pi was also the occasion for the next piece. It can be dated in only a general way. Ding Yan thinks it was written in 217 (Jian'an 22), because that was when Cao Pi was made heir apparent.⁶⁶ Another writer cautiously states only that it predates Cao Pi's rise to emperor in 220.⁶⁷ Xu Gongchi, on the other hand, argues that the titles of some of Cao Zhi's works were given to them after the fact. Xu believes that since Cao Pi is called "young lord" in the poem, it must have been written before

to do with old sumptuary regulations which provided that an official who had not reached a certain level could not use ornamentation to cover up the basic materials of his house. Such a house was a *bai wu*, a plain house. See Cheng Dachang, *Yan fan lu* 演繁露 6:12a-b, *Xuejin taoyuan* 學津討原, comp. Zhang Haipeng 張海鵬 (1755-1816), *Baibu congshu jicheng chubian*. See also Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty* 3: 171n.

⁶⁴Li Chendong 李辰冬 puts it before Cao Pi became emperor, on the basis of its use of the term "young lord" in line 11, but that might also place it before Cao Pi's appointment to the apparenacy. See Li Chendong, "Cao Zhi de zuopin fenqi" 曹植的作品分期, in Li Chendong, *Wenxue yanjiu xin tujing* 文學研究新途徑 (Taipei: Qide chuban she, 1972), 56-57. Li's piece was originally published in *Dalu zazhi* 15 (August 31, 1957): 9-14.

⁶⁵On speed of composition, see Hans H. Frankel, "T'ang Literati: A Composite Biography," *Confucian Personalities*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1969 rpt.) 73.

⁶⁶Ding, *Cao ji quan ping* 219. Itō (*Sō Shoku* 208) also places it in 217, but adds a question mark.

⁶⁷Li, "Cao Zhi de zuopin fenqi" 57.

he became heir apparent, and the title added later. This places it in the same time frame as “Lord’s Feast.”⁶⁸

Seated in Attendance on the Heir Apparent⁶⁹

The white sun lights the blue sky,⁷⁰
 A timely rain has settled the flying dust.
 With chill ice we escape the scorching sun,
 And a cool breeze ruffles our bodies.
 Clear sweet wine fills bronze goblets, 5
 And dishes of viands are spread all about.
 Players from Qi present rare music;
 The singers come from western Qin.⁷¹
 Graceful is our young lord,
 His nimble wit as sudden as a spirit. 10

The seventeenth-century scholar Zhu Jiazheng 朱嘉徵 (1602–1684) understood this piece as a veiled criticism, but that does not seem a very useful approach.⁷² It, too, is a straightforward example of the eulogistic symposium poem, beginning in a description of the feast and ending in praise of the host. The setting of the poem is a hot, dusty day, but fortunately for the assembled company, rain has fallen to settle the dust, the host has thoughtfully provided ice, and a comforting breeze kicks up (lines 1-4). This opening reminds us somewhat of the first two lines of “Entertaining Guests.” That is, just as in the rhapsody, the speaker’s escape from the heat amid tall towers perhaps is symbolic of being entertained by the host, so the arrival of the “timely rain” and the “cool breeze” in the present poem may perform the same function. Thus, the opening lines contribute to the eulogistic aspect of the poem. As is common in these pieces, the closing lines directly praise Cao Pi. On the use of the food and music imagery of lines 6-8, see the discussions below of “Famous Towns” (“Ming du pian” 名都篇) and “For Ding Yi.”

So far we have seen two five-word line poems (“Lord’s Feast” and “Seated in Attendance on the Heir Apparent”) and one *fu* (“Entertaining Guests”) in *Sao*-style prosody. The following piece was written on the occasion of a court ceremony and the

⁶⁸Xu, “Cao Zhi shige de xiezuo niandai wenti” 157.

⁶⁹“Shi taizi zuo” 侍太子坐; see *Concordance* 4:35; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 5:5a-b; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:2-3; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 1:1b.

⁷⁰I do not follow the emendation of *qing chun* 青春 (“green spring”) for *qing tian* 青天 (“blue sky”) suggested in *Concordance* 4:35. See also Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:2 and Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 5:5a. Huang seems to believe *chun* is the correct reading partly because of the opening line of the “Great Summons” (“Da zhao” 大招), which he quotes in his commentary. It contains both *bai ri* 白日 (“white sun”) and *qing chun*; See *Chu ci bu zhu* 10:1b and Hawkes, *Ch’u Tz’u* 109. But the scene depicted in the poem seems more likely to be set in summer. Huang also believed this, which meant he had to explain the occurrence of *chun*. He did so in a rather forced way by saying, “When the sun comes out after a rain, it is lovely like spring,” and went on to add that because the palace of an heir apparent was called both Green Palace (Qing gong 青宮) and Spring Palace (Chun gong 春宮), “green spring” is some kind of metaphor for the heir apparent.

⁷¹Qi 齊 and Qin 秦, in the east and west of northern China, often appear in connection with music. For instance, Bao Zhao’s 鮑照 (ca. 412–66) “Wu cheng fu” 蕪城賦, a rhapsody lamenting the destruction of Guangling 廣陵, mentions “the sounds of Wu and Cai, Qi and Qin” no longer heard there; see *Wen xuan* 11:12b. Li Shan points out in his commentary to Bao Zhao’s passage that the bibliographical treatise of the *Han shu* lists songs from Qi and Qin. See *Han shu* 30:1754.

⁷²Quoted in Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:3.

feast that was part of that ceremony. Perhaps because of the formal nature of the affair, "New Year's Audience" is written in the more archaic four-word line. It was written for the court audience and subsequent feast that occurred on the lunar New Year. Derk Bodde writes, "The whole ceremony was political and social in its purpose: to reinforce at the beginning of each year the ties of loyalty on the one hand and benevolence on the other between the emperor and his subjects, and to symbolize his position at the center of the civilized universe."⁷³ It isn't clear just when this particular poem was written, although the suggested dates all put it later than the poems we have considered thus far: Huangchu 5 or 6 (224 or 225), or Taihe 6 (232), with the further possibilities Huangchu 2 or 7 (221 or 226).⁷⁴

New Year's Audience⁷⁵

At the year's beginning, prime blessings!
 The lucky day spells nothing but good,
 So we hold a fine gathering,
 And feast in this lofty hall.
 The high and low sit by rank; 5
 They are elegant and refined.
 Their upper and lower garments are fresh and clean;
 The zigzag and meander patterns are black and yellow.⁷⁶
 Pure wine fills their cups;⁷⁷
 The central seats dart forth light.⁷⁸ 10
 Rare delicacies are heaped pell-mell;
 They fill and overflow round and square dishes.
 Once the mouth organs and chimes are arranged,
 The small and large zithers are all displayed.
 The sad songs have a shrill sound;⁷⁹ 15

⁷³Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China: New Year and Other Annual Observances During the Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.-A.D. 220* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1975) 139.

⁷⁴See Deng Yongkang 鄧永康, *Wei Cao Zijian xiansheng Zhi nianpu* 魏曹子建先生植年譜 (Taipei: Shangwu Yinshu guan, 1981) 44-45; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 5:6b; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:5-6; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 2:17b. Deng's work was first published in three parts under the title "Cao Zijian nianpu xinbian" 曹子建年譜新編 in *Dalu zazhi* 34.1 (January 15, 1967): 13-20, 34.2 (January 31, 1967): 26-32, 34.3 (February 15, 1967): 30-32.

⁷⁵*Concordance* 4:35-36; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 5.6b-7a; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:5-7; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 2:17b-18a.

⁷⁶"Zigzag and meander patterns" is *fu fu* 黼黻. These two kinds of two color patterns used along the borders of garments. The former, often described as the graphs 己 or 弓 placed back-to-back in series, is the more angular of the two. The latter was a kind of intertwined pattern, sometimes made up of S-shapes. See also Knechtges, *Wen xuan* 1: 86n.

⁷⁷The wine referred to here is *xu* 醑 (or 醕), a wine that has had the dregs removed. See *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 11A:2.34a, 14B.40b. Cf. *Mao shi* 165/6.

⁷⁸The meaning of this line is open to different interpretations. Huang Jie (*Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:7) annotates it with a line from the "Zhao hun" 招魂 poem of *Chu ci*, in which the words *teng guang* 騰光 are used to describe the eyes of beautiful women. In Hawkes' translation this line reads, "Mothlike eyebrows and lustrous eyes that dart out gleams of brightness"; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 106 (my emphasis). See *Chu ci bu zhu* 9:8a. It may be that Cao Zhi had the eyes of the emperor or feasters in mind when he wrote this line.

⁷⁹"Shrill sound" (*li xiang* 厲響) also appears in Cao Zhi's "Seven Openings" ("Qi qi" 七啟); *Concordance* 8:138. Liu Liang glosses that occurrence of *li xiang* as *sheng* 盛, which might be rendered as "strong" or "full"; see *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 34:647.

We savor and chew their pure *shang* notes.⁸⁰
 Looking down, we see patterned railings;⁸¹
 Looking up, we observe floriate rafters.
 We want to preserve all these good things;
 A thousand years to be a normal span.
 Our joyous laughter is full of delight;
 Our happiness is not ended!
 The august house is glorious and noble;
 Long life without end!⁸²

20

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this poem is the way the four-word line prosodic form is employed to reinforce the content to convey the impression of a more formal gathering than we see in other feast poems. Although the refreshments, music, and setting are all very fine (lines 11-18), and the participants are undoubtedly enjoying themselves (lines 19-22), there is no suspicion that this is a boisterous, or even very relaxed, affair. The description of the guests in lines 5-8 has a decorous and ceremonial flavor that precludes the kind of free and open atmosphere we see in certain other of Cao Zhi's feast poems. It contrasts markedly, for example, with "I Am Unfortunate" ("Qie bo ming" 妾薄命), below. Considering the nature of the occasion, the entire poem is certainly meant to be eulogistic. The setting described externally symbolizes the emperor's virtue and power. This facet of the poem is clearest in lines 19-20, in which the poet/speaker expresses the desire to prolong the joys of the moment. At the same time, although there is some conventionality in this kind of expression, these lines may imply a certain sensitivity to the uncertainties of the future, in the manner of the last line of "Lord's Feast."

If the eulogistic symposium poems exhibit a certain conventionality of structure and content, the poet had somewhat more leeway in those symposium poems in which the eulogistic element is absent. For this reason, they cannot be as readily categorized.

For Ding Yi⁸³

Fine guests cram between the wall's watchtowers,
 And bountiful food emerges from inner kitchens,
 While myself and others
 Privately feast in this corner of the city-wall.⁸⁴
 Zithers from Qin play western airs;

5

⁸⁰In his commentary to Zhang Heng's "Dong jing fu" Xue Zong says that *qing shang* 清商 ("pure *shang* notes") refers to licentious music of the old state of Zheng; see *Wen xuan* 2:27a. But the poet's use of the *shang* note in this line is a way of reinforcing the melancholy nature of the music mentioned in the line above, for in Chinese correlative thinking *shang* was the note of autumn and of sadness.

⁸¹"Patterned railings" (*wen xuan* 文軒) also appears in "Seven openings" (*Concordance* 8:136). Li Shan explains it thus: "Wen means beautifully decorated; xuan are the palace pillars"; *Wen xuan* 34:21b.

⁸²*Concordance* 4:36.4-5 notes that there are the variant readings *shou ruo Dong wang* 壽若東王 ("life as long as the Eastern King") and *shou ruo Dong huang* 皇 ("life as long as the Eastern Sovereign)." On Dong wang or Dong huang see note 7.

⁸³"Zeng Ding Yi" 贈丁虞; see *Concordance* 4:45; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 5:21a; *Wen xuan* 24:7b-8a; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:44-45; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 1:7a-b; Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 45, 115-16; Ito, *So Shoku* 48-50.

⁸⁴Cf. Zheng Xuan's commentary to the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou li* 周禮), where he explains *cheng yu* 城隅 as "referring to a corner *fousi* 浮思." In his subcommentary Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (fl. 627–56) says "a *fousi* was a small tower"; *Zhou li yishu* 義疏 41:16b-17a, SPPY.

Large zithers from Qi raise an eastern song.⁸⁵
 When the viands come, they don't go back empty,
 But when the cups arrive, they return without a drop.
 Would I act familiar with strangers?
 My comrades and friends are here with me. 10
 Our great country has many good, talented men
 Just as the sea produces bright pearls.
 The lordly man's morality is fine and well-furnished,
 But the petty man's virtue has no store.
 By amassing good deeds one has blessings to spare,⁸⁶ 15
 And changes in fortune can be awaited any time.
 Broadly affirm the great principles;⁸⁷
 Conventional people are too punctilious.⁸⁸
 The lordly man comprehends the great way,
 Has no desire to be a conventional pedant.⁸⁹ 20

Although this poem begins as an almost prototypical feast poem, it soon devolves into a statement of the poet's values, in the form of advice and encouragement to Ding Yi. The description in the first part contains parallels to other poems by Cao Zhi. If line 2 sounds familiar, it is because it is very similar to line 5 of "Entertaining Guests" above, and lines 5-6 contain a kind of trope often seen in feast descriptions. Cao there employs the eastern and western place names Qi and Qin and the different music associated with those places to show the perfection of the banquet scene. Nothing has been left out. The feast embodies all that one could ask. This technique is not at all unusual in Chinese poetry, nor is its use in the Jian'an limited to Cao Zhi.⁹⁰ We have

⁸⁵Lu Yanji says, "Girls from Qin were good at the *zheng* 箏 ("zither"), and Qin is in the west, so it says 'western airs.' Girls from Qi were good at playing the *se* 瑟 (a large zither), and Qi is in the east, so it says 'eastern song' (*dong ou* 東謳)"; *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:514. *Shuo wen* defines *ou* as a Qi song; *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 3A:18a. See also Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 1: 68n. Similarly, Zhang Xian says, "The people of Qin were good at playing the *zheng*, and the people of Qi were good at playing the *se*"; *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:514. *Zhan guo ce* 8:337 contains a persuasion attributed to Su Qin 蘇秦 (d. 317 B.C.) that has the passage: "Linzi, the capital of Qi, is very wealthy and rich. Among its people there are none who do not blow the *yu* 芋, strum the *se*, strike the *zhu* 筑, pluck the *qin* 琴, fight cocks, race dogs, play *liubo* and kickball (*taju* 蹋鞠)."

⁸⁶For the origin of this familiar expression see the similar passage in the "Wen yan" 文言 wing of the *Classic of Changes*, the section dealing with the hexagram Kun 坤 (Earth); *Zhou yi yinde* 周易引得, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement no. 10 (Peiping: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1935) 4. See also Richard Wilhelm, trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes, Bollingen Series 19 (Princeton: Princeton U P, 3rd ed., 1967) 393.

⁸⁷As Huang Jie points out (*Cao Zijian shi zhu* 1:45), *taodang* 滔蕩 appears in *Chu ci*, where Wang Yi glosses it as "the appearance of vastness"; see *Chu ci bu zhu* 16:14a. Li Shan (*Wen xuan* 24.8a) quotes *Huainan zi* 淮南子 (which is speaking of the *zhen ren* 真人, the Perfected One): "He makes his spirit vast without losing its fullness." See *Huainan zi* 7:6b, SPPY. Cf. Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 1:7b; *Huainan zi* 8:11a.

⁸⁸Li Shan (*Wen xuan* 24:8a) quotes *Huainan zi*: "The reason why one cannot talk about the perfect way with obscure scholars is because they are constrained by convention and tied down by education." See *Huainan zi* 1:7a.

⁸⁹On "conventional pedant" (*shi ru* 世儒), see Wang Chong 王充 (27-97), *Lun heng* 論衡 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1974) 28.432-33; Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun-Heng* (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962 rpt.) 2: 321-32. Wang Chong says that the conventional scholar who expounds the Classics really can't compare, despite what many people think, with the literary scholar (*wen ru* 文儒) who writes his own works.

⁹⁰Cao Pi, for instance, uses this trope in his "Bronze Bird Garden": "Performers from Qi do an eastern dance;/Qin zithers play western music"; see Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641) et. al., comps., *Yiwen leiju* (*fu leishu shi zhong suoyin*) 藝文類聚 (附類書十種索引) (Taipei: Wenguan chubanshe, 1974) 28:500.

already seen it in lines 7-8 of “Seated in Attendance on the Heir Apparent” (“Players from Qi present rare music;/The singers come from western Qin”). It appears again in “Harp Song,” lines 5-6 (“Qin zithers how impassioned/Large Qi zithers mellow and soft”), and in line 6 of “Entertaining Guests” (“Beautiful singing girls from Qi and Zheng perform”).

Where this poem differs from some poems set against the background of the feast is in the contrast it presents between palace feasts and the private feasting of friends. Since this is an occasional poem, we should note here that while the Ding brothers were friends and supporters of Cao Zhi for the heir apparenacy, there was no love lost between them and Cao Pi, who became heir apparent and emperor. In fact, when Cao Pi established the Wei in 220, the Dings were put to death.⁹¹ The privacy of the symposium commemorated in the poem reflects the emphasis Cao Zhi places on friendship (see lines 9-10). This same emphasis is seen in “Harp Song,” lines 13-14 (“Old ties may not be forgotten:/To neglect them in the end is what friendship faults”). But considering the last half of the poem, it may also be that Cao Zhi just doesn't care for the polite affectations involved in mixing with the general crowd. The second half of the poem is addressed to Ding Yi, but it may also be read as a poetical statement of a part of Cao Zhi's value system. It is an exhortation towards a certain combination of behavior and character—that of the *junzi*. There is also an undertone of the need for patience. Cao's writings abound in references to his desire to perform lasting deeds of merit and sometimes speak of his frustration at not being given a chance to do so. We can perhaps surmise a like ambition on the part of Ding Yi. Lines 11-12 have the particular implication that Ding Yi is one of the “bright pearls” of his time. The rest of the poem is given over to a description of the attributes of the *junzi*, which men like Ding and Cao himself should embrace.

The *junzi*-petty man dichotomy posed in the poem is common in Chinese philosophy and literature. Here, Cao Zhi points to the *junzi* (“lordly man”) as a man with a large store of principle, which he can draw on in bad times, in contradistinction to the small or lowly man, who has barely enough virtue to get by in the best of times (lines 13-14). Line 15, a modification of a line from one of the “Wings” of the *Classic of Change*, is still seen and heard today. Taken together with line 16, the meaning is that if one has been given to good works, then one can withstand the fluctuations of fortune with equanimity. The *junzi*, of course, will comport himself in a way that will ensure the accumulation of good. However, Cao Zhi would not have Ding Yi or his other readers confuse being a *junzi* with being a Ru-ist pedant.

Some of the most important Confucian commentators on the *Classics* lived in the later Han, but at the same time Confucianism seems to have been plagued by an “empty formalism.”⁹² This is what Cao Zhi is warning against in his last four lines. He advocates holding to major principles without letting oneself be bound by minor rules of behavior (lines 17-18), apparently a common fault. Chen Yibai 陳一白 has said that Cao Zhi seems to have believed that the *junzi* need not be tied down by the formal aspects of

⁹¹*San guo zhi* 19:561-62 and the *Wei lue* passages in Pei's commentary. See also Hugh Dunn, *Ts'ao Chih: The Life of a Princely Chinese Poet* (Taipei: China News, preface dated 1970) 70-71; Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 109; and Rafe de Crespigny, *The Records of the Three Kingdoms* (Canberra: Australian National University Centre of Oriental Studies, 1970) 12.

⁹²Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1956) 2: 30.

etiquette. One might be a *junzi* by having the mind (*xin* 心) of a *junzi*; but if one had the mind of a lowly man, then all the formalities in the world would not make one a *junzi*.⁹³ What is important for the *junzi* is to understand the Way, and this is something quite different from being a run-of-the-mill Confucian scholar (lines 19-20). The echo of Wang Chong in the last line is unmistakable. Wang Chong's biting scepticism is well known, and the fact that his thought contains a good deal that was Confucian did not save Confucian scholars from attack. In addition to what is mentioned in note 89, Wang Chong also criticized the word-for-word parroting of the words of former teachers by Confucian scholars. He says, "Although they train more than one hundred disciples and are Erudites or Literary Scholars, they still belong to the category of postmen and doormen."⁹⁴

We can actually trace a line from Wang Chong to Cao Zhi. Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) was one of the most influential learned men of Later Han, and he thought highly of Wang Chong's work.⁹⁵ Cai, in turn, was acquainted with the teenaged Wang Can, whom he considered very talented—so talented that he was moved to turn his library over to the youngster.⁹⁶ There existed, therefore, a channel for influence from Wang Chong through Cai Yong to Cao Zhi by way of his associate Wang Can. It matters little if this filiation is tenuous, because there was something in the age that made it natural for Cao Zhi to exhibit a certain disparagement of the average Confucian pedant; something more than the antipathy that sometimes exists between creative writers and scholars. In Cao Zhi's time it was abundantly clear that the Confucian scholars of the age had no power to deal with the recurrent factionalism, governmental breakdown, and war that dogged the land. Cao Zhi was not alone in these views. (Ronald Miao has suggested that disillusionment with classical exegesis is one of the ideas that informs Cao Pi's "Lun wen."⁹⁷) This general attitude of the period toward the ineffectiveness of current Confucian pursuits in dealing with real problems is also seen in the governmental sphere. It led Cao Cao to go against Han tradition by calling for the recruitment of officials on the basis of practical ability in certain of his orders.⁹⁸ The *junzi* and the Ru-ist are often thought of as being closely related concepts. "For Ding Yi" shows that Cao Zhi labored under no such misconception.⁹⁹

Near the beginning of this discussion it was suggested that there is a connection between the troubled nature of the last years of the Han, the penchant of the Jian'an poets for convivial gatherings, and the feast poems. Some of the poems that incorporate the feast have a *carpe diem* element that seems sparked by acute sensitivity to the impermanence of happiness and of life itself.

⁹³Chen Yibai, *Cao Zijian shi yanjiu* 曹子建詩研究 (Hong Kong: Dafang tushu gongsi, n.d.) 37-38.

⁹⁴Wang, *Lun heng* 27:419. The *Hou Han shu* acknowledges Wang's anti-pedantic views: "He considered that while common scholars stuck to the texts, they lost much of the truth of them"; *Hou Han shu* 49:1629. See also Forke, *Lun-Heng* 2: 143; Miao, "Literary Criticism at the End of the Eastern Han" 1023; and Liu, *Han Wei zhi ji wenxue de xingshi yu neirong* 7-8.

⁹⁵See Li Xian's 李憲 (651-684) commentary quoting Yuan Shansong's 袁山松 (d. 401) History of the Later Han; *Hou Han shu* 49:1629.

⁹⁶*San guo zhi* 21:597.

⁹⁷Miao, "Literary Criticism at the End of the Eastern Han" 1019.

⁹⁸Li, *Cao shi fu zi he Jian'an wenxue* 16; Miao, "Literary Criticism at the end of the Eastern Han" 1024; Paul Kroll, "Portraits of Ts'ao Ts'ao: Literary Studies on the Man and the Myth," diss., U of Michigan, 1976, 17-20, 51-53.

⁹⁹This distinction is reminiscent of *Lun yu* 6:13: "The Master said to Tzu-hsia, 'Be a gentleman *ju*, not a petty *ju* '"; D. C. Lau, trans., *The Analects* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1979) 83.

Famous Towns¹⁰⁰

The famous towns have many bewitching girls;¹⁰¹
 Luo capital produces its young men.
 Their precious swords are worth a thousand in gold;
 The clothes they wear are beautiful and fresh.
 They fight cocks on the eastern suburb road; 5
 They ride their horses between tall catalpas.
 Before I've galloped half the way,
 A brace of rabbits crosses in front.
 I grasp my bow, nock a singing arrowhead,¹⁰²
 And give a long chase up the southern hills.¹⁰³ 10
 I draw to the left and shoot to the right;
 A single shot impales both the game.
 With other tricks yet to be shown,
 I raise my hands and hit a winging kite head on.
 The onlookers all praise my skill, 15
 And the archers all attribute it to my fine technique.
 We return and feast at Pingle Lookout;¹⁰⁴
 The excellent wine is ten thousand a ladle.
 They mince carp, stew roe-bearing globe fish,¹⁰⁵
 Jelly turtle, broil bear paws.¹⁰⁶ 20

¹⁰⁰"Ming du pian" 名都篇; See *Concordance* 5:61-62; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:5b-6b; *Wen xuan* 27:22b-23a; Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (twelfth century), comp., *Yuefu shi ji* 樂府詩集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shufu, 1979) 63:912; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:71-73; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 3:4a-5a; Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 30-31, 92-93; Itō, *Sō Shoku* 134-38.

¹⁰¹Cf. Zhang Xian, who says "famous towns" (*ming du*) refers to cities such as Handan 邯鄲, northwest of modern Cheng'an 咸安 County in Hebei, and Linzi 臨淄; see *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:514. This explanation is repeated in Guo, *Yuefu shiji* 63:912. Zhang probably had in mind the five famous royal cities (*wang du* 王都) of the Han.

¹⁰²Zhang Xian (*Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:514) says *jie* 捷 means "draw" (*yin* 引), but Karlgren notes that *jie* is used as a loan word for *cha* 插 ("insert"). See Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1972 rpt.) no. 636b.

¹⁰³The southern hills mentioned here may be Da shi shan 大石山, located south of Luoyang. See Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:485-86.

¹⁰⁴Emperor Ming (Ming di 明帝; reg. 58–75) had the Pingle 平樂 Lookout erected outside the western gate of Luoyang. See *San fu huang tu* 三輔黃圖 5:8a-b, SPTK. See also Knechtges, *Wen xuan* 1: 260.

¹⁰⁵*Xia* 鰕 is another name for the *fen* 魴, a fish that is probably the same as the *ban yu* 斑魚. See Hao Yixing 郝懿行 (1757–1825), ed. *Zuben Erya Guo zhu yishu* 足本爾雅郭注義疏 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1972) C:4:7b and Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 說文解字注, comm. Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735–1815) (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1974 rpt.) 11B:27b-28a, 24b. Bernard Read, *Chinese Materia Medica: Fish Drugs* (Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1977 rpt.) No. 175, identifies it as the globe fish. Note that Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:486, says that *tai* 胎 should be read *tai* 鮐. In that case, "roe-bearing globe fish" becomes "chub mackerel and globe fish."

¹⁰⁶There is a variant here. *Concordance* 5:62 and *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:514 have 炮 (𧄸) 鱸炙熊蹯, but *Wen xuan* 27:23a, Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:6b, and Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:71 all read *han* 寒 instead of *bao* 炮. *Han* occurs in a similar context in "Seven Openings" (*Concordance* 8:134 and *Wen xuan* 34:16a). It belongs to the category of cooking called *jiang* 醬, or things made into a paste or jelly. See Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:72; *Wen xuan* 34:16a; Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:486. Ding Yan's authority for the reading *bao* is *Mao shi* 177/6: 魚鱸膾. But Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488–1559) rejects this reading. He writes:

That the *wu chen* text recklessly changes it to *bao* is probably because *bao bie kuai li* is an old line from the *Classic of Songs*, and, among those of shallow learning, who would not take *han* as an error

I call my companions and shout for my partners and mates;
 We sit in a row and fill the long mat.
 Then, we fly back and forth playing kickball and pegs,¹⁰⁷
 Nimble and agile in innumerable ways.
 The white sun speeds to the southwest;
 Light and shadow cannot be held back.
 Scattering like clouds, we return to the city;
 In the clear dawn we will come again.

25

“Famous Towns” is not a datable poem, although Li Chendong judges from its mood that it must have been written during the happier early years of Cao Zhi’s life.¹⁰⁸ Whether or not this is true, I gather from it that Li’s opinion of the poem is similar to mine; that is, that the work has no hidden meaning. Others have held different views. One such is that the poem criticizes a tendency toward the enjoyment of sport and play and a lack of patriotism. This was first suggested by Zhang Xian, was repeated in Song times, and still appears from time to time.¹⁰⁹ Another view is that the poem is allegorical and expresses Cao’s bitterness at being denied the opportunity to perform meritorious service for his country. This idea dates from Ming times.¹¹⁰ But there doesn’t seem to be any reason to read the poem in either of these two ways. Ignoring these interpretations, the ballad becomes a lively depiction of a few hours in the lives of young men of the leisured class. The narrative moves quickly, from the description of the young men and their pursuits, through the archery exploits of one of them, and on to an impromptu feast and the games that follow it. But at the end the speaker feels time’s tug at his sleeve. In the last four lines of the poem we sense the inexorable passage of time and feel something of desperation, as if the youths had heard an admonition to “Live!” and were determined to pack their days with the only kind of living they knew. It is a somewhat less direct expression of the same idea that infuses the last stanza of Sir Walter Scott’s “Hunting Song”:

Louder, louder chant the lay,
 Waken, lords and ladies gay!
 Tell them youth and mirth and glee
 Run a course as well as we;
 Time, stern huntsman! who can balk,

and follow the reading *bao*. They don’t stop to think that the written forms of *han* and *bao* are quite different and that the sounds are not the same. How can one make such an error? Yang Shen, *Dan qian yu lu* 丹鉛餘錄 14:4b-5a, *Siku quanshu zhen ben* 四庫全書 珍本.

I have followed the reading *han* on the basis of its occurrence in “Seven Openings.”

¹⁰⁷Ju 鞠 (“kickball”) was a game played by kicking a wool-filled leather ball back and forth over a net. See Zhuang Shen 莊申, “Zhongguo gudai de tiyu yundong” 中國古代的體育運動, *Dalu zazhi* 7.2(1953): 4-6. See also Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yu* 363.

Rang 壤 (“pegs”) was a game using two pieces of wood, broad on one end and pointed on the other. Each piece was one *chi* four *cun* long, and three *cun* wide. One was put at a distance of thirty to forty paces and the object was to hit it with the other piece. See Yu, *Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan*, 92-93; Beijing daxue Zhongguo wenxue shi jiaoyan shi 北京大學中國文學史教研室, eds., *Wei Jin Nanbei chao wenxue shi cankao ziliao* 魏晉南北朝文學史參考資料 (Hong Kong: Hongzhi shudian, n.d. rpt.) 87.

¹⁰⁸Li, “Cao Zhi de zuopin fenqi” 58.

¹⁰⁹See *Liu chen zhu Wen xuan* 27:514; Guo, *Yuefu shi ji* 63:912; *Wei Jin Nanbei chao wenxue shi cankao ziliao* 85.

¹¹⁰See *Wei Jin Nanbei chao wenxue shi cankao ziliao* 85.

Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk;
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay!

Certain lines of “Famous Towns” are quite similar to lines used elsewhere in Cao’s corpus. Food imagery can convey many meanings. In Keats (“She found me roots of relish sweet,/And honey wild, and manna dew”) they may represent consumptive death masquerading as true love. In the present poem, as in the case of other of the symposium poems, they lend an atmosphere of perfection and luxury (lines 19-20). These lines are comparable to others in Cao Zhi’s “Seven Openings,” lines where the piling up of food images takes on an almost hypnotic effect:

Jellied turtle that nests on fragrant lotuses,
Minced flying fish from the western seas,
Soup of underwater alligator from east of the Jiang,
Stewed calling quail from south of the Han.¹¹¹

The reference to the impossibility of stopping time in lines 25-26 of “Famous Towns” calls to mind line 18 (“And time races on its westward course”) in the next feast poem, “Harp Song.” We also saw this same idea toward the end of the section of Cao Zhi’s letter to Wu Zhi translated above. “Harp Song,” like “Famous Towns,” is concerned at its end (lines 17-24) with the passage of time and with mutability. The recognition of the bitter truth there, and its acceptance in line 24 (“Knowing fate, what more is there to worry about?”), seems a calmer and more carefully reasoned response than the day after day pursuit of action by the youths of “Famous Towns.” But in fact they are both reactions to the ugly shadow that occasionally haunted the minds of Jian’an poets, even when they wrote about festivities. Here we can see Cao Zhi’s sense of the fitting. In “Famous Towns,” a poem about rather rowdy young men, he eschews the ruminative and philosophical statements that are entirely appropriate to the more sedate “Harp Song.”

Harp Song¹¹²

We set out wine atop a lofty basilica,
And close friends rove there with me.

¹¹¹Concordance 8:134.8-9.

¹¹²“Konghou yin 箜篌引”; see Concordance 5:55-56; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:1b-2a; Wen xuan 27:20b-21a; Guo, *Yuefu shi ji* 39:571; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:60-62; Gu, *Cao Zijian shu jian* 3:1a-2a; Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 23, 77-78; Itō, *Sō Shoku* 123-26.

In *Yuefu shi ji* the poem follows the Jin dynasty musicians’ version under the title of that version, “Yetian huangque xing si jie” 野田黄雀行四解. See also *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 21:620.

A story attaches to the title “Harp Song.” According to Cui Bao’s *Gu jin zhu* 古今注, the authenticity of which is doubtful,

“Konghou yin” was composed by Liyu 麗玉, the wife of a Chaoxian ford guard named Huoli Zigao 霍里子高. One morning Zigao got up, and pushing off his boat, rowed. There was a white-haired old eccentric, with disheveled hair and carrying a wine jug, who began crossing against the current. His wife followed, yelling to stop him, but was not in time, so he fell into the river and drowned. Thereupon, she took up her *konghou* and played it, composing the song “Sir, Do Not Cross the River.” Its sound was extremely sorrowful. When the tune came to an end, she threw herself into the river and died. Huoli Zigao returned and told his wife Liyu about her music. Liyu grieved for her and, drawing up the *Konghou*, she composed the music. Everyone who heard it wept in sorrow. Liyu taught the music to her neighbor Lirong. Naming it “Konghou yin” comes from this. Cui Bao, *Gu jin*

The inner kitchen prepares bountiful food,
 Boils lamb, cuts up a fat ox.
 Qin zithers how impassioned! 5
 Large Qi zithers mellow and soft.
 Yang'e performs a wondrous dance,¹¹³
 From Luo capital come famous songs.
 We cheerfully drink more than three cups,¹¹⁴
 Loosen our belts and empty the numerous delicacies. 10
 The host says, "A gift of a thousand in gold!"¹¹⁵
 The guests offer a "Long life!" toast.
 Old ties may not be forgotten.¹¹⁶
 To neglect them in the end is what friendship faults.
 Modesty is the lordly man's virtue,¹¹⁷ 15
 But what is there to gain going bent like a chime?¹¹⁸
 A startling wind whips the white sun,
 And light and shadow race on their westward course.
 The prime of life does not come twice,
 And after a hundred years we quickly come to an end. 20
 Though we may live in splendid houses,
 Withered and wasted, we return to mountains and hills.
 Of people in the past, who did not die?
 Knowing fate, what more is there to worry about?¹¹⁹

We can only say that "Harp Song" is an early poem. Zhu Xuzeng points out that during the reigns of Emperor Wen (Cao Pi, reg. 220–226) and Emperor Ming (Cao Rui 曹叡, reg. 227–239), Cao Zhi did not have the opportunity to do any entertaining of guests and relations.¹²⁰ He goes on to say that it was written while Cao was Marquis of Linzi or Marquis of Pingyuan, but we cannot be sure of that.¹²¹

zhu C:1b-2a, SPPY.

See also Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:60; *Wei Jin Nanbei chao wenxue shi cankao ziliao* 79; and Chou Ying-hsiung, "'Lord, Do Not Cross the River': Literature as Mediating Process," *New Asia Academic Bulletin* 1 (1978): 112-13.

¹¹³The biography of Flying Swallow Zhao (Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕, d. A.D.1), the beautiful singer and dancer who became empress dowager, says, "When she grew up, she belonged to the household of the Princess of Yang'e, where she studied voice and dance"; *Han shu* 97B:3988. Another relevant association of Yang'e 陽阿 comes from *Huainan zi*, where it appears in connection with dance and is glossed by Gao You 高誘 (fl. 205–12) as the name of a famous entertainer; see *Huainan zi* 2:1b.

¹¹⁴The *Record of Rites* prescribes that the *junzi* should stop drinking at a feast after three cups; see *Li ji Zheng zhu* 9:4a-b.

¹¹⁵The *Shi ji* biography of Lu Zhonglian 魯仲連 says:

Thereupon, the Lord of Pingyuan wanted to enfeoff Lu Zhonglian, but Lu thrice turned away envoys and was in the end unwilling to accept. The Lord of Pingyuan then held a banquet and, when he was feeling tipsy, rose and went forward, making a long life present of a thousand in gold to Lu Zhonglian; *Shi ji* 83:2465.

¹¹⁶Cf. *Lun yu* 14.12.

¹¹⁷Cf. *Classic of Changes*, Hexagram 15, 6/1; Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes* 463-64.

¹¹⁸*Qing zhe* 磬折 is a term descriptive of bending over or bowing. A *qing* is a stone chime, or lithophone. It is the shape of a lithophone that inspires the term. On lithophones, see Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China* 4.1: 145ff.

¹¹⁹The "Commentary on the Appended Texts" ("Xici zhuan" 繫辭傳) of the *Classic of Changes* says, "He rejoices in Heaven and his knowledge of fate; therefore he is free of care"; Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes* 295. See *Zhou yi yinde* 40.

¹²⁰Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:2a.

¹²¹See Xu, "Cao Zhi shige de xiequo niandai wenti" 157. He held these marquises between 211 and 220

“Harp Song” is one of those symposium poems in which the description of the symposium is interrupted by a sudden awareness of time. The change begins at line 13. This last part of the poem is philosophical in its attitude toward life and its acceptance of the inevitability of death. The poet asks what a lordly man (*junzi*), a type that cultivates modesty as a matter of course, could possibly hope to gain by being humble and subservient. Modesty is necessary, but not excessive modesty, not back-bending modesty. After all, time is rushing onward, and at the end a man, be he ever so great, is still laid low and returns to dust. In the last line recognition becomes acceptance, and acceptance becomes freedom. It seems to me that the poem values enjoyment of life and friendship over incessant striving. We may doubt the degree of belief that the last line commands, but we need not doubt it in the same way some have. Many scholars have been overly enthusiastic in finding interpretations of Cao’s works that fit their conceptions of his life.¹²² We have already experienced this in connection with “Famous Towns.” They often look for—and looking for, find—ulterior motives or intents where they do not necessarily exist. In the case of “Harp Song,” for instance, the editors of one anthology propose quite a different interpretation for the end of the poem. They do not consider the last line a rhetorical question at all. They say the poem has a positive meaning and that it expresses the desire to perform some undertaking of note. They go on to say, however, that the last line is ambiguous and can easily make people have “an unhealthy way of looking at things.”¹²³

In “Harp Song” Cao calls on images and language that appear in other of his works as well. We have already noted parallels to line 3 (“The inner kitchen prepares bountiful foods”) in “Entertaining Guests” and “For Ding Yi.” In the latter (also line 3) there is a different word order, and the word *chu* 出 (“come out,” “issue”) is substituted for *ban* 辦 (“prepare”). In the former the same basic line is couched in *Sao*-style prosody (line 5). The use of the place names Qi and Qin with reference to music has already been discussed under “For Ding Yi.”

Lines of Cao Zhi’s that are often praised include the opening lines of “For Xu Gan” (“Zeng Xu Gan” 贈徐幹): “A startling wind whips the white sun, / And sends it suddenly back to the western hills.”¹²⁴ The similarity to lines 17-18 of the present poem is apparent. The speaker, so sensitive to time, sees the sun (day) hurtling through the sky on a strong wind. Further discussion of the time element in “Harp Song” may be found in my earlier remarks on “Famous Towns.”

Up to this point, with the exception of the four-word line *shi* poem “New Year’s Audience,” the three *shi* poems (“Lord’s Feast,” “Seated in Attendance on the Heir Apparent,” and “For Ding Yi”) and two *yuefu* poems (“Famous Towns” and “Harp Song”) that we have considered have all been in five-word lines. Here we will take up two *yuefu* poems in mixed meter. The first has line lengths of 3-3-7-3-3-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4 and the second line lengths of 4-4-4-4-5-5-5-5.

¹²²See Xu, “Cao Zhi shige de xiequo niandai wenti” 157. He held these marquises between 211 and 220 or 221. See *San guo zhi* 19:557, 561; Cutter, “Cao Zhi (192–232) and His Poetry” 481–83.

¹²³Hans H. Frankel, “Fifteen Poems by Ts’ao Chih: An Attempt at a New Approach,” *JAOS* 84.1 (January–March 1964): 1–14, was an important attempt to correct this, though a little too sweeping, perhaps, in its rejection of extra-literary data.

¹²⁴*Wei Jin Nanbei chao wenxue shi cankao ziliao* 81.

¹²⁵See Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673–1769), *Shuo shi sui yu* 說詩晬語, quoted in Hebei Shifan yuan Zhongwen xi gudian wenxue jiaoyan zu 河北師範院中文系古典文學教研組, eds., *San Cao ziliao huibian* 三曹資料彙編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980) 182.

To "In Days to Come of Great Trouble"¹²⁵

The day is painfully short
 And our enjoyment too great,
 So jade tumblers are set, preparations made in the east kitchen.
 We open our true feelings,¹²⁶
 Our hearts are close. 5
 We set out wine behind closed doors,
 And are cordial and merry.¹²⁷
 Set the horses to roam and bring them back late,
 Tip the carriages poles up and take off their wheels.¹²⁸
 Today we share the same hall, 10
 But once out the door, we scatter to different places.
 Parting is all too easy, meeting is hard,
 So let's all empty our cups and goblets.

The opening couplet complains that the day is too short to contain the happy mood of the group. This is reminiscent of other Jian'an symposium literature, such as the opening lines of Liu Zhen's "Lord's Feast." As in Liu's poem, the activities spill over into the night. The participants drink wine and call for food (line 3). Indoors and relaxed by alcohol, they are able to open up and reveal their true feelings, to draw close together in a "cordial and merry" atmosphere (lines 4-7). Although the poem emphasizes the notion of being alone together with close friends that we have already seen in "For Ding Yi," it seems to me that here it has an added meaning in the context of the entire poem. It is almost as if privacy and enclosed space are prerequisites for this process, as though time and open space are threats that need to be walled out. In fact, the threats become explicit in lines 11-12 ("But once out the door, we scatter to different places./Parting is all too easy, meeting is hard"). One might nearly as well treat this as a poem on parting, one of the most common themes in all Chinese literature. But we now know that an awareness of the fleeting nature of good times and of life itself is fairly common in Jian'an symposium poems. The poem is about a party, and those present are hoping to make the most of their time. The speaker even wants to use unusual means to delay the departure of the guests in the delightful eighth and ninth lines ("Set the horses to roam and bring them back late;/Tip the carriages poles up and take off their wheels"). But he has already shown what he knows all along; despite

¹²⁵"Dang lai ri da nan" 當來日大難; see *Concordance* 5:66; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yu* 6:16a; Guo, *Yuefu shi ji* 36:540-41; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:97-98; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 3:2a-b; Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 26, 83-84; Itô, *Sô Shoku* 179-82.

In the same section of *Yuefu shi ji* (36:535-36) is an anonymous *yuefu* in four-word lines entitled "Shan zai xing" 善哉行 that begins: "In days to come of great trouble/Our mouths and lips will be parched and dry." This poem, too, has a feast as its setting, and it is to this poem that Cao Zhi's title refers. "Shan zai xing" is included in *Concordance* 5:65-66, but Ding quite rightly doubts that it can be by Cao Zhi. See also Frankel, "The Problem of Authenticity in the Works of Ts'ao Chih" 193-94. Xu Gongchi places "To 'In Days to Come of Great Trouble'" in Cao's early period in Ye, on the basis of theme and content; see Xu, "Cao Zhi shige de xiezuo niandai wenti" 157.

¹²⁶Here I follow Gu Zhi (*Cao Zijian shi jian* 3:2b) in understanding *qinggu* 情故 as equivalent to *qingsu* 情素 ("true feelings"). See also Itô, *Sô Shoku* 181 and Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 84.

¹²⁷For the use of "cordial" (*hele* 和樂) and "merry" (*xinxin* 欣欣) in banquet poems in the *Classic of Songs* see *Mao shi* 161/3, 164/6, 7, and 248/5.

¹²⁸Following the interpretation offered in Yu, *Cao Cao Cao Pi Cao Zhi shi xuan* 84.

any attempt to squeeze the most from the feast, it will end and the guests all go their separate ways. The same determination to get the fullest possible enjoyment from the gathering is reflected in the second of these mixed meter *yuefu*.

To “The Carriages are Hitched”¹²⁹

Happily seated in a jade basilica,
Bringing together all the honored guests.
Servants pass goblets;
The host leaves his place.

Turning to look in the east and west chambers,
There are strings and woods, drums and bells.¹³⁰
They won't go home until they're drunk,¹³¹
And carry on the night with bright lanterns.

5

Several by now obvious conventions have gone into making up this very conventional and rather undistinguished poem. It leaves the scholar or critic rather little to talk about, although Huang Jie is concerned lest we misread the poet's stance regarding drinking because of this piece. More than one literary scholar has quoted from Cao Zhi's “Wine Rhapsody” (“*Jiu fu*” 酒賦) to show that the poet knew the harmfulness of drinking. Huang Jie does so with regard to “To ‘The Carriages Are Hitched’” to show that its last two lines are not really representative of Cao Zhi's attitude.¹³² Such arguments are unnecessary and seem forced. The first thing to remember is that there is ample evidence of Cao Zhi's fondness for wine.¹³³ Furthermore, as he states in his preface to it, the “Wine Rhapsody” was inspired by Yang Xiong's somewhat playful work by the same title.¹³⁴ Thus, it may have been as much a literary exercise as anything. We know, for instance, that Wang Can also wrote a “Wine Rhapsody.”¹³⁵

In groping for an understanding of historical figures there is often a tendency to oversimplify, to impose consistency on the memory where none existed in the man. Here we have *x* number of poems that Cao Zhi wrote about drinking and having a good time. Here we have a *fu* in which he may be warning about the bad effects of alcohol. The apparent contradiction, if it exists, ought not to be overly emphasized and should not cause us to misread “To ‘The Carriages Are Hitched.’” Critics like Huang Jie were unable to refrain from imputing what they considered acceptable moral standards to Cao Zhi. In fact, “To ‘The Carriages Are Hitched’” is distinctly about a group

¹²⁹“*Dang ju yi jia xing*” 當車以駕行; see *Concordance* 5:72; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:18b-19a; Guo, *Yuefu shi ji* 61:888-89; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:104-5, Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 3:2a.

¹³⁰*Pi* 鞞 and *duo* 鐸 may also refer to the dances in which those instruments were used. See, for instance, Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:462.

¹³¹This line is an adaptation of a line found in *Mao shi* 174/1. Other Jian'an symposium poems that use adaptations of the *Classic of Songs* line include Wang Can's “Lord's Feast” (line 12, *Wen xuan* 20:13a) and Ying Yang's “In Attendance at the Jianzhang Terrace Gathering of the General of the Gentlemen-of-the-Household for All Purposes” (line 26, *Wen xuan* 20:15a).

¹³²Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:105. Others who use “Wine Rhapsody” in this way are Liu, *Cao Zhi ping zhuan* 53, 55 and Ding Yan in his marginalia (*Concordance* 3:32-33).

¹³³*San guo zhi* 19:557-58.

¹³⁴*Concordance* 3:32. For a discussion and translation of Yang Xiong's piece see David R. Knechtges, “Yang Shyong, the *Fuh*, and Hann Rhetoric,” *diss.*, U of Washington, 1968, 69-72, 371-72. See also David R. Knechtges, “Wit, Humor, and Satire in Early Chinese Literature,” *MS* 29 (1970-1971): 79-98.

¹³⁵See *Yiwen leiju* 72:1249.

feasting together and the reluctance of the host to let them depart. As Xu Gongchi has observed, "This is an unadulterated feasting song."¹³⁶

In sharp contrast to the conventionality and simplicity of "To 'The Carriages Are Hitched'" stands Cao's "I Am Unfortunate." This is one of the most intriguing and problem-laden sets of verses in Cao Zhi's corpus. There has not even been agreement on how many poems the lines comprise, the numbers ranging from one to three.¹³⁷ In addition, there are several loose lines attributed to the title in other places. These are appended to the text in *Concordance* 5:60, but I have not attempted to deal with them here.

I Am Unfortunate¹³⁸

I

I hold the jade white hand, happily share a carriage,¹³⁹
Side-by-side climb soaring steps to a cloud-high gallery.¹⁴⁰
Angler's Terrace is tall and serene,¹⁴¹
The pools and ponds, lodges and meres are pleasant.

Looking up, we drift dragon boats on green waves;
Looking down, we pluck branches and stalks of divine plants.¹⁴²

5

¹³⁶Xu, "Cao Zhi shige de xiezuo niandai wenti" 156.

¹³⁷See Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:65-66 and Itō, *Sō Shoku* 191. *Yiwen leiju* 41:741-43 makes it one poem (the text there is incomplete). *Yuefu shi ji* 62:902 makes it two poems. *Yu tai xin yong* 玉臺新詠 contains only the second poem; see *Jianzhu Yu tai xin yong* 箋注, comm. Wu Zhaoyi 吳兆宜 (fl. ca. 1672), ed. Cheng Yan 程琰 (Taipei; Guangwen shuju, 1967 photo rpt.) 9:8a-b.

¹³⁸"Qie bo ming" 妾薄命; see *Concordance* 5:59-60; Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:3b-5a; Guo, *Yuefu shi ji* 62:902-3; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:65-69; Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 4:1a-2b; Itō, *Sō Shoku* 190-201.

¹³⁹The line reads *xi yu shou xi tong ju* 攜玉手喜同車. *Mao shi* 41/1, 2, 3, respectively, contain the following lines: *xi shou tong xing* 行, *xi shou tong gui* 歸, *xi shou tong ju*. Cao Zhi uses the first of these verbatim in "Seven Openings" (*Concordance* 8:138.4).

¹⁴⁰Note that in the "Seven Openings" line immediately following the one mentioned in the preceding note, "soaring steps" (*fei chu* 飛除) appears. Li Shan (*Wen xuan* 34:22a) explains it there by quoting Sima Biao's 司馬彪 (240-306) commentary to the "Imperial Park" to the effect that *chu* refers to the steps of a multi-storied building.

One edition of Cao's works has *bei* 北 ("north") instead of *bi* ("side-by-side"); see Cao Zhi, *Chen Si Wang ji* 陳思王集 2:6a, *Han Wei Liu chao bailsan ming jia ji*. This is followed by Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:66 and K. P. K. Whitaker, "Tsauryr's Song of the Ill-fated Lady," *BSOAS* 17 (1955): 528. On rather flimsy evidence Huang suggests the place in the poem is the Phoenix Gate Tower of the Jianzhang Palace, for which see *Shi ji* 12:482 and Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978 rpt.) 377-78. But Zhang Pu's text is not always reliable, and I seriously doubt this identification. For a more plausible identification of the sites mentioned and alluded to in the poem, see Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:480.

¹⁴¹*Jianchan* 蹇產 appears in Zhang Heng's "Xi jing fu," where Xue Zong glosses it as being descriptive of form; see *Wen xuan* 2:11a. Huang Jie (*Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:66) calls attention to the discussion in Hu Shaoying's 胡紹英 (1791-1860) *Wen xuan jian zheng* 文選箋證. Hu says that *jianchan* is also written 蹇蹇, as in Dongfang Shuo's 東方朔 (ca. 161-ca. 87 B.C.) "Seven Remonstrances." The pertinent line is in *Chu ci bu zhu* 13:17a, and Hawkes translates it "I gazed on the rugged peaks of the high mountains"; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 131. *Jianchan* is applied to things that are lofty and things that are curving. The term is used in Sima Xiangru's "Imperial Park," and Pei Yin's 裴駰 (fl. 465-72) gloss quotes the *Han shu yin yi* 漢書音義 as saying, "*Jianchan* means *quzhe* 屈折 ('curving');" *Shi ji* 117:3022-23. In the present poem it must, as Huang observes, be descriptive of height.

¹⁴²According to Huang Jie, "divine plants" (*shen cao* 神草) may refer to the lotus; see Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:66. But Zhao Youwen suggests that it may mean the magic mushroom (*ling zhi* 靈芝); see Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:481.

We think of Fu Fei on the Luo River;
Returning, sing of Han Girls and the Fair One of the Xiang.¹⁴³

II

The sun and moon have gone and hid in the west.¹⁴⁴
But still we gather in fragrant rooms and secluded chambers.¹⁴⁵
Colorful lanterns and movable screens scatter light,¹⁴⁶
Brightly, like the sun rising from the Fusang tree.¹⁴⁷
Round crowded cups and close set mats we pass wine vessels.

5

¹⁴³Fu Fei 宓妃 is mentioned from time to time in early literature. She appears in *Chu ci* in "Encountering Sorrow" and "Roving Afar." See *Chu ci bu zhu* 1:24b, 5:96; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 29, 86. Wang Yi's commentary identifies her as the goddess of the Luo; *Chu ci bu zhu* 5:9b. Ru Chun's 如淳 (fl. 189–265) commentary in *Shi ji* 117:3040 says that she was the daughter of the legendary ruler Fuxi 伏羲 and that she drowned in the Luo and became its goddess.

Wandering girls (*you nü* 遊女) of the Han River are first mentioned in *Mao shi* 9/1, but the meaning there is not supernatural. At some point the story of a supernatural girl or girls of the Han (Han nü 漢女) devolved. We see it in effect in the present poem and in Cao's "Luo shen fu" 洛神賦, but its existence is apparent earlier, as in Yang Xiong's "Barricade Hunt Rhapsody" ("Jiao lie fu" 校獵賦). See *Han shu* 87A:3550; Knechtges, *The Han Rhapsody* 70, 133. One story has it that one day when Jiaofu 交甫 of Zheng was strolling by the Han River, he encountered two girls. He requested a token from them and got it, but after he had gone only ten paces he no longer saw the token, and when he turned to look at the two girls, they suddenly disappeared. See *Lie xian zhuan* 列仙傳 A:11b-12a, *Dao zang* (H-Y 138).

The Fair One(s) of the Xiang seems to refer to one or both of the wives of Shun. The "Annals of the First Emperor of Qin" ("Qin shi huang ben ji" 秦始皇本紀) says:

Travelling in a southwesterly direction he crossed over the R. Huai and came at length to Hengshan. At Nan-chün he took a boat and was sailing down the river to the Hsiang-shan shrine when a great wind arose and nearly prevented his getting to land. The emperor inquired of his wise men who Hsiang-chün was. They replied, "According to our information, Hsiang-chün are the daughters of Yao and the wives of Shun who are buried in this place; David Hawkes, "The Quest of the Goddess," *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres*, ed. Cyril Birch (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: U of California P, 1974) 56.

See *Shi ji* 6:248.

The usual formulation is that the first-rank wife was called Ehuang 娥皇 and the second-rank wife was called Nüying 女英. See Bernhard Karlgren, "Legends and Cults in Ancient China," *BMFEA* 18 (1946): 296; Albert Richard O'Hara, trans., *The Position of Women in Early China* (Taipei: Mei Ya, 1978 rpt.) 13-17; *Lie nü zhuan jiao zhu* 列女傳校注 1:1a-2a, SPPY.

¹⁴⁴Cf. *Lun yu* 17.1. For another interpretation based on a variant reading of this line, see Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:482.

¹⁴⁵"Fragrant rooms" (*lan shi* 蘭室) and "secluded chambers" (*dong fang* 洞房) refer to the living quarters of beautiful women. One of Zhang Hua's 張華 (232–300) poems, entitled "Qing shi" 情詩, has the line "His face is absent from the fragrant room"; *Wen xuan* 29:18b.

¹⁴⁶*Buzhang* 步障 ("movable screens" or "wind screens") apparently were used as protection from wind, cold, and dust. But they were decorative as well. *Shi shuo xin yu* says,

Wang K'ai used to warm the cauldron by burning fried rice cakes (*i-pu*), while Shih Ch'ung would cook roasts over beeswax candles (*la-chu*). K'ai constructed a purple silk windbreak for walking (*pu-chang*), with dark blue-green silk gauze lining, forty *li* long, to do him one better"; Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü* 459.

See Yang Yong 楊勇, *Shi shuo xin yu jiao jian* 世說新語校箋 (Hong Kong: Da-zhong shuju, 1969) 30:658. See also *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 33:1007. Cf. Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:482, who would adopt a variant reading here.

¹⁴⁷According to myth, the sun (or suns) climbed the Fusang 扶桑 tree in rising. See Sarah Allan's article "Sons of Suns," especially 293-301.

The host rises and dances, whirling.¹⁴⁸
 The skilled ones lean and touch, part and straighten.¹⁴⁹
 Lifted cups and flying goblets go back and forth.
 Measure for measure, we equally color, the same in countenance.
 We freely mingle with those we enjoy. 10
 Their red faces showing outwardly, the girls have forms like thoroughwort.¹⁵⁰

Sleeves trailing, their formal appearance is full of feeling.
 In marvelous dance they soar, their bodies light.
 Clothes loosened and sans shoes, we laugh our caps off.¹⁵¹
 Looking up and down, we laugh and shout with abandon. 15

One embraces and holds a pretty girl's jade-white face;
 All raise gold goblets and halycon-blue dishes in toast.
 For her hand to show its shape through the gauze sleeve is quite hard;
 The wrist is so frail it cannot bear its pearl bracelet.
 The seated guests sigh and smile. 20

A woman serves a towel and moistens powders by her lord.¹⁵²
 Among them are betony-moss and thoroughwort,
 Clove, schizandra, and mixed perfumes.
 Who offers them but Lady Jiang of Qi,¹⁵³
 Her devotion so strong and love so deep they're unforgettable. 25

He has invited good friends to a lay feast.¹⁵⁴
 All they sing is "What's keeping the wine?"¹⁵⁵
 The guests chant, "Only when we're drunk will we go home."¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁸On *suopan* 娑盤 ("whirling," used in reference to dance) see Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 4:2a; Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:67; Hao, *Zuben Er ya Guo zhu yishu* A:3.30b.

¹⁴⁹That *xue* 穴 means "lean," "wry," "bend to one side" is supported by *Er ya* and Guo Pu's commentary; see Hao, *Zuben Er ya Guo zhu yi shu* B:8.1b.

¹⁵⁰A line from the "Zhao hun" poem of *Chu ci* (*Chu ci bu zhu* 9.11a) reads, "The lovely girls are drunk with wine, their faces flushed and red"; Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u* 107.

¹⁵¹What I have translated as "laugh our caps off" is literally "break our capstrings" (*jue ying* 絕纓). A sentence from the *Shi ji* says of Chunyu Kun 淳于髡, "Kun looked up to Heaven and laughed so hard that his capstrings were completely broken"; *Shi ji* 126:3198.

¹⁵²I follow Gu Zhi and Zhao Youwen, who define *yu* 御 as *jin* 進 ("to present," "to offer"); Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 4:2b; Zhao, *Cao Zhi ji jiao zhu* 3:483. Cf. Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:68 and Itō, *Sō Shoku* 199. The words *yi fen* 衣粉 are another difficulty. In his notes to a poem by Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427), Li Shan says, "The *Wen zi ji lue* 文子集略 says, 'Yi ben 衣盆 means clothes perfumes (*yi xiang* 衣香)'; *Wen xuan* 30:3b. Huang Jie, Gu Zhi, and Zhao Youwen all accept this explanation for *yi fen*. However, I have taken *yi* in another well-established meaning, "to moisten" or "to soak." This is also the way the term is understood by Whitaker, "Tsaury Jyr's Song of the Ill-fated Lady" 529. Cf. Itō, *Sō Shoku* 199.

¹⁵³The ruling house of the large Zhou state of Qi was surnamed Jiang 姜. The term "Lady Jiang of Qi," as used in *Mao shi* 138/2, for instance, may mean an exquisite bride. Here it may simply mean a beautiful woman. See Itō, *Sō Shoku* 199.

¹⁵⁴Cf. *Mao shi* 209/5; "All the fathers and brothers/Have a lay feast together."

¹⁵⁵Similar lines appear in Wang Can's "Lord's Feast" (*Wen xuan* 20:13a) and Cao Zhi's "Great Wei" ("Da wei pian" 大魏篇, *Concordance* 5:77.1).

¹⁵⁶Cf. *Mao shi* 298/2: "The drums (sound) *iwen-iwen*; When drunk they will go home"; Bernhard Karlgren, trans., *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1974 rev. rpt.) 254.

The host replies, “The dew is not yet dry.”¹⁵⁷

Along with Ding, Huang Jie, and Itō Masafumi, I prefer to follow early editions of Cao's works and the *Yuefu shi ji* and take the title as two poems. As Itō points out, there is another reason for supposing that the second poem existed as a separate entity, at least in Tang times. The *Yuefu jieti* 樂府解題, compiled by Liu Su 劉餗, dates from that period, and under the title “Qie bo ming” Liu quotes the first line of the second poem, presumably as a way of identifying which “Qie bo ming” he is talking about. He goes on to say, “It seems to regret that the happiness of the private feast is not a long-time thing.”¹⁵⁸ This statement is an attempt to explain the significance of the title. The speaker is unfortunate because of the passing of time, and with it, the feast. If the title has any relationship at all to the contents of the poem, it is a relationship such as that indicated by Liu. Unfortunately, some later writers have gone farther afield in seeking a connection between title and content.

The phrasing of the title seems to derive from a statement in a memorial submitted to Emperor Cheng (reign 32–7 B.C.) by Empress Xu.¹⁵⁹ This has led to several theories about what the poem really means. Although it is always difficult to disprove such interpretations, these seem to be built mainly on flimsy or non-existent evidence or on dubious readings. Zhu Qian 朱乾 thought that the first poem deals with the impermanence of beauty. Although he admitted it is not spelled out, he believes the second is the sad story of a noble beauty whose looks have faded and who is no longer loved. Now she has to act as a performer and entice her lord's guests to drink.¹⁶⁰ This interpretation was already doubted by Zhu Xuzeng in his variorum edition of Cao's works.¹⁶¹ K.P.K. Whitaker rejects it also, but her reasons for doing so have more to do with her own attempts to assign a specific identity to the woman than with the weakness of Zhu Qian's theory.¹⁶²

Zhu Jiazheng took “I Am Unfortunate” as a kind of personal allegory, wherein Cao Zhi complains about not encountering an age when his abilities would be recognized and used in service to his country. He warns that this is not a feast poem.¹⁶³ Zhu Jiazheng's theory is also dismissed by Whitaker.¹⁶⁴ Her own idea is that the poems are about two stages in the life of an identifiable person. In the first poem “her lord appreciates her company in the palatial dwelling and in a number of his leisurely and pleasurable pursuits in a quiet and cultured atmosphere.” The second deals with a later period, when the noble lady “has to serve among all the frivolous young women far beneath her in position and in breeding, to a number of drunken guests at the height of their jollities.”¹⁶⁵ The lady in question is, in Whitaker's opinion, Empress Zhen 甄, Cao Pi's wife, and the poem is to be taken as a condemnation of Cao Pi's behavior

¹⁵⁷Cf. *Mao shi* 174/1: “The dew is heavy/And will not dry without the sun./Peacefully drinking by night./We won't go home until we're drunk.”

¹⁵⁸Quoted in Guo, *Yuefu shi ji* 62:902.

¹⁵⁹See *Han shu* 97B:3977.

¹⁶⁰Zhu Qian (Qing dynasty), *Yuefu zheng yi* 樂府正義, quoted in *San Cao ziliao huibian* 200-01. See also Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:66, 69.

¹⁶¹Zhu, *Cao ji kao yi* 6:4b.

¹⁶²Whitaker, “Tsaur Jyr's Song of the Ill-fated Lady” 530-31.

¹⁶³Quoted in Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:68-69.

¹⁶⁴Whitaker, “Tsaur Jyr's Song of the Ill-fated Lady” 531-32.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.* 532.

towards her. I think we may best be served by laying aside Whitaker's interpretation. There is no evidence that the poem has anything to do with Empress Zhen.

Despite Zhu Jiazheng's admonition, we can safely take these two pieces to be poems of joy and feasting.¹⁶⁶ It may be that, as Gu Zhi says, the poems are a product of the visit Emperor Wen paid to Cao Zhi at his fief in Yongqiu in Huangchu 6 (225). This visit is mentioned in the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, as well as in Cao Zhi's "Order Dated Huangchu 6."¹⁶⁷ Gu's dating, however, cannot be considered as a definitely established fact. He is on safer ground when he addresses the contents of the poems by saying, "The first poem describes an outing, and the second describes a feast."¹⁶⁸

The first poem is fairly straightforward. Gu thinks that such language as "jade white hand" ("yu shou"), "happily share a carriage" ("xi tong ju"), "magic pool" ("ling zhao" 靈沼, a variant in line 4), and "dragon boats" ("long zhou" 龍舟) is especially appropriate if the poem is addressed to the emperor,¹⁶⁹ but that, of course, is not proof that it was. There is probably no need to read any special meaning into the last two lines, for when thinking of water, it would be natural for Cao Zhi's mind to turn to such goddesses. He is, after all, the author of the famous rhapsody "Goddess of the Luo River."

The second poem is more complex. It is a stirring description of a feast. Although both are ballads in the relatively rare six-graph line, the use of this prosody in the second makes for an almost cinematic presentation of images. In fact, the poem divides nicely into "scenes" or stanzas on the basis of rhyme. The rhyme scheme is A-A-A-A-A, B-B-B-B-B-, C-C-C-C, B-B-B-B-B, A-A-A-A-A, D-D-D-D. Each change of rhyme marks a stage in the feast, and within the rhymed sections there may be one or more shifts of the poet's mental lens. Within the individual lines the six-word form sometimes seems to blur the relationships between words so that there is a good deal of grammatical parataxis. Such a line becomes a montage of images, and the grouping of several lines by rhyme makes a larger montage.

Scene one gives the time and setting of the feast. The first line not only tells the reader it is night, but also imparts a sense of passing time. The two poems may very well be related, the first describing an excursion during the day and the second, in lines 1-2, introducing the fact that the festivities are being carried into the night. The setting is a pleasant one; the women's quarters of a palace, where bright lanterns and screens have been set up. The guests sit close together and begin to drink.

In the second section there is dancing; not only dancing by entertainers, but also by the host. Then in lines 8-12 the poet's focus shifts to the drinking of the general company and the open conviviality among them. The young women, perhaps the entertainers, are red from drinking and seem to have the grace of thoroughwort, a numinous plant (line 11). In this line Cao has reversed the normal word order of the last two words, to get the rhyme.¹⁷⁰

The third scene (lines 12-15) describes the grace and skill of the young women dancing, and, in a striking juxtaposition, then depicts the increasingly boisterous and free enjoyment of the guests, clothes loosened and looking all around, laughing and shouting uproariously. Attention is directed in part four to one of the delicate women

¹⁶⁶Fang Zushen agrees, but would make it one poem. See Fang, *Han shi yanjiu* 208.

¹⁶⁷Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 4:1a-b, 2b. See *San guo zhi* 19:565 and *Concordance* 8:129.

¹⁶⁸Gu, *Cao Zijian shi jian* 4:2b.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 4.1b.

¹⁷⁰Huang, *Cao Zijian shi zhu* 2:68.

present. In lines 16-17, one of the guests is holding her face in his hand and all the others toast her. Lines 18-20 move in still closer to show the girl's fragile wrist, so small and weak it can scarcely hold her pretty bracelet. The men can only sigh and smile in admiration.

The main figure in scene five is a very special woman, a "Lady Jiang of Qi" (line 24), who stands by the side of her lord, offering perfumes to refresh him. She is praised for her devotion and love (line 25). I believe this is her first appearance in the poem and that we should not identify her as one of the women already alluded to.

The concluding section deals with the reluctance of those present to call a halt to the festivities. As is pointed out in the notes, the language in this section is not entirely original to the poem.

Modern works that include selections from Cao Zhi do not as a rule incorporate these two poems. Huang Jie and Gu Zhi have them, of course. Itō Masafumi probably recognized their special qualities—the second has a challenging strangeness that grows on a reader—and so chose to include them in his book. There are several places where we must make educated guesses about who is doing what. Nevertheless, the poems show superb skill at using imagery and at guiding the reader's attention first to one detail of the feast and then to another. It is as though the reader were an observer glancing here and there, or a participant looking at the party through a vinous haze, or as though he were viewing the feast through the moving eye of a camera.

The difficulty and obscurity of certain lines is only one reason these pieces are not anthologized much. Another, perhaps more important, reason is that they are not considered to be very representative of either Cao Zhi or Jian'an literature as a whole. I am not talking here only of prosodic form, for it is true that the six-word poem is not common. Something more is at play, and that something more is the whole background in which the Jian'an symposia were held and the symposium poems written. In addition to its original audience, any old poem has had a large number of later audiences comprised of individual readers, whose responses to the poem have been influenced by a bewildering assortment of factors. It is a mark of how good good poetry is that it passes through all these hands unscathed. But sometimes even good poetry is denigrated or ignored because it is alien to modern sensibilities, or because a modern reader has not done his homework, has not read well. Sometimes cultural, social, or political considerations interfere with our appreciation of old poetry. In the case of the symposium poems, one influential work on Cao Zhi says,

. . . Cao Zhi also wrote some poems on the way of life of the nobility (like "Ming du Pian" and "Konghou yin") and party poems exchanged with the writers in Ye (like "Shi taizi zuo" and "Gong yan"). In his later period are some poems written directly to the emperor (like "Ze gong shi" and "Ying zhao shi"). Some of them reflect a spiritless and uninteresting sentiment, some are deficient in honest emotion. Speaking for most, their relative importance is not great. . .¹⁷¹

And an earlier critic wrote,

The Lord's Feast poems by the Wei poets are all quite mediocre. The party poems (*yingchou shi* 應酬詩) by later poets derive from them. The use of a wild goose as a voice in Ying's poem, and the sadness of its tone make it different from the bulk of such works.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹Li, *Cao shi fu zi he Jian'an wenxue* 45 (see also 10).

¹⁷²Shen Deqian, comp., *Gu shi yuan* 古詩源 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977 rpt.) 6:132. See also Fang, *Han shi yanjiu* 288.

The idea behind these criticisms seems to be that this kind of poetry fails to exemplify the "realism" for which Jian'an verse is applauded; a feeling that the more the reflections of the troubled world in which the poet lived, the better the poetry.

Now it is true that some of the poems presented in this article are immediately approachable, while with others we soon reach that "place where the critic and scholar in us may legitimately part company." But while tastes may differ, we should try to understand the motives that inform the poems.¹⁷³ It isn't that these pieces fail to present a vision of the poet's society; it is that they present a slice too thin and narrow, too privileged, for some tastes.

I have called the first four pieces eulogistic symposium poems. The eulogistic symposium poems are closely connected to a specific event and structured with the functions of description, gratitude, and praise in mind. In these four works and in the *Wen xuan* Lord's Feast poems there was a good deal of latitude in how the individual poet accomplished these tasks, but the underlying motives seem to have been the same. The remaining symposium poems are more heterogeneous, but I have noted certain conventions and similarities. Several of them show a concern for the passage of time, a kind of *carpe diem* mentality combined with a twinge of sadness. Perhaps, as Joyce has Gabriel say,

there are always in gatherings such as this sadder thoughts that will recur to our minds: thoughts of the past, of youth, of changes, of absent faces that we miss. . .¹⁷⁴

But that Cao Zhi's feast poems so often contain some degree of this sentiment is probably the reflection of a truly felt conviction of the age. We may prefer the robustness of "Famous Towns," the philosophy of "Harp Song," or the technique of "I Am Unfortunate," but we will have a better understanding of all the feast poems if we keep in mind his contemporary audience, the intensely literary environment in which the symposium poems were written, and the turbulent historical context.

¹⁷³Richard D. Altick, *The Art of Literary Research* (New York: Norton, 1963) 112.

¹⁷⁴James Joyce, *Dubliners* (New York: Viking, 1962 rpt.) 204.