

## Beyond the *Mao Odes*: *Shijing* Reception in Early Medieval China

MARTIN KERN  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

In 1 B.C., close to the collapse of the Western Han Dynasty, the Mao 毛 tradition of the ancient *Odes* (*Shi* 詩) received a chair at the imperial academy, belatedly following the earlier patronage of the Lu 魯, Qi 齊, and Hán 韓 exegetical lineages. Less than a century later, the *History of the Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書) “Monograph on Arts and Writings” (*Yiwen zhi* 藝文志), in abbreviated form representing the late Western Han imperial library catalogue, included fourteen different works for the four officially recognized lineages: one text that comprised the Lu, Qi, and Hán versions, two texts for the Lu version only, five for the Qi, three for the Hán, and two for the Mao.<sup>1</sup> However, the *History of the Han*—presumably representing the Eastern Han perspective of its compiler Ban Gu 班固 (32–92)—notes that the Lu, Qi, and Hán versions had indiscriminately drawn on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋) and selected “disparate explanations” (*zashuo* 雜說) that “all missed [the songs’] original meanings” (*xian fei qi benyi* 咸非其本義). Soon after Ban Gu, Xu Shen’s 許慎 (ca. 55–ca. 149) character dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, a partisan work promoting the so-called ancient-script versions of the classics among which the *Mao Odes* were now included, clearly favored the Mao reading in its references to the ancient songs.<sup>2</sup> Zheng Xuan’s 鄭玄 (127–200) most influential subcommentary was devoted to the *Mao Odes* (*Mao shi* 毛詩), as was Wang Su’s 王肅 (195–256) subsequent exegesis.

As a result, by the time of the next major imperial catalogue still extant—the “Monograph on the Classics and [Other] Writings” (*Jingji zhi* 經籍志) in the seventh-century *History of the Sui* (*Suishu* 隋書)—none of the Lu or Qi versions was listed anymore. While three Hán versions were still noted (one of them differing in title from the three earlier ones), works on the Mao tradition of the *Odes* had multiplied to thirty-six titles. The *History of the Sui* concludes its brief account of officially recognized *Odes* scholarship with the following words:

The *Qi Odes* were already lost during the Wei dynasty; the *Lu Odes* were lost during the Western Jin; and while the *Hán Odes* still exist, there is no one who transmits them. Just the *Mao Odes with the Zheng Commentary* alone have remained in place to the present day. There also are the *Ye Odes* for which the [Liu-Song] retired official Ye Zun had produced a commentary. The meanings it proposes are mostly aberrant, and it does not currently circulate.<sup>3</sup>

齊詩，魏代已亡；魯詩亡於西晉。韓詩雖存，無傳之者。唯毛詩鄭箋至今獨立。又有業詩，  
奉朝請業遵所注，立義多異，世所不行。

In addition to the titles still extant in Sui times, the monograph also notes works from the earlier Liang imperial library that were now lost: one title associated with the *Outer Tradition*

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1. *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987) 30.1707–8.

2. Cf. the analysis of *Odes* quotations in Ma Zonghuo 馬宗霍, *Shuowen jiezi yinjing kao* 說文解字引經考 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1958). It should be noted though that the *Mao Odes* did not contain ancient (pre-Qin) characters.

3. *Suishu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987) 32.915–18.

of the *Hán Odes* (*Hán Shi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳) and no less than thirty-eight titles related to the *Mao Odes*. These thirty-eight lost works, together with the thirty-six listed as extant for the Mao tradition, included individual commentaries, collections of several commentaries, sub-commentaries to earlier commentaries, works specializing on phonology, expository writings that promoted or refuted particular interpretations, books devoted to the discussion of textual variants and doubtful characters, works that collected fragments of lost poems, and a text on the plants and animals in the *Odes*, attributed to an otherwise obscure third-century Lu Ji 陸璣.<sup>4</sup>

In short, between the first and the seventh centuries, scholarship of the *Odes* had experienced periods of great proliferation alternating with times of loss and destruction. Terrible losses occurred at several times between the end of the second century and the fall of the Western Jin in 317, and then again toward the end of the Liang in 555, when Emperor Yuan 元 (Xiao Yi 蕭繹, r. 552–555), his capital beleaguered, burnt his library. Thereafter, the transmission of the *Odes* eventually stabilized, though it was now firmly dominated by the *Mao Odes*. The *Old History of the Tang* (*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書) lists three titles for the *Hán Odes*, one for the *Ye Odes*,<sup>5</sup> and twenty-six for the *Mao Odes*; similarly, the *New History of the Tang* (*Xin Tangshu* 新唐書) lists four titles for the *Hán Odes*, one for the *Ye Odes*, and thirty for the *Mao Odes*.<sup>6</sup> The situation changed only in Song times, when a large number of new commentaries, some of them explicitly challenging the Mao reading, were produced by individual scholars.

The catalogues of the Sui and Tang imperial libraries certainly give the impression that by late Six Dynasties times, the Mao-Zheng 毛鄭 exegesis of the *Odes* had completely eclipsed the Lu and Qi traditions while leaving the *Hán* interpretation with some marginal significance. The Mao-Zheng reading is thoroughly observed in Liu Xie's 劉勰 (ca. 467–522) *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍) and became enshrined through the mid-seventh-century imperial compilation of the *Correct Meaning of the Five Classics* (*Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義), despite more than thirty instances in which Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) and his collaborators noted that a certain Mao preface to a specific song "has no correspondence in the Classic" (*yu jing wu suodang ye* 于經無所當也).<sup>7</sup> In the early Tang, the *Han shu* commentator Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645) echoed the Mao-Zheng interpretations in his numerous explanations of *Odes* quotations included in Ban Gu's text,<sup>8</sup> as did, in the eighth century prominent poets like Li Bai 李白 (701–762) and especially Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) in their references to the *Odes*.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the historicizing and moralizing interpretative style of the *Mao Odes* was forcefully extended to early medieval poetry, for example in the Tang-dynasty commentaries on the "Nineteen Old Poems" (*Gushi shijiu shou* 古詩十九首), a series of songs included in the sixth-century

4. Not to be confused with the famous writer Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303) mentioned below. The text, *Mao shi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏, was later reconstructed from other sources and as such is extant today.

5. In the *Suishu*, the commentator for the *Ye Odes* is given as 葉遵, but in the *Jiu Tangshu* and *Xin Tangshu*, he appears as 葉遵.

6. *Jiu Tangshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) 46.1970–71, *Xin Tangshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) 57.1429–30.

7. Wang Zuomin 汪祚民, *Shijing wenxue chanshi shi: Xian Qin—Sui Tang* 詩經文學闡釋史 (先秦—隋唐) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005), 316–21. Wang's book is one of the most useful among quite a number of new works on the reception and interpretation history of the *Odes* in that it moves beyond the confines of classical scholarship.

8. Tanaka Kazuo 田中和夫, *Moshi seigi kenkyū* 毛詩正義研究 (Tokyo: Hakuteisha, 2003), 302–408.

9. Wang Zuomin, *Shijing wenxue chanshi shi*, 362–74.

anthology *Selections of Refined Literature* (*Wenxuan* 文選). Altogether, it is easy to get the impression that prior to Song times, a genuine, monolithic orthodoxy in the reception of the ancient *Odes* was securely in place.

I wish to add some qualifications to this standard version of medieval *Odes* reception, in part building upon the recent work by Wang Zuomin 汪祚民 and Tanaka Kazuo 田中和夫. In particular, I am concerned with the hermeneutically open “Airs of the States” (*guofeng* 國風) that had received a range of very different readings already in Warring States through Han times. In this period, and arguably through much of Eastern Han times, the Mao interpretation was highly exceptional, even anomalous, with very little support in other early readings. For example, the extensive references to the *Odes* in Liu Xiang’s 劉向 (79–8 B.C.) *Biographies of Eminent Women* (*Lienü zhuan* 列女傳), composed by a man related to the imperial house, show no concern for the Mao reading; instead, the work reflects the interpretations of the *Lu Odes*, at the time the still dominant exegetical tradition of the ancient songs. In the following, I will briefly review the continuity of the Lu reading in Eastern Han and Six Dynasties times before returning to the literary reception of a particular group of songs from the “Airs”—songs that were considered morally problematic in the Mao tradition but seemed happily acceptable to Six Dynasties poets.

#### THE CONTINUITY OF THE LU READING

As has long been recognized, the Eastern Han official inscription of the classics on stone stelae, erected in A.D. 176 outside of the imperial academy, drew still on the *Lu Odes*.<sup>10</sup> While the Lu reading has survived only in fragments,<sup>11</sup> one of its characteristics was to explain a number of songs as satirical where the Mao commentary, by contrast, took the same songs as laudatory.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 87 B.C.) *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji* 史記), presumably representing the Lu reading of the *Odes*,<sup>13</sup> notes:

When the Way of the Zhou declined, the poets traced the roots [of the demise] to the [royal] sleeping mat (i.e., the king’s sexual indulgence), and “Fishhawks” arose. When humaneness and rightness fell into decay, “Deer Cry” satirized about it.<sup>14</sup>  
周道缺，詩人本之衽席，關雎作。仁義陵遲，鹿鳴刺焉。

This satirical reading of both “Fishhawks” (Guanju 關雎, Mao 1) and “Deer Call” (Lu ming 鹿鳴, Mao 161)—the first song of the “Airs” and the first of the “Minor Court Hymns” (*xiaoya* 小雅), respectively—is in clear opposition to the Mao commentary that takes both songs as eulogistic: “Fishhawks” in praise of the virtuous queen (later interpreted as King Wen’s 文 [r. 1099/56–50 B.C.] wife) and “Deer Call” in celebration of the royal feasting of

10. For a summary of the evidence and discussion, see James Robert Hightower, “The *Han-shih wai-chuan* 韓詩外傳 and the *San jia shi* 三家詩,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 11 (1948): 280, n. 61.

11. The principal compilation is Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917), *Shi sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), which builds on the work of earlier Qing scholars. It must be noted, however, that all these compilations on occasion seem to contain arbitrary and circular judgments in assigning a particular interpretation of a given song to one of the Western Han exegetical lineages of the *Odes*.

12. See Chen Qiaocong 陳喬縱 (1809–1869), *Sanjia shi yishuo kao* 三家詩遺說考 in Wang Xianqian, *Qing jingjie xubian* 清經解續編 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1988), vol. 4, 1178–1426.

13. As argued by Chen Qiaocong; see his discussion in *Sanjia shi yishuo kao*, “Lu shi yishuo kao zixu” 魯詩遺說考自序, in *Qing jingjie xubian*, vol. 4, 1178, and the translation in Hightower, “The *Han-shih wai-chuan*,” 279–86.

14. *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 14.509.

high officials and distinguished guests at court.<sup>15</sup> Yet despite the rising stature of the Mao interpretation after 1 B.C., for both songs the Lu reading can be traced through a series of Western and Eastern Han sources.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, while it ceased to be the mainstream interpretation soon after the Han, it did not disappear for either “Fishhawks” or “Deer Call.” The *Wenxuan* contains a “Poetic Exposition on the Zither” (Qin fu 琴賦) by Xi Kang 嵇康 (223–262) where at one point the poet lists a series of ancient songs played or accompanied by the zither, among them “Deer Call.” In his commentary on the text, Li Shan 李善 (d. 689) uses the occasion to point to an earlier text on the zither, Cai Yong’s 蔡邕 (133–192) “Modes of the Zither” (Qin cao 琴操), from which Li excerpts as follows:

“Deer Call” was composed by a grand minister of the Zhou. When the kingly way declined, the grand minister knew that the wise were hiding in seclusion; thus, he plucked the strings to offer satirical remonstrance.<sup>17</sup>

鹿鳴者，周大臣之所作也。王道衰，大臣知賢者幽隱，故彈絃風諫。

Perhaps Li Shan chose this reference to Cai Yong merely for the fact that both Cai and Xi Kang were speaking of “Deer Call” as a zither piece; yet be this as it may, he obviously implied that Xi Kang had the Lu reading of the song in mind. Not everyone in the seventh century was willing to acknowledge that the “Airs” could be read outside the *Mao Odes*; for example, Yan Shigu in his glosses on the *History of the Han* strenuously insisted on the Mao interpretation of “Fishhawks”—despite the fact that the *Records of the Historian*, the *History of the Han*, and Fan Ye’s 范曄 (398–446) *History of the Later Han* (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書) all included explicit passages presenting the song as moral satire.<sup>18</sup> One passage from the *History of the Later Han* where Fan notes that “Fishhawks” was composed as a satirical response to King Kang’s neglect of government is anthologized as “Discussion of the Annals of Empresses” (Huanghou ji lun 皇后紀論) in chapter forty-nine of the *Wenxuan*. Here, despite their overall predilection to quote the song in praise of female virtue, Li Shan and his fellow Tang commentators show no hesitation to dutifully provide the references to the early sources of this interpretation.<sup>19</sup> Li even cites the Lu reading of “Fishhawks” in his commentary to Xi Kang’s “Treatise on Nourishing Life” (Yangsheng lun 養生論) where Xi only obliquely, if at all, had hinted at the song when declaring that sexual indulgence shortens

15. For “Fishhawks,” see Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 4–8; Jeffrey Riegel, “Eros, Introversion, and the Beginnings in *Shijing* Commentary,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57 (1997): 155–59; for “Deer Call,” Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjia yi jishu*, 551.

16. For an excellent review of the many Han texts that take “Fishhawks” as a satire, criticizing the king—presumably King Kang 康 (r. 1005/3–978 B.C.)—for his licentious behavior, see Mark Laurent Asselin, “The Lu-School Reading of ‘Guanju’ As Preserved in an Eastern Han *Fu*,” *JAOS* 117 (1997): 427–43. For the Lu reading of “Deer Call” in the Eastern Han, see Chen Qiacong, *Sanjia shi yishuo kao*, 1179, 1221–22, and Hightower, “The *Han-shih wai-chuan*,” 286.

17. Cai Yong, *Qin cao* 1.2a/b, *Wanwei biezang* 宛委別藏 ed. (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1981); for Li Shan’s commentary, see *Liu chen zhu Wenxuan* 六臣注文選 (Sibu congkan ed.), 18.27a; David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 3: *Rhapsodies on Natural Phenomena, Birds and Animals, Aspirations and Feelings, Sorrowful Laments, Literature, Music, and Passions* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), 297. Li Shan’s quotation does not exactly match the received text of *Modes of the Zither* but combines several of its lines. It is impossible to determine which version is original; either way, Cai Yong interprets “Deer Call” as a moral satire, and he quotes directly the complete first stanza of the song as it appears in the “Airs.”

18. *Shiji* 14.509, 121.3115, *Hanshu* 30.2669, *Hou Hanshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 2.111, 10A.397. For more early sources of the satirical reading, see Riegel, “Eros, Introversion, and the Beginnings in *Shijing* Commentary,” 155–56, nn. 29 and 30; also Martin Kern, “Western Han Aesthetics and the Genesis of the *Fu*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63 (2003): 425–27.

19. *Liu chen zhu Wenxuan*, 49.26a/b.

one's lifespan.<sup>20</sup> To be sure, the Tang commentaries on these two texts are exceptional in the midst of numerous other references to the Mao reading of "Fishhawks." They suffice, however, to illustrate that the satirical reading was widely known throughout the Six Dynasties and early Tang.

DEPARTURES FROM THE MAO READING IN  
SIX DYNASTIES POETIC RECEPTION OF THE "AIRS"

The satirical reading of "Fishhawks" was not restricted to the *Lu Odes* but also shared by the Qi and Hán traditions. Its basic premise, it seems, was to confront a morally deficient ruler with an ideal depiction of virtue.<sup>21</sup> Yet another early reading of the song differed more radically from the Mao tradition in not even taking "Fishhawks" as an expression of superior morality. This reading is now known from two recently excavated bamboo manuscripts: the early Han "Five Modes of Conduct" (Wu xing 五行) manuscript from Mawangdui 馬王堆 (Changsha, Hunan) and the late Warring States "Confucius's Discussion of the *Odes*" (Kongzi shilun 孔子詩論), likely to date from ca. 300 B.C. and now housed in the Shanghai Museum. Both texts submit that "'Fishhawks' uses [the expression of] erotic allure to lead through illustration to ritual propriety" (*yilyou se yu yu li* 以由色諭於禮).<sup>22</sup> At least two comments, one in the late third-century B.C. *Xunzi* 荀子 and the other by Liu An 劉安 (179?–122 B.C.), point in the same direction and seem closely related to the famous line in *Analects* 3.20 that "'Fishhawks' [expresses] pleasure but does not lead to licentiousness, [expresses] sorrow but does not cause harm" (*Guanju le er bu yin, ai er bu shang* 關雎樂而不淫，哀而不傷). Both texts speak not of "Fishhawks" in particular but of the "Airs" in general:

As for the "Airs of the States" expressing a fondness of sexual allure, a tradition says: they satisfy the desires but do not lead to the transgression of the correct stopping point.<sup>23</sup>  
國風之好色也。傳曰：盈其欲不愆其止。

The "Airs of the States" express a fondness of sexual allure but do not lead to licentiousness.<sup>24</sup>  
國風好色而不淫。

20. *Ibid.*, 53.5b.

21. See the Eastern Han poet Zhang Chao's 張超 "Reproaching the 'Poetic Exposition on a Grisette'" (Qiao qingyi fu 諒青衣賦), analyzed in Asselin, "The Lu-School Reading of 'Guanju' as Preserved in an Eastern Han *Fu*," and further examples in Zhang Shubo 張樹波, *Guofeng jishuo* 國風集說 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1993), 9–12.

22. For the Shanghai Museum text, see Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2001), 139; Liu Xinfang 劉信芳, *Kongzi shilun shuxue* 孔子詩論述學 (Hefei: Anhui daxue chubanshe, 2003), 170–72; Huang Huaixin 黃懷信, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu "Shilun" jieyi* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書《詩論》解義 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2004), 23–31. For the Mawangdui text, see Liu Xinfang, *Jianbo Wu xing jiegou* 簡帛五行解詁 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 2000), 158–60; Wei Qipeng 魏啟鵬, *Jianbo "Wu xing" jianshi* 簡帛《五行》箋釋 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou, 2000), 126–28; Pang Pu 龐樸, *Zhubo "Wu xing" pian jiaozhu ji yanjiu* 竹帛《五行》篇校注及研究 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou, 2000), 82–83; Ikeda Tomohisa 池田知久, *Maotai Kanbo hakusho gogyōhen kenkyū* 馬王堆漢墓帛書五行篇研究 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1993), 533–45; Riegel, "Eros, Introversion, and the Beginnings of *Shijing* Commentary"; Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 366–67.

23. *Xunzi*, "Da lue" 大略; see Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986) 19.336.

24. Liu An, "Li sao zhuan" 離騷傳; see *Shiji* 84.2482. Here, the comment is not attributed to Liu An, but it is also quoted—and properly identified—in Ban Gu's "Li sao xu" 離騷序, which is preserved in Wang Yi's 王逸 (d. 158) commentary to the "Li sao" 離騷; see Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1070–1135), *Chu ci buzhu* 楚辭補注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) 1.49.

In the reading of the Mawangdui and Shanghai Museum manuscripts, “Fishhawks” explicitly expresses sexual allure and desire; the same is true for the “Airs” in general according to *Xunzi* and Liu An. Compared to the Mao exegesis, this must have implied a different interpretation not only of the whole song but also of some of its words. In particular, the epithet *yaotiao* 窈窕, in the Mao-Zheng text interpreted as referring to the lady’s self-chosen virtuous seclusion, can only have pointed to the lady’s erotic attraction. In fact, this is how the Mao-Zheng reading understood its textual variant *yaojiao* 窈糾 in “The Moon Comes Out” (Yue chu 月出, Mao 143), one of the “Airs of Chen” (Chen feng 陳風). According to its Mao preface, the song “criticizes being fond of sexual allure/desire” (*ci hao se* 刺好色) and speaks about those in office who “were not fond of virtue but delighted in glorifying sexual allure/desire” (*bu hao de er yue mei se* 不好德而說美色).<sup>25</sup>

In the view of the Mao prefaces, each one of the ten “Airs of Chen” criticizes indecent behavior, in most cases of sexual decadence; and this chimes well with the fact that by late Western Han times, the southern state of Chen had a reputation for loose morals and social and political disorder.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the eleven “Airs of Qi” (Qi feng 齊風) are without exception read as criticizing improper conduct, again with prominent mention of sexual dissolution. Yet right at the beginning of his “Poetic Exposition on the Moon” (*Yue fu* 月賦), Xie Zhuang 謝莊 (421–466) recalls how Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232) had mourned the death of his friends while watching the moon: “He gently intoned the lyrics of Qi, vigorously chanted the verses of Chen” (*shen yin Qi zhang, yin qin Chen pian* 沈吟齊章, 殷勤陳篇).<sup>27</sup> Traditional commentators, including Li Shan, have read this couplet not as a general reference to the Qi and Chen songs altogether, but specifically as pointing to “The Sun is in the East” (Dongfang zhi ri 東方之日, Mao 99) and “The Moon Comes Out.” Both songs speak of the moon, but they speak even more of female allure and implied erotic intimacy—and both, according to their Mao prefaces, were satires. Yet this reading is certainly not what Xie Zhuang tries to advance; instead, he seems to be quoting the two songs just for their moon imagery.

Another charming song from the “Airs” is “Among the Mulberries,” Sangzhong 桑中, Mao 48) in the “Airs of Yong” (Yong feng 鄘風) that, again according to its Mao preface, criticizes the Lord of Wei 衛 for the adulterous behavior in his ruling house, from where it then spread to the noblemen who arranged secret trysts with the wives of others. Yet consider the penultimate section in Jiang Yan’s 江淹 (444–505) “Poetic Exposition on Separation” (*Bie fu* 別賦) where Jiang recalls earlier moments of separation among lovers:

Next there were:  
The poem on the peony,  
And the song of a fair lady;

下有  
芍藥之詩  
佳人之歌

25. For the full argument on *yaotiao* and *yaojiao*, and how in excavated manuscripts “Fishhawks” is interpreted in conjunction with the songs that in the Mao reading are considered criticizing indecent behavior, see Kern, “Excavated Manuscripts and their Socratic Pleasures: Newly Discovered Challenges in Reading the ‘Airs of the States,’” *Études Asiatiques/Asiatische Studien* 61 (2007), 775–93, and Ke Mading 柯馬丁 (Martin Kern), “Cong chutu wenxian tan ‘Guofeng’ de quanshi wenti: yi ‘Guanju’ wei li” 從出土文獻談《國風》的詮釋問題：以《關雎》為例,” *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢, 2008.1: 253–71.

26. Chen was the southernmost of the states represented in the *Odes* and in Warring States times became absorbed by Chu. Since at least late Western Han times, its reputation was strongly negative: according to several passages in the *Hanshu*, the populace held women in (inappropriately) high esteem, was fond of ghosts and spirits, made use of shamans, and engaged in excessive (*yin* 淫, a term with strong sexual overtones) religious sacrifices; see *Hanshu* 28B.1653, 81.3335.

27. *Liu chen zhu Wenxuan* 13.16b; Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, 3: 33.

The girl from Wei among the mulberries,  
The beauty from Chen in the upper palaces . . .<sup>28</sup>

桑中衛女  
上宮陳娥

The “poem on the peony” is “Zhen and Wei” (Zhen Wei 溱洧, Mao 95), the last of the “Airs of Zheng” that according to its Mao preface was criticizing social disorder in general, and the widespread male and female licentiousness in the state of Zheng in particular. The “song of a fair lady” may refer to a song attributed to Li Yannian 李延年 (fl. 120 B.C.) praising his sister, a dancer who became the favorite consort of his ruler, Emperor Wu of Han.<sup>29</sup> The “girl from Wei among the mulberries” points, of course, to “Among the Mulberries,” as does the location of the “upper palaces” (*shanggong* 上宮), an expression taken from the same song. Meanwhile, it remains unclear what the “beauty from Chen” (*chen e* 陳娥) might be pointing to. Some scholars believe the phrase refers to “Swallows” (Yanyan 燕燕, Mao 28) in the “Airs of Bei” (Bei feng 邶風), a song that according to its Mao reading tells about the widow of Lord Zhuang of Wei 衛莊公 (r. 757–735 B.C.), Zhuang Jiang 莊姜, who sends off her female friend Dai Gui 戴嬀 to her home state of Chen.<sup>30</sup> While this would provide another example of separation and would furthermore match the fact that Zhuang Jiang is indeed a woman from Wei, “Swallows” does not speak of two lovers and seems an odd fit with both “among the mulberries” and “upper palaces”—unless Jiang Yan knows of a homoerotic reading of “Swallows,” now lost, that somehow connects it to “Among the Mulberries.” Another possible reading of “the beauty from Chen” would take the phrase in a more general way, that is, as a reference to the women of Chen, a state of questionable social mores. Be this as it may, or whatever other (lost) reference Jiang Yan might have had in mind with “the beauty from Chen,” his unambiguous references to “Among the Mulberries” and “Zhen and Wei” show that his use of these songs was not constrained by their pejorative judgment in the Mao-Zheng exegesis. Unlike the canonical reading of the “Airs,” nothing in his verses suggests a satirical intent behind his references to some of the more notorious songs of the *Odes*.

A generation earlier, Bao Zhao 鮑照 (414–466) had composed a *yuefu* 樂府 poem “Plucking Mulberries” (Cai sang shi 採桑詩) that came to be included in chapter four of the sixth-century anthology of love poetry, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace* (*Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠).<sup>31</sup> Bao Zhao begins with straight references to both “Among the Mulberries” and “Zhen and Wei,” only replacing the Zhen 溱 by the Qi 淇 River, which likewise flows through the territory of Zheng:

In late spring, plum flowers begin to drop;  
Female cloth-workers engage in silkworm toil.  
They pluck mulberries among the Qi and Wei Rivers,  
Then return to amuse themselves in the pavilions of the upper palaces.

季春梅始落  
女工事蠶作  
採桑淇洧間  
還戲上宮閣

Following lines of lush description that fuse images of spring with those of erotic allure, the first half of the song culminates in the celebration of youth and freshness:

In this season, warm allure is peaking;  
The beauty’s dress a new dazzle once again.

是節最暄妍  
佳服又新爍

28. *Liu chen zhu Wenxuan* 16.40a/b; cf. Knechtges, *Wenxuan* 3: 209.

29. *Hanshu* 97A.3951.

30. See Knechtges, *Wenxuan* 3: 208, n. ll. 107–8.

31. See Wu Zhaoyi 吳兆宜, *Yutai xinyong jianzhu* 玉臺新詠箋注 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1988), 4.142–43; see also Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩, *Yuefu shiji* 樂府詩集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 28.414.

Yet then, the poem's female persona sighs and plucks her zither, thinking of her younger days past and recalling earlier verse of erotic desire from the literary tradition. Restraining her thoughts, she recalls the canonical reading of the *Odes*—which now itself is just another literary trope:

The Airs of Wei since ancient times have given delight in the voluptuous,  
The customs of Zheng since old have been frivolous and fickle.

衛風古愉艷  
鄭俗舊浮薄

In a self-referential twist, Bao Zhao shows his familiarity with the very Mao-Zheng orthodoxy from which his song had departed right from the beginning. The belated reminder of what is “ancient” (*gu* 古) and “old” (*jiu* 舊) only seemingly displays deference to the tradition; to the aging female persona of the poem, it is but a gesture to console herself, smiling at the pleasures now gone by.

A number of other poems in the *Yutai xinyong* explicitly draw on the “Airs,” including songs from the Zheng and Wei sections, that the Mao-Zheng reading had taken as exposing indecent behavior. None of them can be understood as satires. Following Bao Zhao, some of the finest poets from the late Southern Dynasties such as Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) and Liu Xiaochuo 劉孝綽 (481–539)<sup>32</sup> continue to give particular attention to “Among the Mulberries.” In fact, Bao Zhao’s “Plucking Mulberries” proved immensely popular, from Liang through Tang times inspiring at least thirteen more *yuefu* poems of the same title. This series of poems was led by Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503–551, r. 549–551), Emperor Jianwen 簡文 of the Liang dynasty. Traditionally believed to be the sponsor of the *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*,<sup>33</sup> Xiao Gang in his own “Plucking Mulberries” alluded to the same places of erotic encounter from “Among the Mulberries” that Bao Zhao had invoked earlier.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, the *Selections of Refined Literature* include about four dozen texts of various genres that in one way or another refer to specific “Airs” from the Zheng, Wei, and other sections that according to the Mao prefaces displayed and criticized indecent behavior.<sup>35</sup> Pointing to the *Selections* preface where Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531) dismisses morally dubious songs as “melodies of perishing states” (*wangguo zhi yin* 亡國之音)<sup>36</sup>—a well-worn trope from as far back as the “Ten Faults” (Shi guo 十過) chapter of *Han Feizi* 韓非子—Tanaka Kazuo notes that the texts anthologized in the *Selections* differ from those of the *New Songs* in that they do not endorse expressions of erotic desire.<sup>37</sup> This is certainly true in general terms (and has been the traditional moral distinction between the *Selections* and the *New Songs*), but it would be too simple to believe that Xiao Tong and his collaborators, or the authors

32. Tanaka Kazuo, *Mōshi seigi kenkyū*, 174–82.

33. The compilation date of the anthology, and with it Xiao Gang’s involvement, is heavily debated. While Liu Yuejin 劉躍進, *Yutai xinyong yanjiu* 玉臺新詠研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 84–88, has argued that the text was only compiled under the Chen dynasty, that is, after the fall of the Liang, Fu Gang 傅剛, “*Yutai xinyong bianzuan shijian zai taolun*” 《玉臺新詠》編纂時間再討論 (*Beijing daxue xuebao* 北京大學學報 2002.3: 12–15), has refuted Liu and reiterated the traditional view of a Liang date, and of Xiao Gang’s patronage of the anthology. More recently, Zhang Peiheng 章培恆, “*Yutai xinyong wei Zhang Lihua suo ‘zhu’anlu’ kao*” 《玉臺新詠》為張麗華所“撰錄”考 (*Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 2004.2: 5–17) and Zhang Lei 張蕾, “*Yutai xinyong yanjiu shuyao*” 《玉臺新詠》研究述要 (*Hebei shifan daxue xuebao* 河北師範大學學報 [*Zhexue shehui kexue ban* 哲學社會科學版] 27.2 [2004]: 72–76) have again argued for a Chen dynasty compilation date.

34. See Guo Maoqian, *Yuefu shiji*, 28.414–17.

35. Tanaka Kazuo, *Mōshi seigi kenkyū*, 182–84.

36. Liu chen zhu Wenxuan, “Preface,” 2b.

37. For his rather brief actual comparison of the texts of the two collections, see Tanaka Kazuo, *Mōshi seigi kenkyū*, 185–89.



whose works they selected, were entirely under the sway of the Mao-Zheng approach to early poetry.

More examples could easily be adduced to show how Six Dynasties poets referred to specific “Airs” that give account of—and, in the Mao-Zheng reading, purportedly expose—sexual desire. Such references did not originate in the fifth and sixth centuries. In Lu Ji’s 陸機 (261–303) lengthy poetic exposition “Seven Summons” (Qi zheng 七徵), written in the tradition of Mei Sheng’s 枚乘 (d. 141 B.C.) “Seven Stimuli” (Qi fa 七發), a courtier attempts to entice Master Obscure Vacuity (Xuanxu zi 玄虛子), a man removed from mundane desire, to become engaged in the world.<sup>38</sup> In the section devoted to sexual allure, the courtier declaims:

I have heard:

North of the Mei River, there was the longing [of a man] gathering dodder;  
On the banks of the Qi River there were the sighs [of a man saying] “accompany me.”  
In “Fishhawks,” “waking and asleep” leads to troubled thoughts;  
In “Zhen and Wei,” “dissolute amusement” leads to pleasure.

As for

Enchanting consorts and voluptuous women,  
One searches the crowd and picks the exquisite . . .<sup>39</sup>

蓋聞

沫北有采唐之思，  
淇上有送予之歎。  
關雎以寤寐為戚，  
溱洧以謔浪為歡。

若夫

妖嬈艷女，  
蒐群擢俊。

This enticing scenario is then elaborated upon in much more detail, finally leading to the question “Might you, Sir, give in to these?” (*zi qi na zhi hu* 子其納之乎). In the passage just cited, the first two lines allude again to “Among the Mulberries,” dovetailing with the mention of “Zhen and Wei.” Thus, already in the third century we witness two notorious songs from the *Mao Odes* being freely used as literary tropes. Furthermore, a different version of Lu Ji’s apparently damaged and fragmentary text has a significant variant in the second line of the first couplet, which would result in the following reading:

· North of the Mei River, there was the longing [of a man] gathering dodder;  
The gentleman from the Qi River endured being sent off [across the river].  
沫北有采唐之思，  
淇上有送予之勤。

In this version, included in the eighth-century encyclopedia *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚,<sup>40</sup> the second line would allude to “A Fellow” (Meng 氓, Mao 58), a song from the “Airs of Wei” that according to its Mao preface criticizes improper seduction and licentious mingling. While in the before-cited *Lu Shiheng wenji* reading, both lines allude directly to phrases in “Among the Mulberries” and thus seem to be more consistent, the philological principle of

38. As pointed out in Wang Zuomin, *Shijing wenxue chanshi shi*, 280–81.

39. *Lu Shiheng wenji* 陸士衡文集 (*Sibu congkan* ed.) 8.9a/b. Yan Kejun 嚴可均, *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han sanguo liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), “Quan Jin wen” 全晉文 98.2a, notes “Seven Diminutives” (Qi wei 七微) as a variant title.

40. *Yiwen leiju* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985) 57.1031–33.

*lectio difficilior potior* (“the more difficult reading is the stronger”) can be invoked to argue for the *Yiwen leiju* version which is likewise perfectly meaningful. (It is easy to imagine how the *Yiwen leiju* text might have been changed into the one in the *Lu Shiheng wenji*, but it is hard to imagine the opposite process.) In that case, the brief passage would invoke not two but three songs that the Mao tradition considers critical of wayward behavior. Whichever version one chooses to follow, something else in Lu Ji’s text stands out: the pairing of these songs with “Fishhawks,” the very song that the Mao tradition considered the exact moral opposite of the tunes and lyrics of licentious behavior.<sup>41</sup> Taken in isolation, the citation “In ‘Fishhawks,’ ‘waking and asleep’ leads to troubled thoughts” does not suggest any specific interpretation of the song. However, its position between references to “Among the Mulberries” and “Zhen and Wei” (and possibly “A Fellow”) seems to leave little room for the Mao-Zheng understanding of the song as being in praise of female virtue.

As noted above, the *History of the Sui* imperial catalogue maintained that the *Lu Odes* were still in circulation by Lu Ji’s time. Yet Lu Ji’s allusion to “Fishhawks” does not seem to reflect their influence. At least in Eastern Han sources from just a century earlier that are believed to express the Lu interpretation, the song is presented as a satire because it confronts an immoral ruler with an ideal image of virtue and restraint, not because it itself speaks of sexual desire. By contrast, the early reading of “Fishhawks” that does propose the latter is the one found in the “Confucius’s Discussion of the *Odes*” and “Five Modes of Conduct” manuscripts where the expression of desire is embedded in the rhetoric of moral persuasion and self-cultivation. At the time of the manuscripts—a period spanning the 150 years from ca. 300 B.C. to the mid-second century B.C.—this reading of the “Airs” and the application of their purported rhetorical principles must have been widely known. Its presence can be shown in contemporaneous poetic texts such as Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 (179–117 B.C.) “Poetic Exposition on the Excursion Hunt of the Son of Heaven” (Tianzi youlie fu 天子游獵賦), the “Great Summons” (Da zhao 大招) in the *Verses from Chu* (*Chu ci* 楚辭), and—most importantly as the immediate model for Lu Ji’s text—Mei Sheng’s “Seven Stimuli.” All these poems recite erotic enticements (always including the music and dancers from Zheng and Wei) but end on a sober note of moral persuasion, thus putting the rhetorical principle of “using erotic allure to lead through illustration to ritual propriety” into the practice of textual performance.<sup>42</sup> It appears that Lu Ji, writing in the third century, was able to connect to this much earlier tradition that, until the recent manuscript finds, has never been noticed by literary historians. Yet even more remarkably, Lu Ji drew “Fishhawks” straight into the rhetoric of erotic enticement. It seems clear that either directly or indirectly, Lu Ji must have had access to the reading of “Fishhawks” that we now see in the ancient manuscripts and, furthermore, that he was fully aware of how Warring States and early Han texts had employed the principle of “using sexual allure to lead through illustration to ritual propriety.”

#### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

While Lu Ji’s work did not enter the *Wenxuan*, its inclusion in the seventh-century *Yiwen leiju* testifies to its continuous presence in the pre-Tang literary realm. It was certainly well

41. See, for example, Xiao Tong’s preface to the *Selections*, 2b; Knechtges, *Wen xuan*, vol. 1: *Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982), 79.

42. I have discussed this phenomenon of early rhetoric and its application to the above-noted texts in “Western Han Aesthetics and the Genesis of the *Fu*”; see further my “Excavated Manuscripts and their Socratic Pleasures” and “Cong chutu wenxian tan ‘Guofeng’ de quanshi wenti: yi ‘Guanju’ wei li.”

known and now appears as the missing link (probably parallel to other texts that have disappeared without a trace) between our earliest readings of the “Airs” and later Six Dynasties approaches to the “melodies of Zheng and Wei.” What we then see in the late southern dynasties, especially at the Liang court, was not a radically new approach to the “Airs” but merely the more pronounced statement of an already existing reading.

There can be no question about the overwhelming presence of the Mao-Zheng orthodoxy after the Han, and yet it appears there existed alternative approaches to the “Airs” that throughout Six Dynasties times were never fully eclipsed. One of these readings was that of the *Lu Odes* which were still circulating in Lu Ji’s time and remained, at least in some of their basic tenets, well known long thereafter. Another reading, this one even further removed from the *Mao Odes*, was that of the manuscripts, a late direct reflection of which can still be found with Lu Ji. While his poetic reception of it cannot have happened in isolation, we do not know to what extent it was still familiar to fifth- and sixth-century authors such as Xie Zhuang, Bao Zhao, Jiang Yan, and Xiao Gang. However, it was the only early interpretation that presented the “Airs” without the historical impositions of the Mao and Lu readings, and its forthright acceptance of the expressions of sexual allure and desire will not have ended with Lu Ji who was, after all, one of the most prominent writers of his age.<sup>43</sup>

The simple fact that such an acceptance was possible after the *Mao Odes* had become dominant may have prepared the ground for the subsequent reception of the “Airs.” By the time of the *Yutai xinyong*, it connected with a new literary taste that could happily accommodate “Among the Mulberries” and similar songs as poetic expressions of love and erotic desire. In this context, it is interesting to note that Xiao Gang, while as author and patron of literature mostly known for his “palace-style poetry” and his (real or merely purported) sponsorship of the *Yutai xinyong*, is also credited with a scholarly work titled *The Meaning of the Fifteen Airs of the States [Sections] in the Mao Odes* (*Mao shi shiwu guofeng yi* 毛詩十五國風義), a text in twenty chapters that the *History of the Sui* catalogue lists among the lost works of the Liang library. Considering Xiao Gang’s own poetry and literary predilections (including his references to “Among the Mulberries” noted above), Wang Zuomin is probably correct when suspecting that his interpretation of the “Airs” will have departed substantially from the Mao-Zheng orthodoxy.<sup>44</sup> Judging from his own work, Xiao Gang displayed an attitude to the “Airs” that according to traditional literary history only emerged in much later times. When during the Song, scholars like Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072), Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1036–1162), Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), and others began to challenge the political and historical readings of the Mao-Zheng orthodoxy, they struggled with the notion that the hallowed classic included songs that—at least to these Song scholars—seemed indecent. To solve the dilemma, they read pieces like “Among the Mulberries” not as celebrations of love but as warnings against licentiousness.<sup>45</sup> According to the conventional account of Chinese literary history, it is only in modern times, especially

43. See the biographical sketch in Knechtges, *Wenxuan*, 3: 379–81.

44. Wang Zuomin, *Shijing wenxue chanshi shi*, 263–66.

45. For a discussion of the traditional view of the Zheng and Wei songs, see Jean-Pierre Diény, *Aux origines de la poésie classique en Chine* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 17–40. On the efforts of Zhu Xi and other Song dynasty scholars to rescue the seemingly indecent songs as warnings, see Wong Siu-kit and Lee Kar-shui, “Poems of Depravity: A Twelfth Century Dispute on the Moral Character of the *Book of Songs*,” *T’oung Pao* 75 (1989): 209–25; Li Jiashu (Lee Kar-shui) 李家樹, *Guofeng Mao xu Zhu zhuan yitong kaoxi* 國風毛序朱傳異同考析 (Hong Kong: Xuejin chubanshe, 1979) and the same author’s *Shijing de lishi gong’an* 詩經的歷史公案 (Taipei: Da’an chubanshe, 1990), 39–82.

in the wake of the May Fourth period, that scholars have shed this layer of moralistic interpretation and have been willing to appreciate the "Airs" for what—at least to us—appears to be their literal meaning, especially in the expression of love and desire.

Yet it seems that the Six Dynasties author quoted above already did just that. Their readings of the "Airs" were evidently in the minority, and one might venture that despite its imperial authorship, Xiao Gang's *The Meaning of the Fifteen Airs* was lost and never retrieved for a reason. To Sui and Tang students of the *Mao Odes*, Xiao Gang's "meaning" (*yi* 義) cannot have been the "correct meaning" (*zhengyi* 正義) of Tang imperial learning—even though both relied on the same *Mao Odes* as the base text of the songs. Yet while the book listings in the *Suishu* intimate a sweeping victory of the Mao-Zheng orthodoxy, the many titles related to the *Mao Odes* may in reality have included a plurality of readings of the ancient *Odes* that went beyond mere elaboration on the Mao and Zheng commentaries.

It is probably true that after the third century, no reader could avoid the *Mao Odes*—including the text's tendentious glosses—as the base text of the ancient *Odes*. At the same time, it appears that throughout the Six Dynasties, readers and poets were able to transcend the Mao exegesis by relating to other, and sometimes more ancient understandings of the *Odes*. In addition to the Lu interpretation, these alternative approaches included also a reading that only recently has come to light in excavated manuscripts. This reading represents the earliest understanding of the "Airs" now available to us, and it has opened our eyes to a text like Lu Ji's "Summons" that before the manuscripts finds had no place in the reception history of the *Odes*.