TO KNOW THE TONE:
ANALYSES AND EXPERIMENTAL TRANSLATIONS
OF LĪ DUĀN’S POETIC EXPERIMENTS

by

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To Know the Tone: Analyses and Experimental Translations of Lî Duān’s Poetic Experiments

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In translation studies, one typically finds a dichotomy between fidelity and license: adherence to “meaning” or adherence to “style.” Thus, scholarly translations of Táng 唐 Dynasty (618-907 CE) Chinese poetry tend to focus on the semantic meaning of a poem to the neglect of its formal qualities, such as parallelism, rhyming, alliteration, assonance, and tonal variation. While this approach has done much to aid an historical understanding of Táng poetry, it fails to highlight a poet like Lî Duān 李端, who emphasized technical brilliance over original sentiment or imagery. Invoking Friedrich Schleiermacher’s foreignizing method of translation and Walter Benjamin’s concept of translation as a text’s afterlife, this thesis attempts to open up translation practices, arguing that “meaning” and “style” are not opposed to each other, and that while every translation must fail, the self-reflective translator will put forth a strategic failure. This thesis then employs historical reconstructions of Middle Chinese to discover that Lî Duān used alternative tonal patterns in several of his poems as means of disruption. Thereupon, experimental translations of these poems are offered, using the long and short vowels of accented syllables in English to represent the level (píng 平) and oblique (zè 仄) tonal classes of Middle Chinese.
DEDICATION

In memory of Marty Mazanec (1985-2005), cousin and childhood best friend, whose injunction to “get busy living” inspired me to go to China and pursue my dreams.
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B. Tonal Mistakes in Lî Duān’s Pentasyllabic Poetry.................................................. 65
Bó Yá excelled at playing the zither, while Zhōng Zǐqí excelled at listening. When Bó Yá played the zither and focused on ascending a high mountain, Zhōng Zǐqí would say, “Excellent! Towering, towering – like Mt. Tāi!” When he focused on flowing waters, Zhōng Zǐqí would say, “Excellent! Vast, vast – like the Yángzǐ or the Yellow River!” Whatever Bó Yá put forth, Zhōng Zǐqí certainly grasped.

When Bó Yá was wandering in the shadows of Mt. Tāi, he suddenly encountered a violent rainstorm and stopped beneath a crag. His heart saddened, he picked up his zither and played it. At first, he made a piece about the pouring rain. Then, he composed a tune about the lofty mountain. With each melody, Zhōng Zǐqí reached its sense. Bó Yá then put away his zither and sighed, “Excellent, excellent! Oh, how you listen! What you imagine is precisely what’s on my mind! Is there nowhere for my sounds to flee?”

The story of Bó Yá and Zhōng Zǐqí, found in the fourth century collection of Daoist and quasi-Daoist tales known as the Lièzĭ 列子, is the locus classicus of the old Chinese concept of zhīyīn 知音, “one who knows the tone.” In this sense, “tone” means the feeling and meaning of a melody, that essential core so hard to put into words. The story underscores the fact that it takes two to make art possible: the artist (Bó Yá) and the audience (Zhōng Zǐqí). The meaning of the artistic act – meaning, that is, in the broadest sense of the term – is lost without an understanding listener. Were Bó Yá to be left alone, apart from Zhōng Zǐqí, he would put away his zither in despair.


2 Cf. a similar story Zhuāngzĭ 莊子 tells at the funeral of his friend Huīzĭ 惠子 about the carpenter Shí 石, who needed the proper partner in order to perform a trick (Zhuāngzĭ jī shì 莊子集釋 24.843-44) For an English translation, see Mair, Wandering on the Way 244.
Translators would like to think that they “know the tone” of their subjects, that if they were to hear the original poet reciting his verse, they would exclaim shànzī, shànzāi 善哉善哉, “Excellent, excellent!” The idea is simple, and has an intuitive logic to it: to understand the work, one must first understand the author. Translation scholar Lawrence Venuti explains this concept (which he calls simpatico) in the following way:

When simpatico is present, the translation process can be seen as a veritable recapitulation of the creative process by which the original came into existence. The translator is assumed to participate vicariously in the author’s thoughts and feelings. To this end, many translators attempt to learn all that they can about a given era – its culture, history, politics, etc. – as a way of entering the author’s mind that they may produce something which approximates the original text, only in a foreign language. In the process, the translator becomes a scholar.

However, the ideal of zhīyīn/simpatico has come under attack in the wake of post-structuralism. As many literary theorists of the twentieth century have made clear, translation always does violence to the original text, and the original cannot be known. Venuti explains the concept of simpatico only as a sort of straw-man which he can later tear apart, calling it “no more than a projection” and a kind of “cultural narcissism” in which one “finds only the same culture in foreign writing, only the same self in the cultural other.”

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3 Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility* 237-38. Perhaps closer to the Lièzī passage, but less directly related to translation, is George Steiner’s attempt to use the experience of listening to music as a way of restoring meaning to art after deconstruction has emphasized its non-meaning, for which see Steiner, *Real Presences*, esp. 179-200.

4 The idea of the intentional fallacy, of course, pre-dates post-structuralism. For the classic formulation of this danger, see Wimsatt and Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” 3-18. For a further examination of general approaches to translation, see below, pp. 12ff.

de Man have done such a thorough job of debunking the notion of a transparent reading, and the concept of the subject such a reading presupposes, that there can be no return to a pre-critical state.⁶

Yet the warnings of various post-structuralisms do not give us license to read (and therefore translate) ahistorically. If anything, several strains of recent literary theory (generally Marxist and post-colonial⁷) have challenged us to do the opposite, to recognize the full historical and geographical particularity of the original work, to let it challenge the tendency to universalize one’s own culture. In fact, one could argue that the “cultural narcissism” Venuti so despises is more symptomatic of theories which hold language to be mechanistic, somehow beyond history. Thus, we find the ideal of zhīyīn/simpatico returning, but with a key moment of self-reflection. Although translators may never fully inhabit the minds of their subjects, they can avoid making gross philological and historical errors which lead to a taming, an attempted civilizing of the foreign work.

Therefore, this paper will argue that, for a modern critic of Táng 唐 Dynasty (618-907 CE) poetry, the only way to know the tone (zhīyīn) is by knowing the tones (zhīshēng 知聲), i.e., the literal four tones of the Chinese language as they were in the Táng. More specifically, this paper will examine how a single poet, Lǐ Duān 李端, employed tonal patterns as one element in

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⁶ See, e.g., Paul de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology* 45, in the context of deconstructing philosopher Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715-1780): “Being and identity are the result of a resemblance which is not in things but posited by an act of the mind which, as such, can only be verbal... To be verbal, in this context, means to allow substitutions based on illusory resemblances.”

⁷ E.g., one major work with this sort of injunction is Jameson, *The Political Unconscious.*
constructing his verse. Finally, this analysis will lead to an exploration of how knowing the tones should inform translation practice, with specific examples provided.

The Reception of Lǐ Duān

Lǐ Duān is notable in modern studies of Táng poetry for his absence. In both Chinese- and English-language scholarship, he generally appears as a member of a group of poets known as the Dàlì Era’s Ten Talents, Dàlì shí cái zǐ 大歷十才子. Stephen Owen’s monumental three-volume study of Tang poetry includes one chapter on this time period, which largely dismisses the output of the entire era (defined as roughly “between the late 750s and early 790s,” but named after the Dàlì reign period, 766-779) as “not worthy of survival,” filled with “hackneyed sentiments, images, and rhymes.” As for the younger members of the Ten Talents, among whom he counts Lǐ Duān, he considers them practically interchangeable, and thus translates only one of Lǐ’s poems, in order to demonstrate the group’s debt to Wáng Wéi 王維 (699-759). Other Western scholars’ treatments similarly fail to treat the poet as an individual. Such group-oriented analysis abounds in the Chinese-language secondary literature as well, the major

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9 Ibid. 273-74. The poem he translates is “Visiting Wang Stream After a Rain,” Yǔ hòu yóu Wāng chuān 雨後遊漸川, which can be found in Quán Tàng shī 全唐詩 [hereafter QTS] 285.3244.

10 Examples include Kroll, “The Egret in Medieval Chinese Literature” 190; Yu, “Poems for the Emperor” 81-82; and Swartz, Reading Tao Yuanming 57-58. Kroll and Swartz each translate a single Lǐ Duān poem, and Yu translates two, but none give any characterization of the poet himself, except for Kroll’s brief aside that Lǐ Duān, when he wrote a poem on the egret, was “of a retiring character.”
exception being a chapter devoted entirely to the poet in Jiăng Yîn’s 蔣寅 Dàlì shîrēn yânjiū 大歷詩人研究 [Research on the Dàlì poets].

The name of this group is first preserved in the earliest biographical notes of Lî Duân which remain, namely his entry in Yáo Hê’s 姚合 early ninth-century anthology Jîxuăn jî 極玄集 [Collection of utmost mystery]:

字正已。趙郡人。大歷五年進士。與盧綸、吉中孚、韓栩、錢起、司空曙、苗發、崔洞、耿湋、夏侯審唱和。號十才子。歷校書郎。終杭州司馬。

Styled Zhèngyī, a man of Zhàojùn [modern day Zhàoxiàn 趙縣 in Hébêí 河北 Province], passed the jînshî examination in the fifth year of the Dàlî era [770]. Composed poetry along the same rhyme patterns as Lú Lûn, Jî Zhôngfù, Hán Hông, Qián Qî, Sìkông Shû, Mîâo Fâ, Cûî Dông, Gêng Wêî, and Xiàhóu Shên. They were called the Ten Talents of the Dàlî era. [Lî Duân] served as a collator and, at the end of his life, was the military supervisor in Hângzhōû.

This account of Lî Duân’s life, with a few additions concerning his literary talents and his victory in poetry competitions, is nearly unchanged in the Qîng 清 Dynasty (1644-1911) collection Quán Tâng shî 全唐詩 [Complete Tâng poems]. Thus, we see that from the very beginning, the Ten Talents were considered as a collective entity. For many of them, including

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11 Jiăng Yîn 蔣寅, Dàlì shîrēn yânjiū 大歷詩人研究 205-19. For the Chinese-language collective analyses, see, e.g., Jiăng Yîn’s other masterful study, Dàlî shîfēng 大歷詩风, and Liú Guôyīng 刘国瑛, Xîntâi yû shîgê chuângzuô: Dàlî shî cáiîzî yânjiū 心态与诗歌创作: 大历才子研究. Tângdài wênxué shî 唐代文学史 2:31-33 gives a brief treatment of Lî Duân individually but largely parrots the clichés of earlier critics.

12 I.e., the highest degree attainable in the imperial examination system, sometimes translated as “presented scholar.”

13 Jîxuăn jî 極玄集 juăn 卷 A, in Tângrén xuăn Tâng shî 唐人選唐詩 325.

14 QTS 284.3232. For an English translation of this version of Lî Duân’s biography, see Tang Zi-chang, Poems of Tang 420.
Lí Duān, birth and death dates are either unknown or speculative. Moreover, due to the fact that the Ten Talents wrote in highly conventional styles, using standard allusions and imagery derived from the High Táng masters, many of their poems appear similar. As the biographical note above mentions, this group of poets often wrote poetry in the context of composition competitions, in which several people would write according to the same rhyme scheme, the winner being decided by the speed and ease with which he composes. In this context, a poem’s content becomes secondary, while the utmost of importance is attached to form and technique.

Despite his relative neglect in modern scholarship, Lí Duān was a major literary figure in his own day. His poems were included in the Táng anthologies Jīxuān jì [Collection of the utmost mystery], Yùlán shī 御覽詩 [Poems for the emperor’s perusal], Yòuxuān jì 又玄集 [Collection of the more mysterious], and Cǎi diào jí 才調集 [Collection of talents]. There are three entire juān 卷 devoted to 257 of his poems in the Quán Táng shī, and he earned the nickname among later generations of cāizīzhǒng de cǎizī 才子中的才子, “the talent among talents,” due to the speed and facility with which he composed his poetry.

15 Yu, “Poems for the Emperor” 78, e.g., gives us the following list: “Lu Lun (748?-798?), Han Hong (jīnshì 754), Qian Qi (722?-785), Miao Fa (d. ca. 785), Xiahou Shen (fl. 780), Ji Zhongfu (d. ca. 788), Cui Dong (718-789?), Sikong Shu (730?-790?), Li Duan (738?-786), and Geng Wei (jīnshì 763),” echoing the dates given by Jiāng Yín, Dài shīrén yánjiū. Owen does not attempt to provide precise dates for any of the Ten Talents in either The Great Age of Chinese Poetry or “The Cultural Tang.” Regarding Lí Duān, a Yuán 元 Dynasty (1271-1368) collection of Táng poets’ biographies admits that dates of the poet’s birth and death are “unclear” (Táng cǎizī zhuàn jiào jiàn 唐才子傳校箋 2.4.76), while Tángdài wénxué shī 31 gives us “?785?” with which Kroll agrees in “Poetry of the T’ang Dynasty” 302. There is no entry for our poet in either of the official Táng histories, Jiù Táng shū 舊唐書 and Xīn Táng Shū 新唐書.

16 Jiāng Yín, Dài shīrén yánjiū 209. Cf. Tángdài wénxué shī 32.

17 Jiāng Yín, Dài shīrén yánjiū 205.
One reason for this disparity between Lǐ Duān’s original reputation and his marginalization in modern scholarship could be due to the fact that current critics, especially those in the West, tend to value originality over technical prowess. As Owen writes of the entire Dàlì era, “In ages when the subtleties of mood and craft were primary concerns, the later eighth-century capital poets were popular. But in ages dominated by strong, individual poets, they were largely ignored.”18 Thus, the strong personalities of the High Táng, such as Wáng Wéi, Mèng Hǎorán 孟浩然 (689-740), Lǐ Bó 李 白 (701-762), and Dù Fǔ 杜 甫 (712-770), tend to attract more critical attention than their literary descendants in the late eighth century. To put it bluntly, from our aesthetic perspective, these poets are simply more enjoyable to read.

Another reason for Lǐ Duān’s current obscurity is due to the influence of the Qīng Dynasty anthology of Táng verse, Táng shī sānbǎi shòu 唐詩三百首 [Three hundred Táng poems], which features only one of Lǐ Duān’s poems, a quatrain titled “Listening to the Cithern,” Tīng zhēng 聽琴.19 Since its publication in 1763 or 1764 (the precise date is disputed), this volume has become by far the most popular collection of Táng verse, largely because of its accessibility (it was originally compiled for schoolchildren) and its high aesthetic standard.20 Therefore, non-scholarly translations of Táng poetry rarely stray from the circle prescribed by Táng shī sānbǎi shòu, and when they do, they focus on the same few poems not included in this collection.

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19 I use the archaic term “cithern” to distinguish the zhēng 筝, a type of Chinese zither which at the time had 12-13 strings (though today has 16-18 strings), from its cousin the qīn 琴, which has 7 strings.

For example, popular translations of Lǐ Duān’s poetry are almost completely limited to
two poems, the aforementioned “Listening to the Cithern” and “Paying Respects to the New
Moon,” Bài xīn yuè 拜新月. Despite the fact that Lǐ Duān wrote in a variety of styles and
composed the majority of his verses as pentametric eight-line poems, both of these poems are
pentametric quatrains (wǔyán juéjù 五言绝句). This tells us more about Qīng Dynasty taste, on
which early Western translators depended, than about Lǐ himself. In fact, if we take the Táng
anthologies to be an accurate gauge of that era’s taste, we can see that Lǐ’s contemporaries
valued his pentametric eight-line poems more than his pentametric quatrains.

However, as a way of broaching the problems of translation, let us compare several
English renderings of Lǐ Duān’s most famous piece, “Tīng zhēng” 聽箏, which I have called
“Listening to the Cithern.” First, an interlinear version:

| 听 | 簏 |
|—|—|
| tīng | zhēng |
| listen | cithern |

Although I have been able to find are Henry H. Hart’s extremely loose
translation of “Zāochūn tóng yǔ shíláng tí Qīnglóng Shāngfāng yuán” 早春同庾侍郎題青龍上方院 (QTS 284.3235), which he titles “A Shrine at Twilight” (A Garden of Peonies 52), and Tang Zi-chang’s rendering of “Sù Huáipǔ yì Sīkōng wénmíng” 宿淮浦憶司空文明 (QTS 386.3269), which he titles “Rest at Hwai River Thinking of Si-kon Suo [sic]” (Poems of Tang 345). “Tīng zhēng” can be found on Táng shī sānbǎi shòu 唐詩三百首 7.6, and both “Tīng zhēng” and “Bài xīn yuè” can both be found on QTS 286.3280.

21 The only exceptions I have been able to find are Henry H. Hart’s extremely loose translation of “Zāochūn tóng yǔ shíláng tí Qīnglóng Shāngfāng yuán” 早春同庾侍郎題青龍上方院 (QTS 284.3235), which he titles “A Shrine at Twilight” (A Garden of Peonies 52), and Tang Zi-chang’s rendering of “Sù Huáipǔ yì Sīkōng wénmíng” 宿淮浦憶司空文明 (QTS 386.3269), which he titles “Rest at Hwai River Thinking of Si-kon Suo [sic]” (Poems of Tang 345). “Tīng zhēng” can be found on Táng shī sānbǎi shòu 唐詩三百首 7.6, and both “Tīng zhēng” and “Bài xīn yuè” can both be found on QTS 286.3280.

22 Jiāng Yīn, Dài lì shìfēng 208-09 gives us the following statistics about Lǐ Duān: of his 257 extant poems, 37 (14%) were old-style (gǔtí 古體) or music-bureau (yuèfǔ 樂府), 49 (19%) were heptametric (qīyán 七言), and 144 (56%) were regulated pentametric (wǔlǜ 五律).
Although Jiāng Yīn does not break down this last category further, a glance through Lǐ Duān’s
poems in QTS reveals that, of the regulated pentametric poems, 33 (13% overall) are quatrains
and 111 (43% overall) are composed of eight lines.
The first thing we may note is the concision: the poem is only twenty syllables long, divided into four lines of five characters. Next, we note the lack of a stated subject, as is typical in much of classical Chinese poetry. Thus, the story of the poem could be told objectively, from a third-person narrator, or it could be told subjectively, from the first-person perspective of the cithern player. Also, there is the parallelism within the first couplet: the third character of lines one and two both refer to precious substances, 金 and 玉, gold and jade. The parallelism becomes stronger if we know that 金粟 and 玉房 are both two-character compounds, the first referring to a dazzling yellow color, the second a common way of describing a magnificent room, one often bedecked with jade.

We may also notice the proper name which appears in the third line, 周郎, which appears to be an allusion that the original audience would have immediately caught. In fact, 周郎 refers to 周瑜, a general of the state of 吳 during the Three Kingdoms period (220-260 CE), who was known to be a skillful and attentive musician, much like the fictional character Bó Yá we meet in Lièzǐ. Thus, the scene that appears is a short, suggestive one with a very specific referent: a young woman in a lavish palace playing the
cithern for her lord the connoisseur, General Zhōu. Hoping to attract Zhōu’s attention, she plays a few wrong notes that he (but perhaps no one else) may notice.

Finally, to increase our intuition that the poem is tightly crafted, we may notice the repetition of certain sounds: in Modern Standard Mandarin, it follows an ABAB end-rhyme scheme. Also, the fourth character of lines 2 and 3 rhyme, and there is the repetition of the character shí 時 in line 4. The poems’ sounds resound like harmonious notes of a cithern, attracting our attention some 1200 years later as well as it did General Zhōu’s.

Mindful of the linguistic and historical details of the poem, let us now turn to its first English translation, by the early Sinologist Herbert Giles, originally published in 1898.

MUSIC HATH CHARMS

Hark to the rapturous melody!
   Her white arm o’er the lute she flings. . . .
To break her lover’s reverie
   She strikes a discord on the strings.

First, let us note that Giles reproduces two qualities of the original form: the ABAB rhyme scheme and the four-line structure. On the level of poetic form, he also renders his lines in iambic meter, surely utilizing the dominant rhythm of the time in order to make the quatrain a proper poem in English.

Although he retains two of the governing images of the poem – the whiteness of the player’s skin and her intentional missteps – the rest is changed nearly beyond recognition.

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23 Although there may appear to be more internal resonance, especially of the –u sound, to one who reads the poem in Mandarin, it is actually not present if one were to read it with Middle Chinese pronunciation. I have restricted myself to pointing out rhyme where it exists with the early pronunciation, except for the “rhyme” between lines 1 and 3, which is actually an off-rhyme in Middle Chinese, meaning the characters have the same final sound but different tones. For more on Middle Chinese phonology, see below, pp. 20ff.

24 Giles, Gems of Chinese Literature 198.
General Zhōu is transformed into “her lover,” the jade room and the gold pegs are gone, and the player’s arms “fling” about. The first line, instead of describing the physical attributes of the lute, describes the effect of the music on the listener, that it enraptures him. The title reinforces this theme, and the third line confirms it by using the word “reverie.” Thus, the poem is no longer a brief, delicate, uncertain moment nestled in the setting of a large, lavish palace; instead, it is of two intimates, the tension of the lover’s mind being divided between his beloved and her music. What was implicit in the original (the lover’s divided attention) has become explicit in the translation, and what was explicit in the original (the physical details, the historical referent) has been erased in the translation.

The next version comes from Witter Bynner, an American poet who worked with Kiang Kang-hu to translate the entirety of the anthology Táng shī sānbāi shǒu into English in 1929.

*On Hearing Her Play the Harp*

Her hands of white jade by a window of snow  
Are glimmering on a golden-fretted harp –  
And to draw the quick eye of Chou Yü,  
She touches a wrong note now and then.

In this translation, Bynner pays close attention to the many physical details in a way Giles did not. The gold frets of the stringed instrument remain intact, General Zhōu is mentioned by name, and the temporal aspect of the final line returns. However, a few curious changes have been introduced, such as the reversal of lines 1 and 2, the “window of snow” which replaces the jade room, the “glimmering” of the hands, and General Zhōu’s new “quick eye.”

Furthermore, the rhymes have been lost, and the poem has no fixed meter, though the number of lines remains the same. Also, like Giles’s translation, the subject becomes explicitly

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“she,” i.e. the feminine third person. Although the overall atmosphere of this translation is perhaps closer to the original, the tautness of the form is sacrificed. Moreover, the English reader is left scratching his head at the reference to “Chou Yü,” whose name is given but is never described. While Bynner’s translation is certainly more evocative than Giles’s, it nevertheless fails when set next to “Tīng zhēng” by Lĭ Duān.

The point here is not to point fingers at translators of the past because they could not capture the entirety of Lĭ Duān’s poetic craft. Rather, the point is to use the most well-known (and, presumably, best understood) of Lĭ’s poems to highlight the difficulties inherent in the translation of Táng poetry and, more broadly, in any act of translation. Although there have been many other translations of “Tīng zhēng,” let us take Giles’s and Bynner’s renderings synecdochically for the others.26 A translation strategy which takes for granted the transparency of language and its relation to larger structures is doomed, like every translation, to fail, but with this difference: it will be unaware of its failure and unable to calculate its failure strategically. Therefore, we must turn now to the broader field of translation theory in order to formulate a self-reflective translation strategy.

Approaching Translation

Unlike other literary activities, translation is remarkable for its dearth of novel theorizations. As George Steiner remarks in his seminal study of translation, *After Babel*:

List Seneca, Saint Jerome, Luther, Dryden, Hölderin, Novalis, Schleiermacher, Nietzsche, Ezra Pound, Valéry, [Stephen] MacKenna, Franz Rosenzweig, Walter Benjamin, [Willard van Orman] Quine—and you have very nearly the sum total of those who have said anything fundamental or new about translation.27

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26 For other translations of “Tīng zhēng,” as well as of most previously published translations of Lĭ Duān’s verse in English, see Appendix A.

27 Steiner, *After Babel* 283.
Traditionally, the question comes down to a very simple binary opposition of “fidelity and license—the freedom of faithful reproduction and, in its service, fidelity to the word”: is a literal rendering of lexical meaning and syntactical order more proper, or is a reproduction of the “spirit” of a text to be preferred? Translators over the centuries have typically wrestled with this question in a practical, professional manner, offering apologies for their personal methods. However, all held the same basic premises: the original text is what is basic, what is real, what contains the true meaning of the work; the translation is its bastard child, a derivation which never measures up, which can never contain all the meaning of the original. Until the twentieth century, the translator’s dilemma was rarely theorized.

In the context of this static debate, enter Friedrich Schleiermacher, noted nineteenth-century German philosopher and theologian. In his 1813 speech delivered to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin called “On the Different Methods of Translating,” he attempts to move beyond the simple opposition between fidelity and license and begins to speculate on other ways to think about translation. To him, there are essentially two options available to the translator, though different from fidelity and license:

Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader.

Although still phrased as a binary opposition, Schleiermacher’s terms here reject an immediate understanding of the original text through translation. The translator cannot somehow recover the

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28 Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator” 78.

29 For a helpful historical overview, see the opening section of Steiner’s chapter on “The Claims of Theory,” After Babel 248-83.

30 Schleiermacher, “From ‘On the Different Methods of Translating’” 42.
author's original intention, render it into a different language, and present this to his reader; rather, in translation, “one sacrifices the identity of the work”\(^{31}\) because it changes the very substance of the text, i.e., language.

Therefore, Schleiermacher finds it necessary to reject the method of translation which seeks to leave the reader alone and moves the writer toward the reader. This approach presents a false immediacy to the reader. On the contrary, Schleiermacher endorses the method of moving the reader closer to the writer, as seen through the medium of the translator:

> The translator's goal must be to provide his reader with the same image and the same pleasure as reading the work in the original language offers to the man educated in this way, whom we usually call, in the better sense of the word, the amateur or the connoisseur.\(^{32}\)

What the translator ought to attempt is a reproduction of his own experience of the text, which is an encounter with the original as foreign, not as an immediately comprehensible substance. Although this concept of translation still implies a hierarchy between authentic and derived, it is nevertheless a much more subtle theorization than the old tension between fidelity and license, and even anticipates many key concepts of modernist and postmodernist translation theories.\(^{33}\) Thus, Schleiermacher paves the way for Benjamin.

Written in 1923 or 1924, Walter Benjamin's essay “The Task of the Translator” originally served as the introduction to his translation of Charles Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*, but has recently, especially since Derrida's treatment of it in 1985,\(^{34}\) become a canonical text in modern

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\(^{31}\) Ibid. 41.

\(^{32}\) Ibid. 44.

\(^{33}\) Cf., e.g., Venuti’s binary of translation approaches, called “domesticating” and foreignizing,” which are largely a reformulation of Schleiermacher, minus the latter’s nationalist overtones (*The Translator's Invisibility* 15-16).
translation theory. In it, Benjamin pushes Schleiermacher’s concept of foreignization a step or two farther than his predecessor:

No translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife—which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living—the original undergoes a change. Even words with a fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process.\(^\text{35}\)

Like Schleiermacher, Benjamin rejects out of hand an immediate conception of translation, that a translation can reproduce for the reader the same experience as the original work on the native reader. In the afterlife of a text, which is to say its translation, the original undergoes a change. It is thus not a stable, fixed entity; it is something historical, changing throughout time, highlighted by each new translation. Because the authentic original admits of its mutability, because it is self-reflexive, it need not fall victim to false immediacy. Translation reveals the original to be something in flux, yet it remains the original.

This, however, leads to a new question: how does the original change? The answer is contained in what Benjamin means by the term “afterlife.” He explores this concept in the following sentence:

Just as the manifestations of life are intimately connected with the phenomenon of life without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife.\(^\text{36}\)

\(^{34}\) Derrida, “Des Tours de Babel.” My reading of Benjamin’s essay departs from Derrida’s by emphasizing its positive over its negative formulations, though both types are present in his text. In so doing, I believe I am more closely adhering to Benjamin’s original project, which he describes elsewhere as divesting phenomena “of their false unity so that, thus divided, they might partake of the genuine unity of truth” (Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama 33).

\(^{35}\) Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator” 73.

\(^{36}\) Ibid. 71.
The meaning of “afterlife” may seem fairly obvious, that, due to the fact that languages evolve, a work will be passed down to future generations only in translated form. However, it soon becomes clear that the concept of afterlife is, in fact, more complicated. First, Benjamin writes that “the idea of life and afterlife should be regarded with an entirely unmetaphorical objectivity,” but that this is not based upon “the feeble scepter of the soul” or “the even less conclusive factors of animality, such as sensation, which characterize life only occasionally.” Rather, “the concept of life is given its due only if everything that has a history of its own, and is not merely the setting for history, is credited with life.”

Life, then, is more than mere survival; it is existence in history, something's ability to create history. Life is the effect on the past and future of a person, an event, a work of art, etc. Therefore, afterlife is the continual, potentially eternal extension of this concept of life. A translation “issues from” the afterlife of the original, thus revealing the original to be imbued with life, with historicity, with an “ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering” of meaning(s).

This idea of translation as the “afterlife” of a text, then, leads to an investment in history, albeit one that is not singular and naïve. The translator must approach her task historically in two directions: she must (1) use the fruits of the labors of historians and philologists to attempt to understand the context in which the original was written, (2) reflect upon her own historical situation and grasp the potential impact of her translation, and (3) examine the interrelations.

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37 Ibid. 71.

38 Ibid. 72. Cf. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* 45, where he explains that the term “origin” describes “that which emerges from the process of becoming and appearance.” To concretize this abstract formulation, see Jorge Luis Borges’s story “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote,” which tells of a man who seeks to rewrite *Don Quixote* word-for-word without consulting the original text. Particularly illustrative is one passage in which Borges contrasts two identical quotations, which take on entirely different meanings due to their unique historical contexts (*Labyrinths* 36-44).
between the previous two, the mutual re-inscribing of history and historiography. Therefore, the translator must formulate her translation as a *strategy*. Where Kenneth Burke observed that “all questions are leading questions” in that they “automatically select the field of controversy,” we can state that all translations are strategic translations in that they automatically select what is important and what is translatable in a given text.

Typically, translators have emphasized semantic content as what is important and translatable, especially in the scholarly context. In this approach, history is revealed in footnotes which inform the reader of philological debates of a given word, or the plausible literary allusions upon which the poet may have drawn. At its best, this method is laudable and does much to give the target audience a certain kind of understanding of the original text; at its worst, it becomes paraphrase, falling outside the boundaries of the term “translation.”

But history reveals itself in matters of form as well as matters of content. When Frankfurt School theorist Theodor Adorno tells us that “history does not merely touch on language, but takes place in it,” he refers not only to the semantic content of words but to the larger structures of form and genre as well. Historical, political, and economic realities all contribute to the evolution of form; therefore, they are subject to change over time, change which will be seen as either degenerate or progressive (which, again, will often depend upon the time). The writing of blank verse in English, for example, meant something very different for Shakespeare than it does for a contemporary American poet.

Therefore, the historically-minded translator must not slight the consideration of form as he prepares to translate. As poet and translator John Nims reminds us,

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39 Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* 67.

The translator has an obligation to form as well as to content, and if rhythm meant as much to the poet as “thought” did, or if he felt a sound effect worth achieving, the translator should at least be aware of that effect and work toward it, if he can.  

Although any idea of an “original effect” is necessarily a reconstruction, a falsity, an understanding of these (more or less accurate) reconstructions can help the translator formulate his own strategy, strive for a more nuanced understanding of the original text and its impact on various generations. In this way, he will better be able to provide the target reader with a critical understanding of the original.

The Translation of Middle Chinese

The attention to sound is especially important for the translator of Táng Dynasty Chinese poetry. As A. C. Graham remarks in the introduction to his translations of poems of the late Táng, “poems in China, as elsewhere, are firstly patterns of sound.” Though this may sound obvious, even banal, Graham's statement bespeaks the Sinological community's relative unconcern with this matter. The scholarly standard of reading and transcribing Middle Chinese (MC), which covers the Táng period, using Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM) pronunciation and the conservatism of the Chinese script create the illusion of a false immediacy in the reading of older texts. In its most extreme form, this false immediacy becomes the ideographic myth. In its subtler forms, it results in numerous scholars dressing up paraphrase (or mere lexical correspondence) as poetry. But the study of Chinese literature is more than Signology.

41 Nims, “Considerations” 133.  
42 Graham, Poems of the Late T’ang 17. Cf. Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature 158: “Every work of literary art is, first of all, a series of sounds out of which arises the meaning.”  
43 Made popular in the West by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound in The Chinese Character as a Written Medium for Poetry. For a succinct debunking of the ideographic myth, see DeFrancis, Chinese Language 133-49.
Yet this is not indicative of the whole field; a handful of scholars have attempted to integrate the aural qualities of medieval Chinese poetry into their analyses, and phonological reconstructions have made great strides in recent years, especially in accessibility. For this reason, there is no longer any excuse not to take the issue head-on and translate those aspects of poems which may have seemed untranslatable in the last century. For just one such example, the translator of Classical Chinese poetry must take into consideration the notoriously laconic nature of the language, and the fact that this element often gets slighted in translations into Western languages. To quote A. C. Graham again:

The gift of terseness is the least dispensable literary qualification of a translator from Chinese, and the illusion that to work in everything one must go on adding words is the cause of the paradox that some of the sparsest Chinese writers seem like windbags when read in English.

Thus, lest the poet become a “windbag,” it is paramount that the translator of Chinese should attempt to avoid long, Latinate words and phrases in favor of the terseness of diction found in Anglo-Saxon-influenced poets, such as Gerard Manley Hopkins and Seamus Heaney.

Even more frequently neglected in the literary analysis of Táng poetry are issues such as rhyming (both end rhymes and internal), alliteration, and assonance. One reason for this is the

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45 William Baxter, for example, has made his working etymological dictionary available on his website (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~wbaxter/etymdict.html), and David Branner has created Yìntōng, a user-friendly, searchable database of his transcriptions (http://americanorientalsociety.org/yintong).

46 See, e.g., Arthur Waley on avoiding Sīmā Xiāngrǔ's 司馬相如 (179-117 BCE) poems: “Such eloquence cannot be described, much less translated” (The Temple and Other Poems 44).

47 Graham, Poetry of the Late T'ang 19.
vast disparity between the sounds of MSM and MC, which means any modern reader can “hear” the original text only through the reconstructions of historical linguists. But any reconstruction of MC is tentative and must be approached with caution. In light of this, many literary scholars have concluded that they should not approach these reconstructions at all, that such matters are best left to phonologists. Yet at this point, the lesson of the post-structuralists should give us our rejoinder: any interpretation of a literary text is a reconstruction, an approximation which fails; one which, however cautiously, accounts for linguistic particulars will be a more historically-informed interpretation.

The first major attempts to reconstruct the phonetic qualities of MC using European linguistic techniques come from Swedish linguist Bernhard Karlgren’s efforts in the early twentieth century. After making detailed transcriptions of the sounds of various Chinese dialects, Karlgren used the methods of historical phonology, along with ancient rhyming dictionaries, to reconstruct MC and Old Chinese (OC), eventually culminating in Grammata Serica Recensa. Since the publication of Karlgren’s monumental work, many scholars have refined his work in various ways, ranging from Edward Schafer’s simplifications to William Baxter’s large-scale revisions, but few have departed from his general methodology.

In contrast, David Branner has tried to avoid the messiness inherent in using dialect studies to reconstruct the actual phonetic values of MC. He has proposed instead what he calls an “anti-reconstruction,” a transcription system which aims to represent clearly and succinctly the information contained in rhyming tables such as the Guāngyín 廣韻 (1008 CE), with the aim of

\[\text{Schafer, The Vermilion Bird 267-69; Baxter, A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology. See also Pulleyblank, Middle Chinese.}\]
providing a tool useful to non-linguists.\(^{49}\) In this way, Branner’s system does not fall into the trap of thinking it is conveying the actual sound of MC; rather, it demonstrates a critical self-awareness which allows the scholar to draw closer to the original text without the triumphalism inherent in other systems. For this reason, I have chosen to use Branner’s anti-reconstructions when examining the auditory qualities of Táng poetry.

Finally, and perhaps most neglected of all in translations of Táng poetry, there is the matter of the four tones of MC and how poets make use of them. Although there are four tones in both MSM and MC, the qualities of these tones differ drastically. As every Chinese 101 student learns, in MSM, the tones are labeled first, second, third, and fourth (*diyīshēng* 第一聲, *dìèrshēng* 第二聲, *disānshēng* 第三聲, and *disìshēng* 第四聲) and have distinct qualities based on variation in pitch as follows: (1) high and flat, (2) rising, (3) low and dipping, and (4) sharply falling. In MC, however, the tones are called *píngshēng* 平聲, *shǎngshēng* 上聲, *qūshēng* 去聲, and *rùshēng* 入聲, i.e., level, rising, departing, and entering. The only tone for which we know the phonetic quality with any certainty is *rùshēng*, which indicated that the word ended with a \( -p, -t, \) or \( -k \) (a quality lost in MSM but still present in other dialects, such as Cantonese). Of the phonetic qualities of the other three tones, linguists have not come to consensus.

We do know, however, that for two words to rhyme, they had to match in ending (as in English) as well as in tone.\(^{50}\) We also know that the four tones were divided into two categories:

\(^{49}\) Branner, “A Neutral Transcription for Teaching Medieval Chinese.”

\(^{50}\) Later prescriptive rhyme books would further specify that words could rhyme only if they belonged to the same *shè* 社, i.e., the sixteen subdivisions of the tonal categories. However, as Branner notes, there is evidence that these categories had not fully formed by the time period with which we are concerned (“A Neutral Transcription” 14-15), and individual poets rarely stuck so closely to such rules, so this paper will ignore *shè*. 
ping 平 and zè 仄, i.e. level and oblique. Ping included all words with pingshēng (which comprised the majority of words), and zè included all words with the other three tones. This division of tones, and its importance to medieval Chinese prosody, may reflect the influence of Sanskrit and a new distinction between short and prolongable words, which would have been important for the chanting of translated Buddhist scriptures.51 Whatever the actual qualities of the tones, the metrical patterns for lǜshī 律詩, “regulated poetry,” which developed in the late fifth century and gained wide currency in the Táng Dynasty, are based upon variations of the ping and zè tonal classes.

Although the rules for the various poetic forms could become quite complex, pentametric poetry (wūyánshī 五言詩), on which we shall focus when examining Lì Duān’s poems, primarily emphasizes variation of the tonal qualities of the second and fourth characters in a line of poetry. Within a couplet, the pattern within each line should vary, the second line being the inverse of the first. Within a quatrain, the pattern within each couplet should vary, the second couplet being the inverse of the first. Finally, within an eight-line, pentametric recent-style poem (wūyán jīntīshī 五言近體詩), the patterns of each quatrain should vary. We can illustrate this more clearly with the following chart, letting X represent oblique tones and O represent level tones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couplet variation:</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>or</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quatrain variation:</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>or</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>X</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eight-line variation: | X | O | or | O | X |

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However, we must note that the larger the scale, the less stringently binding are such rules. That is to say, while it is somewhat common to see the same kind of quatrain repeated in an eight-line poem, it is very uncommon to see the second and fourth characters of a line both have oblique tones.\footnote{52 For a more thorough examination of this matter, the classic study of Chinese prosody is Wáng Li 王力, Hǎnyǔ shīlùxué 汉语诗律学. For a brief overview in English, see Downer and Graham, “Tone Patterns in Chinese Poetry,” or Owen, The Poetry of the Early T’ang 429-31. For a more extensive treatment in English, see Mair and Mei, “The Sanskrit Origins of Recent-Style Prosody,” referenced above. For the earliest extant primary resource on Táng prosody, see the collection by the early ninth-century Japanese monk Kūkai 空海, Bunkyō hifuron 文鏡秘府論.}

We must briefly note one more thing about the tones: generally, the end-rhymes (which appear on the even-numbered lines, and occasionally the first line) were level tone, while the remainder of the lines ended with oblique tones which did not rhyme with each other. The opposite (end rhymes oblique tone, the rest level) was not unheard of, but was less common. In any case, it was important that only even lines rhyme with each other (with an optional first-line rhyme), that the rhyme words be of the same tonal category, and that non-rhyme ending words be of the other tonal category.

With this brief foray into Chinese prosody in mind, it is easy to see why English translators of Táng poetry have generally shied away from matters of tonal variation. First, they have no direct equivalent for it in their language, and therefore no way of directly reproducing it (as they can with, say, line breaks). Even if we accept Mair and Mei’s hypothesis that the píng
and zè tonal classes represented prolongable and short syllables, and thus were roughly analogous to the long and short vowel distinction that formed the basis of Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin verse, we still run up against the fact that English poetry traditionally distinguishes between stressed and unstressed syllables, an entirely different matter. Second, because the four tones of MC are quite different from those of MSM, knowledge of the tones can only come through the reconstructions of historical phonologists, of which many literary scholars in the West are ignorant, or, if not, they regard such reconstructions with suspicion.

However, as we have seen from our survey of the reception of Lǐ Duān, matters of form were essential to his craft. The genius of our poet (and many of the Dàlì poets) lies not in what he says, but how he says it. While form and content can never be separated into utterly distinct binaries, even a cursory survey of Lǐ Duān’s poetic corpus in light of his literary and social contexts (i.e., earlier Táng poetry and composition competitions) reveals that Lǐ placed greater emphasis on technique, with semantic meaning and emotional affect taking a secondary role. Like the Homeric bards of ancient Greece, Dàlì poets such as Lǐ had to have a plenitude of readily available techniques to facilitate speedy composition. Therefore, a study and translation of Lǐ Duān’s poetry which attempts to take it on its own terms must, above all, wrestle with formal representation.

The Quatrains of Lǐ Duān

With a newly attentive ear to Middle Chinese prosody and form, let us now return to Lǐ Duān’s poetry, beginning with his second most frequently translated poem, the quatrain “Paying

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53 For a classic study of the Homeric epithets and their role in speedy composition, see Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*. 
Respects to the New Moon,” Bái xīn yuè 拜新月. In deference to scholarly convention, I will first offer a translation that aims at semantic meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>拜新月</th>
<th>Paying Respects to the New Moon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>開簾見新月</td>
<td>Opening the curtains, I see the new moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>便即下階拜</td>
<td>Then descend the stairs to pay my respects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>細語人不聞</td>
<td>Subtle words people can’t hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>北風吹裙帶</td>
<td>The north wind blows my skirt and sash⁵⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much like “Listening to the Cithern,” the scene is brief and sensual. The sexual implications of the imagery of opening and entering are obvious: the bamboo curtains part, allowing the moonlight to creep in, the north wind penetrates the clothes of the speaker, whom we can assume to be a woman because of her skirt (qún 裙) and because of poetic convention.

Given the tradition of frontier poetry, in which the bright moon portrays the distance of the soldier from his homeland, the new moon likely reminds the speaker of her distant lover and so comes to represent him. Thus, when she descends the stairs to pay respects to the moon, she thinks of her husband, which leads to the “subtle words” of line 3. This phrase has a double meaning here: it refers to the softness of the speaker’s voice as she whispers to herself her desires to see her husband as well as to the pillow talk the lovers once shared before he went to the (possibly northern) frontier. Therefore, the two acts of opening and entering in lines 1 and 4 can be read as sexual innuendoes: the husband (as moon) enters her chamber, and the husband

⁵⁴ QTS 286.3280. It should be noted that this poem has sometimes been attributed to Gěng Wéi 耿渾, another of the Ten Talents, but it is usually listed as being Lí Duān’s. It must also be noted here that the term “new moon” in Chinese does not refer to the unseen moon as it does in the West. Rather, it has two uses in the Táng: (1) the newly appeared moon, i.e. the waxing crescent, and (2) the moon on the fifteenth day of the lunar cycle, i.e. the full moon. In my opinion, Lí seems to be using it in the second sense, with the overwhelmingly bright light representing the surge of emotion in the speaker; however, one could also argue for the first sense, as the light of moon catches the speaker by surprise, thus triggering her memory.
(as northern wind) moves within her clothes. Yet identifying the northern wind with her husband not only indicates his physical location as a soldier. In standard Chinese cosmology, the north is associated with darkness, with yīn 陰, with death. Therefore, the poem also admits of the speaker’s fears that her husband has perished on the frontier.

Although this semantically-oriented translation indeed reveals the poem to be a precious, provocative image, the scene itself is somewhat trite. By the time of Lǐ Duān, literally thousands of poems had been written on the theme of the lonely wife longing for her husband, who is off battling the barbarians on the distant frontiers. To engage with this poem on the level of form, let us look at the poem with its MC transcriptions.55

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>拜</th>
<th>新</th>
<th>月</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>peiH</td>
<td>sen</td>
<td>ngwat</td>
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<th>開</th>
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<th>便</th>
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<th>下</th>
<th>階</th>
<th>拜</th>
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<tr>
<td>ban</td>
<td>tsek</td>
<td>ghaQ</td>
<td>kei</td>
<td>peiH</td>
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<th>細</th>
<th>語</th>
<th>人</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seiH</td>
<td>nguoQ</td>
<td>nyen</td>
<td>pou56</td>
<td>men</td>
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<tr>
<th>北</th>
<th>風</th>
<th>吹</th>
<th>裙</th>
<th>帶</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pek</td>
<td>pung</td>
<td>tshywi</td>
<td>gwen</td>
<td>teiH</td>
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</table>

The first thing to notice is that though the rhyme pattern is standard, that of ABCB, the quality is less common, that is, the oblique sound of *eiH. Furthermore, the first line also ends with an

55 In David Branner’s MC transcription system, shǎngshēng words are listed with a silent capital Q after them, qūshēng words with a silent capital H after them. Rūshēng words are recognizable because they end with a –p, –t, or –k, and píngshēng words comprise the rest. To make the tonal patterns more clear, I have listed them next to each line of the poem, O representing level (píng), X representing oblique (zè).

56 The negating word bù/bú 不, in MC as in MSM, could change tones, depending on the context, being read in píngshēng, as *pou, and in rūshēng, as *pet.
oblique tone, upsetting the common practice of making all non-rhyme words of a given stanza of a different tonal category from the rhyme words. However, such minor abnormalities have precedent and remain within convention. The first notable auditory construction is the fact that the first character of line 3 ends with *–eiH, and the first character of line 1 ends with *–ei, making them a perfect rhyme and an off-rhyme of the main end rhyme. The off-rhyme of *–ei also appears in the fourth word of line 2. Thus, both couplets begin and end with the same final, giving them a neat envelope structure while also linking the two. The reader finds two discrete units which flow smoothly from one to the other.

Second, and perhaps most conspicuous, there is the abnormal tonal pattern. While the second and fourth characters of the middle two lines match perfectly as X O / X O, the first and last line both have level tones in the 2–4 positions, as O O / O O. Where we would expect to see pattern A, we instead see the anomaly that is pattern B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern A</th>
<th>Pattern B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O X</td>
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<tr>
<td>X O</td>
<td>X O</td>
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<td>X O</td>
<td>X O</td>
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<tr>
<td>O X</td>
<td>O O</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The problem is that the tonal pattern does not seem to be a single mistake which we could dismiss as bad writing on Lī Duān’s part. Compare, for example, the tonal pattern of “Bài xīn yuè” with “Tīng zhēng,” the translations of which we examined earlier.
While there is something interesting happening here in tonal structure (i.e. that the tones of each word in the first and second lines of both couplets are perfectly inverted), it follows Pattern A as we would expect. In this way, “Tīng zhēng,” though artfully constructed, reveals itself to be formally quite distinct from “Bài xīn yuè.” The latter is equally taut, as evidenced by the repetition of the *–ei final at the head and tail of each couplet. But more than that, it retains a perfect tonal mirroring despite the anomaly of the two ping words in the 2-4 positions in a single line.

In this analysis, we have revealed much about the Lǐ Duān’s technique in writing “Bài xīn yuè,” in terms of form, rhyme, semantic meaning, and imagery. However, a more difficult question becomes: how does this translate into translation? That is to say, we are faced once more with the difficult question of what could possibly function as a means of representing tone in English. The temptation would be to vary meter by linking ping and zè to, say, iambic and trochaic feet, but this would have the disadvantage in that variation of the metrical feet would appear strange, whereas in Chinese prosody monotony (in the strictest sense of the word) is what seemed most strange. Moreover, such a translation technique would greatly domesticate the original poem, not appear to the English reader as something foreign (to follow Schleiermacher’s theorization), and hence not be sufficiently “strategic.”

Therefore, this series of translations will attempt to use long and short vowels to match ping and zè, following Mair and Mei’s suggestion that the two tone classes may have been tied to sustained and short syllables. Although the long/short vowel distinction is not steadfast in English, it does provide the grounds for both a formal echoing of the original and a sufficiently underused technique to attempt innovation in English-language verse. These experiments in translation will also attempt to reproduce such effects as rhyme and alliteration where it can,
especially when they are deemed integral to Lī Duān’s technical achievements. However, in the process, these experiments will also not abandon semantic meaning, and so I will follow the lead of Edward Schafer in offering two translations for each poem: one scholarly/semantic, one formal/technical.57

As I have already offered a scholarly translation of “Bài xīn yuè,” let us now turn to the formal translation.

Full Moon Offering

Curtains open, spots the moon full
She descends the steps to make her offer
Words soft, no people hear
North breeze blows waistband & skirt

In this translation, I have used the –er(t) sound as the main rhyme where MC had *–ei(H), thus: curtain, her offer, words, and skirt at the beginnings and endings of the two couplets. Also, I have attempted to keep the translation as concise as possible while still maintaining intelligibility; therefore the number of syllables in each line is 8, 10, 6, and 7. Finally, in using the distinction between long (L) and short (S) syllables to represent tones, I have focused on stressed syllables:

Cúrtains ópen, spóts the móon fúll
S        L        S        L        S

Shé descénds the stéps to máke her óffer
L        S        S        L        S

Wórds sóft, nó péople héar
S        S        L        L        L

Nórh bréeze blóws wáistband & skírt

57 Cf. Schafer, “Wu Yün’s ‘Cantos on Pacing the Void.’” In addition to scholarly and versified translations, Schafer also gives a prose paraphrase for each canto, which, however, I will not do for Lī Duān’s poems, as they involve far less technical terminology than those of Wú Yún 吳筠 (d. 778).
When one compares this variation with the tonal variation of the poem, they are nearly identical
(with one mistake in the first word of the first line, a short syllable in place of a ping word):

```
O O X O X  S L S L S
O X X O X  L S S L S
X X O O O  S S L L L
X O O O X  S L L L S
```

Though we might not notice the contrast of long and short vowels if we were not alerted to it,
their variation does indeed noticeably contribute to the rhythm of the piece. Furthermore, the
repetition of the –er(t) sound successfully mirrors the enveloping and linking function of the MC
*–ei(H), even though this necessitates making the first syllable of the poem short rather than
long. Finally, the alliteration at the beginning of the final line (*pek *pung 北風) also has its
equivalent in the translation (“breeze blows”). To be certain, this translation still fails in many
ways: the lack of an article in several places sounds awkward in English, the inverted syntax of
“moon full” of line 1 also sticks out in a way the original phrase 新月 (MSM xin yue, MC *sen
ngwat) does not, and the variation of line length loses the visual uniformity of the original.
Nevertheless, the translation, after much reflection, has chosen to accept these failures for the
sake of highlighting other features of the poem.

Looking through Lî Đuân’s 31 other quatrains in Quán Tảng shí, we find one more of
interest for its abnormal tonal patterns, namely “Găn xìng” 感興, “Moved by a Whim.” Let us
now examine it through two translations and its MC transcription.

感興  Moved by a Whim
Incense Burner\textsuperscript{58} is the loftiest peak
In its middle is the lofty one’s dwelling
At sunset, descending the mountain, he comes
At moonbright, ascending the mountain, he leaves\textsuperscript{59}

Smoke Bowl’s got the highest summits
Between them, a high soul lives
When dusky the sun, down the mount, arrives
When brilliant the moon, up the mount, exits

The poem is straightforward, using the simplest words to describe the habits of a recluse. The
craft of this poem is not so much evocative imagery and ingenious repetition of rhymes, as was
the case in “Bài xīn yuè,” but the use of spatial words and precise parallelism. The word for
lofty/high (高, MSM gow, MC *kau) is used twice in the opening couplet: first literally,
conveying the height of the mountain; second metaphorically, to describe the superiority of the
person. In lines 2-4, we also see a three-fold division of vertical space: middle (中, zhōng,
*trung), down (下, xià, *ghaQ), and up (上, shàng, *dzyangQ). The recluse occupies the space

\textsuperscript{58} “Incense Burner” (Xiānglù), in addition to being the name of the object placed before a
shrine, can also refer to the name of a peak on Mt. Lú (Lūshān 嵩山), located in modern-day
Jiāngxī 江西 province.

\textsuperscript{59} QTS 286.3280.
of the middle (used as a noun), only passing temporarily through the upper and lower realms (both used as verbs).

The second couplet of the poem presents us with perfect parallelism, as nearly each word (excluding the fourth) is mirrored by its opposite in the other line: sun/moon 日/月, dim/bright 暮/明, down/up 下/上, and come/go 来/去. The only place where there is not perfect mirroring is when there is repetition of the word for mountain (山, shān, *sran), the second instance of which is also the site of one of the “mistakes,” a second píng where there should be a zè. Obviously, Lī Duān could not have made the lines perfectly parallel, as using a word like “valley” or “river” (both zè words: *luk 谷 and *sywiQ 水) in one of the lines would have ruined the semantic parallel of the recluse’s activities. However, Lī could have reused “peak” (*teingQ) in place of the second “mountain” and retained the semantic meaning while avoiding the “mistake” of two píng words in the final line. Similarly, there are plenty of synonyms for lofty/high (e.g. 岁, jí, *ngep) which the poet could have used in the first line to avoid the “mistake” there. The question is, then: why didn’t he?

It seems likely that the poet wanted to create an interlinking effect through repetition: the use of “lofty/high” in lines 1 and 2 and the use of “mountain” in lines 3 and 4 attest to this. Furthermore, there is the graphic repetition of “sun” and “moon” (日 and 月) in the character for “bright” (明), making an elementary visual pun that creates another link. For this reason, perhaps, Lī chose to repeat the “mistake” of two píng words in lines 1 and 4. In this way, there are not only links between couplets, but also between the first and last lines of the poem. What seems to be a straightforward, simplistic quatrain reveals itself to contain well-crafted repetition upon closer inspection.

Eight-Line Poems
Having dealt with Lǐ Duān’s tonally irregular quatrains, let us turn to his pentametric recent-style verse (wǔyán jìntīshī 五言近體詩), those six- and eight-line poems which are generally considered to have achieved their formal apotheosis in the Dàlì era. Of Lǐ’s 111 recent-style poems, the majority employ perfect tonal variation. In fact, only 37 (33%) have any sort of tonal “mistake” whatsoever. Of these, I have identified five poems which pose alternative tonal patterns similar to those we have seen in Lǐ’s quatrains: i.e., the deliberate repetition of a monotonous line within a poem.

As there are no examples of six-line poems which feature this type of tonal irregularity, let us begin with the first example of such an eight-line poem in Quán Táng shī, a poem which has the added benefit of being relatively free of allusions, “Guò gǔkǒu Yuán Zànshàn suǒjū” 過谷口元贊善所居.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>過谷口元贊善所居</th>
<th>Stopping by Yuán Zànshàn’s Residence at the Valley’s Mouth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>入谷訪君來</td>
<td>Entering the valley, I come to inquire after you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>秋泉已堪涉</td>
<td>The fall fount can already be forded⁶²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>林間人獨坐</td>
<td>Within a grove, a person sits alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>月下山相接</td>
<td>Beneath the moon, the mountains touch one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>重露溼蒼苔</td>
<td>Heavy dew moistens the dark green moss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>明燈照黃葉⁶³</td>
<td>A bright lantern illuminates yellow leaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Jiāng Yín, Dàlì shǐfēng 212.

⁶¹ For a list of these poems, with the tones of their second and fourth characters marked, see Appendix B. In compiling this list, I have read charitably, which is to say, where there are multiple pronunciations for a character, I have chosen to read it with the formally correct pronunciation.

⁶² I.e., the fount/spring is so full of water that it is passable.

⁶³ QTS lists the possible variant hóng 紅, red, for huáng 黃, yellow. However, both words have the same tone in MC as well as in MSM; therefore, the variant will not affect my reading of the poem.
Old friend, since I’ve not seen you –
My silk-white hairs, how densely stacked\(^4\)

Entering the valley, asking ‘round for you
The late-season stream is forded, passed
Between trees, a lone man sits
Under stars, mountains reach to the last
Green moss wet with heaps of dew
On golden leaves, a lantern light’s cast
My mate, when you’re not met –
How my blanched strands are stacked

In this poem, the theme of old age’s loss takes center stage. The descriptions of the scenery mirror the poet’s emotions. As the speaker is old, the year is nearing its end, and the “fall fount” is so full it can be forded. Midnight darkness shrouds the scenery, and when light does shine, it reveals the changed leaves or the imposing mountains. The lone person, who becomes part of the

\(^{4}QTS\ 284.3233\).
background scenery, is a reflection of the speaker, unable to find Yuán Zànshàn, who has perhaps passed away. The poet is stranded, in a secluded valley, with no comfort to be found in the natural scenery which surrounds him.

As Jiăng Yín tells us, parallelism is one of the major strengths of many of the Dàlì poets, and Lì Duān is no exception. The parallelism of the middle lines strengthens the sense of contrast between the speaker and his surroundings. To translate interlinearly for a moment, in the second couplet, where the “person alone sits,” we find the “mountains one another touch/greet,” the latter’s communion mocking the former’s solitude. In the third couplet, we find parallel usage between “dark green moss” and “yellow leaves.” The former absorb, gain nourishment from the dew which moistens them, whereas the yellow leaves have fallen, merely bouncing back the light shone upon them (the word I translate as “illuminate,” zhào 照, can also mean “reflect”).

The structure of this poem, with its scene-setting opening lines, parallel middle couplets, and imagistic closure, is nothing new. As Owen has shown, this tripartite pattern was well-established among court poets from the Early Táng on. However, there is something more going on here. The fact that we find the tonal “mistake” of two ping words in the 2-4 positions of lines 2 and 6 should clue us in to another possible poetic structure at work: a bipartite pattern composed of quatrains, linked by parallelisms in the middle. The ping lines thus become markers of separate, mirrored sections. In this way, we have two identically-structured quatrains, manifested in the repetition (rather than the alternation) of tonal patterns between the quatrains. To reinforce this hypothesis, we should take note of the fact that lines 1 and 5 rhyme with each other.

65 Jiăng Yín, Dàlì shìfēng 212.
other, a phenomenon unusual in recent-style verse. However, if one sees the poem as composed of two discrete units, this secondary rhyme creates a unifying effect, which, if we think about it dialectically, is only necessary where there is the threat of disunion. In this way, Lí Duān is attempting to experiment with a different poetic structure while masterfully employing classic techniques to keep the poems’ coherence.

Lí Duān’s alternative formal structure is thus a disruption of the standard, rapidly calcifying structure of recent-style verse. This disruption, this “roughening” of language is the goal of poetry, according to early twentieth-century Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky. Following Tolstoy, he writes, “The technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar… Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.”67 A familiar form, such as the standard tonal patterns of recent-style poetry in the Dàlí era, can often lull its audience into half-concentration, an inattention to detail that erases particularity. The purpose of art, to Shklovsky, is to bring about a fuller perception through form, whether that be the creation of a completely new form or the tweaking of an existing form, as is the case with Lí’s bipartite structure. Yet we must remember, as Shklovsky himself does,68 that such disruption is historically bound, that its roughening effect can only take place within a historical context.

For another example, let us now turn to a frontier poem, some of the conventions of which we recognize from “Bài xīn yuè.”

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67 Shklovsky, “Art as Technique” 12. For a more recent formulation of art’s disruptive function, cf. Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics 40, which describes one aspect of art’s utopian vision: “Utopia is, in one respect, the unacceptable, a no-place, the extreme point of a polemical reconfiguration of the sensible, which breaks down the categories that define what is considered to be obvious.”

68 Ibid. 24.
Seeing off Gǔ Zhīqí to Ānxīmù

In former times, of the ten brothers of the year

We now meet each other, of the five divisions

Tonight, we raise a cup of ale,

Under the Lóng moon will be seen army walls

Frontier men, all the way to dawn, march

With deep feelings, I see off you, the secretary

And the mighty barbarians for generations will pacified

Ānxīmù 安西幕 is the name of a commandery in the distant west, on the border of the Chinese empire. Of Gǔ Zhīqí 古之奇, whose odd-sounding name may indicate that it is an alias or nickname of some sort, there is no record besides this poem.

The term “brothers of the year” (niánxǐōng 年兄) refers to men who passed the jinshi examination at the same time. The number ten should not be taken literally; it is a round number used for the sake of parallelism with the “five” of the second line. In 770, the year Lǐ Duān passed his jinshi examination, there were in fact 26 “brothers of the year” (Dēngkē jī kǎo bǔzhèng 登科記考補正 1:432).

“The Five Divisions,” wǔxiào yíng 五校營 merges together the two synonymous phrases wǔxiào 五校 and wǔyíng 五營, both of which refer to the five colonels in charge of the military, and thus, synecdochically, the divisions of the military. These were the foot soldiers (bùbīng 步兵), garrison cavalry (túnqí 屯騎), the Cháng River encampment (chángshǔǐ 長水), the picked cavalry (yuēqí 越騎), and the archers (shèshēng 射聲). This structure was codified by Emperor Wǔ of the Hán Dynasty (Hán Wǔdì 漢武帝, r. 141-87 BCE). For an overview of this military structure, see Bielestein, The Bureaucracy of Han Times 114-24, esp. 114-15.

Lóng 隴 refers to the area of today’s Gānsù 甘肅 province in the far west. In frontier poetry, the “Lóng moon” (Lóng yuè 隴月) had become a cliché to indicate the soldiers’ distance from the capital.

QTS 285.3252. The final line could also be construed as question: “When will the mighty barbarians be pacified?”
Before, ten men together ranked
We meet now, of different flanks
Tonight, we raise these ale cups
The Turkish moon above soldiers’ banks
Watchmen’s lamps move through night and vanish
Border soldiers march until the sun wakes
Feelings deep, I part from you, a clerk
For years, the savage troops are sank

Like “Bài xīn yuè,” this poem focuses on two people, an addressee on the frontier and a speaker in the civilized world. The distance between them, represented by the moon, leads to nostalgia for their shared past. Beyond this, we find several other conventional elements: the far-off, exotic place name (Lŏng), the fires of the watchtowers, and the suffering of the soldiers. Unlike “Bài xīn yuè,” this poem is located at the moment of parting (hence the cups of ale, signs of a departure banquet), and therefore the speaker’s longing for the addressee, as well as their distance, is not actualized, but anticipated. Where “Bài xīn yuè” represents the uncertainty, the anxiety of a woman who has not heard from her husband in years, this poem reveals the pang of loss as two friends part, trying to stave off the future, be it one of glory or of death.
Comparing the two, “Bài xīn yuè” may seem more effective, as it is less direct, merely hinting at both joy and sorrow through innuendo. In “Seeing off Gǔ Zhīqì to Ānxīmù,” the speaker notes their shared past in line 1 and directly states the situation and his “deep feelings” in line 7. But it is wrong to conclude that nothing is going on underneath the surface here. The prophecy of line 8, that the barbarians will be pacified, seems less like a bland statement of fact than a hope against the likely outcome: Gǔ Zhīqì, the clerk, will perish in a distant land, vanish like the watchtower fires, far from his family and friends.

In this context, we see the benefit of the bipartite structure Lǐ Duān employs. Although most of the formal elements of the poem are conventional (the rhymes on lines 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8, the ping-tone end rhyme, the parallelisms in lines 1-2 and 5-6), we sense a distinct turn after line 4. The first quatrain describes the past and the present, common to both parties. The occasion is nearly festive, as that of a reunion. In this context, the repeated ping words of line 3 (all but the final character) give a sense of sustained elation, as if the “brothers of the year” toast each other at the top of their voices. The sense of impending doom only emerges in line 4, when the poet gives his first description of scenery: the Lōng moon and the army walls. However, the danger is yet external, out beyond the ramparts.

The shift comes in line 5, when the imagery of disappearing over a great distance comes to the fore: the watchtowers’ fires are swallowed into endless darkness, and the soldiers march so far away they seem to touch the sun as it rises. The joyful present becomes the mournful present, as each see signs of their fateful future. In the departure of line 7, the speaker strains to hold on to present, the emotional height emphasized again by the repetition of ping words. But this cannot last, dissolving finally into the unconvincing wish of the final line, bringing us into the
foreboding future. Thus, the formal disruption of the bipartite structure with its monotonic lines reinforces the disruption of the life shared by the speaker and the addressee.

As we have gotten to know the emotions typically enacted in a departure poem in “Seeing off Gǔ Zhīqì to Ānxīmù,” in which the addressee must travel to the dusty, barbaric west, let us now turn to another departure poem, one in which the addressee must make his way to the wilds of Shū.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>送夏侯審游蜀</th>
<th>Seeing off Xiànhóu Shēn to Shū</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>西望烟绵树</td>
<td>Gazing west, mist winds around trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>愁君上蜀時</td>
<td>It grieves me that you head to Shū this season</td>
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<tr>
<td>同林息商客</td>
<td>Sharing groves, you’ll rest with merchants</td>
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<tr>
<td>隔棱見眾師</td>
<td>On adjacent plankways below, you’ll see fishermen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>石滑羊腸險</td>
<td>The rocks are slippery on Sheepgut Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>山空杜宇悲</td>
<td>The mountains empty, cuckoos lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>琴心正幽怨</td>
<td>My zithered heart has now a hidden plaint</td>
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74 Shū is the old name for the area that roughly corresponds to today’s Sichuān province in the southwest. Xiànhóu Shēn was another member of the Ten Talents of the Dàlì era, of whom little is known in the way of biography, other than that he flourished in 780.

75 The colorfully named Sheepgut Pass (Yángcháng xiàn 羊腸險) originally referred to a long, twisting mountain pass located in the Zhào 趙 area (present-day northern Shānxī 山西 and southwest Héběi 河北 provinces), but, over time, came to mean any winding, narrow pathway. Cf., e.g., Dù Fū’s lines, “The road is lost on Sheepgut Pass / The clouds are stretched over Pheasant-tail Heights” 路失羊腸險 / 雲橫雉尾高 (“Xī wén guānjūn yǐ lín zéi jīng èrshí yún” 喜聞官軍已臨賊境二十韻, Dù shī xiángzhǔ 杜詩詳註 5.417).

76 This line brings to mind a passage from the famous “Shū Road Hardships” Shū dào nán 蜀道難 by Lǐ Bó, which also juxtaposes the cuckoo with empty mountains: “You’ll also hear the cuckoo cry / in the moon, grieving empty mountains” 又聞子規啼 / 夜月愁空山 (Lǐ Bó jí jiàozhù 李白集校注 3.199). For a full English translation of Lǐ Bó’s and several other writers’ treatments of Shū hardships, see Kroll, “The Road to Shu.”

77 The rhyming phrase “zithered heart” (琴心, MSM qín xīn, MC *gem sem) indicates that one is deeply affected, as if touched by the music of a zither.
No need to play the phoenix song

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Gazing west, smoke blows through woods
I’m pained you start for Shū soon
In the same groves as merchants, you will sit
From split paths, spot fishers by lagoons
The rocks are wet on Goatgut Pass
Cuckoos on empty hills croon
My harp’d heart reveals deep sorrow
So sing not that phoenix tune

Much like taking off for the frontier, the poem of sending off a friend to Shū had its own conventions (in addition to the conventions of the general parting poem): descriptions of the lush

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78 QTS 284.3259-60. The “phoenix song” of the final line refers to a passage from the Analects, in which the Madman of Chū 楚 sings to Confucius: "Oh phoenix, phoenix / How dwindled is your power! / As to the past, reproof is idle, / But the future may yet be remedied. / Desist, desist! / Great in these days is the peril of those who fill office.” (Translation from Arthur Waley, The Analects of Confucius 219).
landscape, the exotic animals, and the general hardships of the journey. While we find little new on the semantic level in Lī Duān’s treatment of the topic (besides the curious phrasings of lines 3-4), the poem itself is full of verbal resonance. In addition to the primary end rhyme of *–i, we find internal rhymes in line 1 (*an man 煙綿), lines 3-4 (*kheik / keik 客 隔), line 5 (*yang drang 羊腸), line 6 (*duoQ ghuoQ 杜字), and line 7 (*gem sem 琴心). There are also instances of alliteration in lines 1-2 (*dzyouQ / dzyangQ dzyk dzyi ظ / ی) and line 4 (*kanH kuo 見 罡). The abounding wordplay, calling out from nearly every line like the calls of cuckoos, is odd for a regulated poem in recent style. In this way, form attempts to match content: like the landscape of Shū, the sounds of the poem are overabundant and a bit exotic to the conventions, even alienating. The only line in which we find no auditory resonance (apart from the end rhyme) is line 8, in which the speaker forbids his friend from singing the phoenix song. This lack marks our return to the mundane, the conventional world of the capital in which the poet remains while the addressee makes his way through the wilds of Shū.

In this poem, we see again the bipartite structure of mirror quatrains with identical, not alternating, tonal patterns, including the “mistake” of pǐng words in the 2-4 positions of the third line of each quatrain. Similar to “Seeing off Gū Zhīqì to Ānxīmù,” we note a turning between the two parts. Although both of the middle couplets describe scenery, the first focuses on Xiāhóu Shēn’s interactions with other people, namely the merchants and the fishermen. The groves and plankways are benign images, the plankways (as felled trees) even demonstrating man’s taming of nature. By contrast, in the second couplet, the images become ominous: one might fall to his death trying to clamber through Sheepgut Pass, or one might find himself stranded on empty mountains as cuckoos taunt the traveler from above. With this in mind, the speaker uses four pǐng tones in a row in line 7 to show how hard he strains to convey his deep feelings for the
addressee. With such strain, such deeply “zithered” feelings, there is no need to sing the phoenix song, that madman’s melody which laments the past and hopes for a better future.

For our next translation, we turn to yet another parting poem, this one on the occasion of a marriage.

Seeing off Lí Bīngcáo to Shān Prefecture to Get Married⁷⁹

To the east, send off the charioteers
My lord, you are a high-ranking person
As a receiving groom you’ll come upon this fine daybreak
The matchmaker is reached in mid-spring
It’ll be a time for the fording-river wife
A meet companion, the son-in-law a guest
How could the neighboring official
Raise his whip and follow their dust⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Shān Prefecture (Shānfū 陝府) refers to an area roughly corresponding to today’s Sānménxīà 三門廈 in western Hénán 河南 province.

⁸⁰ QTS 285.3265. Presumably, the neighboring official (literally, “same-gate official,” tóngménli 同門吏) will not follow the couple, as he would do so only to object to their marriage.
To the east, you send some charioteers
You, sir, are truly a superior soul
A welcoming husband, you watch for sunup
The go-between’s found by mid-spring’s toll
She’ll then be called the wife who crosses rivers
A good fit, the new son finds his guestly role
How could some bureaucrat object
Or raise complaint, follow the dust of their stroll

Unlike the previous two poems we have examined, this song of departure is celebratory, and hence the mood is joyous. Lí Bǐngcáo, a “superior person” (the more literal meaning of shàngtóurén 上頭人), is marrying into a fine family on a bright morning, and he and his bride are perfect companions for one another. The final couplet proudly complains that one who knows them best – an upright official of the “same gate” – could not dream of objecting to their union. In the process, we gain brief glimpses into marriage customs of the Táng; however, we will not explore these further, as they are beyond the scope of this essay.81

Formally, this poem is unusual for several reasons. First, it employs the bipartite structure found in several of Lí Duān’s other poems, in this instance marked by the repeated píng tones in the 2-4 positions in lines 1 and 5. Here, the two parts of the poem correspond to the anticipation of the ceremony and its enactment. The roughening of form here calls attention to the uniqueness of the couple’s wonderful union, its unparalleled perfection. Second, we find Lí’s first tonal “mistake” beyond the deliberately constructed new pattern seen so far: line 3 contains zè tones in the 2-4 positions. This pattern not being repeated, we must assume it one of Lí’s rare errors, or at least an instance where has not sought perfect tonal patterns.

81 For a brief introduction in English to the topic of Táng weddings, see Benn, Daily Life in Traditional China 243-48.
Third, the only instances of alliteration which occur, found in lines 1 and 2 (*pang pat 方 發 and *dzyQ dzyangQ 是上), involve the second and third characters of their lines. In this poem, as is usually the case in Táng poetry, there is a caesura after the second character of a line, which can then be divided into two discrete segments. In lines 1 and 2 of the present poem, we find this to be so: line 1 contains the set phrase dōngfāng 東方 (*tung pang) before the caesura, and line 2 has the semi-colloquial shàngtóurén 上頭人 (*dzyangQ dou nyen) after it. The phrases on the opposite sides of the caesura thus tend away from each other, but the alliteration across the divide attempts to pull them back together. Perhaps in these lines Lí Duān is attempting at a linguistic level to enact the union taking place on the semantic level of the poem, a union able to resist even the division of the mighty caesura.

From marriage we turn to illness, and examine a poem Lí Duān sent to a bedridden friend, the final poem of our selection.

酬秘書元丞郊園疾見寄  A Toast Sent to Yuán, Assistant in the Imperial Library, Laid up in a Garden outside the City Walls due to an Illness

闻說漳濱臥 I hear it said by the side of the Zhāng you lie

题诗怨歳華 Writing poems grudging the season’s florescence

求医主高手 I seek a doctor to care for you with lofty hands

报疾到貧家 To cure your illness by coming to your humble home

撤枕销行蚁 Set aside your pillow to dispel the marching ants

移杯失畫蛇 Move your cup away to get rid of the painted snakes

明朝九衢上 Tomorrow morning, on the nine-fold avenue,

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82 The Zhāng 漳 is a river located in present-day Hénán 河南 province, a tributary of the River Wèi 微河.

83 “Painted snakes” (huāshè 畫蛇) here refers to the twisting shadows in the cup, caused by reflections of a bow hanging on a wall, an indication of idleness (here due to illness). The unusual phrase “marching ants” (xíngyǐ 行蟻) of the previous line, given its parallelism with the “painted snakes,” may be synonym for “floating ants” (fùyǐ 浮蟻), which refers to the floating bits of froth found in a cup of ale.
You shall see the Jade One’s chariot

I hear it said by the Zhāngside you rest
And compose poems moaning what spring makes
I seek for you a doctor with a healing touch
To fix your illness, he comes to your poor home.
Put off your pillow to wipe out moving ants
Ignore your stein to rid the shadowy snakes
Tomorrow morn, along the street so broad
For the Jade One’s car you’ll no more wait

As his friend is confined to bed while waiting to recover from his illness, the poet sends him a few lines of encouragement. Aside from a few culturally-specific phrases, which have been dealt with in the footnotes, there is little to comment upon in the way of semantic meaning. On the level of form, we first note that the only tight parallelism occurs in lines 5-6, both of which

84 QTS 285.3258. The “Jade One” (yùrén 玉人) of the final line refers to a transcendent being (xiàn 仙).
describe ways of getting rid of metaphoric lower, baser animals. Also, we see again the mark of the two-quatrain structure, i.e. the 2-4 ping words in lines 3 and 7. The poem neatly divides into two sections. First, the speaker demonstrates his empathy for the addressee (as nature, in full bloom, clearly does not understand), outlining the severity of his illness. Second, the speaker methods to recovery quickly (abstaining from drink, putting aside the pillow, and moving around a bit), after which the sick Mr. Yuán will be able to enter the city walls once again, where the Emperor or a high-ranking officer will, like a Daoist transcendent, notice and select him. He will be enraptured, lifted up, and soon enjoy a higher glory.

As we have seen, though often regarded as one of the paramount examples of conventional, impersonal poetry, Lí Duān in fact frequently employed non-conventional (though still carefully structured) tonal patterns. His bipartite forms, as shown by his eight-line poems’ use of two identical (rather than alternating) quatrains, sets him in opposition to the prevailing conventions even while appearing to subscribe to it. In this way, the “individuality” of Lí Duān is most apparent when he is at his most formal. By using the stock imagery and “hackneyed sentiments” Stephen Owen so vehemently derides, Lí is able to focus on employing his technical wizardry for the sake of metrical experimentation, an aspect largely hidden from modern readers who shy away from reconstructions of MC.

Conclusion

We have seen how the non-semantic aspects of Táng poetry, such as sound and prosody, are fundamental to understanding the achievements of Lí Duān. It is not a great leap to infer that they are also fundamental to understanding the other Dálì poets, the poetry of the entirety of the Táng, and all poetry of medieval China. I have attempted to demonstrate one way in which these elements can inform translation practice, namely through a re-creation of rhyme patterns and a
long/short vowel distinction which roughly mirrors that of ping/zè tonal classes. Although the
distinction of vowel lengths is not prominent in English poetics as the tonal distinctions are in
Chinese, such a consideration nonetheless influences the rhythm of the translation in significant
ways, creating an (artificially) analogous effect.

Although such analogy is artificial, is arbitrary, so are all linguistic choices of the
translator. The academic translator destroys rhythm while aiming for semantic accuracy, the
historical translator buries her reader in lengthy footnotes, and the popular translator ignores
history while searching for a “poetic feel” recognizable to his target audience. We must
remember that language is the essential material of poetry, and swapping one type of material for
another radically alters the work. By isolating rhyme and meter, my translations have chosen to
isolate just one (non-semantic) meaning among the many possible meanings buried within the
poems. Translation is not the transposition of music from one key to another. Rather, to use an
architectural metaphor, it is the re-construction of a wooden temple with steel I-beams, or with
Colorado sandstone, or with pipe cleaners.

In this way, something is always necessarily lost in every translation. In identifying
literary allusions, the modern translator is limited by his own familiarity with other texts, a
familiarity never equivalent to the writers of a pre-printing press era, who often memorized
hundreds of books. In identifying historical allusions, the modern translator is limited by the
surviving records, many of which, in imperial China, have been redacted by ideologically-driven
dynastic historians. In identifying sound and rhythm, the modern translator is limited by the
tentative nature of historical reconstructions. Nonetheless, translation occurs, and is necessary for
those unfamiliar with the source language.
In the face of such impossibility, the translator must make certain strategic choices in order to present the reader with a certain version of the text, a version that certainly digs into history in order to better approximate the “meaning” of the original, but one that self-consciously aims at a constructed effect. In the last 120 years, Táng poets in the English language have far too often become imagists or windbags writing arbitrarily lineated prose. While the fruits of previous translators’ efforts have done much to enhance our understanding of Táng intellectual history, we have generally remained aloof from understanding the poetic craft. Therefore, we must focus our attention on issues of meter, rhythm, wordplay, and the like in order to present an alternative understanding of the poetics of China’s Golden Age. Only by knowing the tones can we come to know the tone.


Appendix A:

Previous English Translations of Lī Duān’s Poems

While by no means exhaustive, this appendix reproduces nearly all previous translations of Lī Duān’s poetry into English. Translations have been grouped according to original poem, beginning with translations of the shortest poem and ending with the translation of the longest poem. As much as possible, typographic and annotative particularities of the various translations have been retained. After each translation is listed the translator’s name and year of publication.

(1) 聽箏

鳴箏金粟柱，素手玉房前。
欲得周郎顧，時時誤拂弦。\(^{85}\)

LI TUAN

MUSIC HATH CHARMS

Hark to the rapturous melody!
   Her white arm o’er the lute she flings . . .
To break her lover’s reverie
   She strikes a discord on the strings.

-Herbert Giles, 1923\(^{86}\)

LI TŪAN

On Hearing Her Play the Harp

Her hands of white jade by a window of snow
Are glimmering on a golden-fretted harp –
And to draw the quick eye of Chou Yū,
She touches a wrong note now and then.

\(^{85}\) QTS 286.3280; Tâng shī sānbǎi shǒu 7.6.

\(^{86}\) Herbert A. Giles, Gems of Chinese Literature: Verse, second ed. (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1923) 198.
ON HEARING HER PLAY THE HARP

Her hands of white jade by a window of snow
Are glimmering on a golden-fretted harp—
And to draw the quick eye of Chou Yü
She touches a wrong note now and then.

LI TŪAN
T’ANG DYNASTY

-D. J. Klemer, 1959

JADE LUTE

Li Duan

She tunes every string of her jade lute,
Displaying artfully her graceful fingers,
Wishing to gain Admiral Zhou’s* attention,
She touches purposely a few wrong notes.

*Zhou was a famous young admiral of the Kingdom of Wu (222-277 A.D.). He was also a talented musician. Whenever he heard some wrong notes he would stop the musician and give correct instruction.

-Tang Zi-chang, 1969

listening to zheng music

–li duan

the resonant strings tremble
on the golden pillar of zheng instrument

slender white fingers dance at the frets
there before the bed of general zhou

---


she touches a wrong note now and then
coaxing a glance from the general

- John Knoepfle and Wang Shouyi, 198590

LI DUAN
_Listening to the Broad Zither_

Playing the broad zither, its fittings embellished with gold,
With pure white hands at the front of the jade chamber,
She wants to get Master Zhou to turn his head –
So sometimes she sounds a wrong note on the strings.

-Peter Harris, 200991

(2) 拜新月

開簾見新月，便即下階拜。
細語人不聞，北風吹裙帶。92

Desire
By Li Tuan

The blinds I raised; with joy the New Moon saw.
The steps descended, eager to adore.
My whispered prayer might not be heard of men.
The North Wind’s fingers at my girdle tore.

Note:—Compare:
“And Venus loves the whisper of plighted youth and Maid
In April’s ivory moonlight beneath the chestnut’s shade.”93

-W. J. B. Fletcher, 191994


92 QTS 286.3280.

WORSHIPPING THE NEW MOON

(Li Tuan, T’ang Dynasty)

Raising my curtain I see the new moon;  
I go down the front steps to kneel in worship.  
If I speak in a low voice no one will hear me.  
Ah! The chill north wind is blowing.

-Arthur Christy, 1929

SALUTE TO NEW MOON  
Li Duan

When she opens screens and sees new moon,  
She comes down the steps to bow and pray:  
Her tender words cannot be heard by anyone,  
Only in north wind, her shirt, ribbons sway.

-Tang Zi-chang, 1969

(3) 感興

香爐最高頂，中有高人住。  
日暮下山來，月明上山去。  

summit of Mount Incense-cup  
There high hermit dwells  
Sun dusky, descends the mount  
Moon bright, remounts the summit

-Erik Mueggler, 2001

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94 W. J. B. Fletcher, Gems of Chinese Verse: Translated into English Verse (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1919) 224.


96 Tang Zi-chang, Poems of Tang 80.

97 QTS 286.3280.
As moon falls and stars grow few, the sky is growing bright. 
A single lamp burning still, dreams cannot be fulfilled. 
She throws on some clothes and gazes out beyond the gate again, 
Unperturbed, as dawn arrives, by magpies cries of joy.

-Pauline Yu, 2005

LI TUAN

A SHRINE AT TWILIGHT

We met 
At twilight 
And visited the old shrine 
Together.

Grief and sorrow 
Seemed far away—
No more 
Than a breath of wind 
Or a wisp of cloud—
And all about us 
Nature smiled.


99 QTS 286.3281; Tângrên xuăn Tâng shī 214.


101 QTS 284.3235.
Ah!
If only the horse and cart
Had not returned so soon,
We would have stayed
To watch the nesting birds
Come home.

-Henry Hart, 1938

(6) 白鷺咏

迥起來應近，高飛去自遙。
映林同落雪，拂水狀翻潮。
猶有幽人興，相逢到碧霄。

Rising distantly, he comes, drawing almost near,
Soaring on high, he departs, far off on his own.
Glistening against the grove like the settling snow,
Brushing over the water, forming a rolling tide!
–Yet, he possesses the temper of a man secluded,
And once met, he moves on into the cyan empyrean.

-Paul Kroll, 1979

(7) 巫山高

巫山十二峯，皆在碧虛中。
迥合雲藏月，霧微雨帶風。
猿聲寒過瀾，樹色暮連空。
愁向高唐望，清秋見楚宮。

The twelve peaks of Wu Mountain
All lie within the azure void.

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103 QTS 284.3235.


105 QTS 285.3242; *Tângrén xuǎn Tâng shī* 212-13.
Swirling together, clouds hide the moon.
A thin drizzling rain sweeps in the wind.
Gibbons’ cries, chilled, pass through the gorge.
Trees’ hues at dusk stretch to the sky.
Sadly travel toward Gaotang
And in clear autumn see the palace of Chu.

-Pauline Yu, 2005

(8) 晚遊東田寄司空曙

暮來思遠客，獨立在東田。
片雨無妨景，殘虹不映天。
別愁逢夏果，歸興入秋蟬。
莫作臏官意，陶潛未必賢。  

Touring the Eastern Field in the Evening, I Send This Poem to Sikong Shu

At dusk my thoughts fell on that distant traveler,
As I stand alone in the eastern field.
A spattering of rain does not obscure the sunlight,
The fragment of a rainbow could not conceal the sky.
Parting sorrow met with summer fruit,
Impulse to return entered with autumn cicadas.
Do not fancy the idea of renouncing officialdom,
Tao Qian was not necessarily worthy.

-Wendy Swartz, 2008

(9) 雨後遊欄川

驟雨歸山盡，頹陽入欄川。
看虹登晚墅，踏石過春泉。
紫葛藏仙井，黃花出野田。
自知無路去，邇步就人煙。  

106 Pauline Yu, “Poems for the Emperor” 81.

107 QTS 285.3247.


109 QTS 285.3244.
Visiting Wang Stream After a Rain

A sudden downpour returns to the mountains, is gone,
And the falling sunlight enters Wang Stream.
To see rainbows climb high in the evening villa,
And tread stones to cross a springtime creek.
Purple creepers hide the immortals’ well,
Yellow flowers come out in the wild fields.
Knowing myself there’s no road to go farther,
I turn back my steps to the smoke of men’s dwellings.

-Stephen Owen, 1981

(10) 宿淮浦憶司空文明

愁心一倍長離憂，夜思千重懷舊遊。
秦地故人成遠夢，楚天涼雨在孤舟。
諸溪近海潮皆應，獨樹邊淮葉盡流。
別恨轉深何處寫，前程唯有一登樓。111

REST AT HWAI RIVER THINKING OF SI-KON SUO

Li Duan

Disappointed mind is further troubled
by long worry over departure:

Evening thoughts revolve a thousand times
thinking of old travelers.

In the land of Chin, there are many friends
who are now only in remote dream,

Under Chu Heaven the cold rain is
falling on my lonely boat.

All of the rivers nearly to the sea,
have been affected by the tide,

Leaves of the lonely trees near the Huai
are all gone with the current.


111 QTS 286.3269.
I don’t know where to begin to write
   as my sorrow for departure turns deeper,

I think I can only look to the future and write
   a poem after “Step up to Upper Stairs”. *

*The poem entitled “Step up to Upper Stairs” was written by poet Wang Cian when he was homesick.

-Tang Zi-chang, 1969\textsuperscript{112}
Appendix B:

Tonal “Mistakes” in Lī Duān’s Pentasyllabic Poetry

This appendix lists all cases of monotony within a single line in Lī Duān’s pentasyllabic poetry, with tonal markings given for the second and fourth character of each line. In cases of characters having multiple pronunciations, I have chosen to give the reading that allows for tonal variation, giving Lī the benefit of the doubt.

留別柳中庸 (QTS 284.3233) 過谷口元善所居 (QTS 284.3233)

惆悵流水時， X X 人谷訪君來， X O
蕭條背城路。 O O 秋泉已堪涉。 O O
離人出古亭， O X 林間人獨坐， O X
嘶馬入寒樹。 X O 月下山相接。 X O
江海正風波， X O 重露溼蒼苔， X O
相逢在何處。 O X 明燈照黃葉。 O O
故交一不見， O X

野亭三韻送錢員外 (QTS 284.3233) 素髮何稠疊。 X O

野菊開欲稀， X X 九日贈司空文明 (QTS 284.3233)
寒泉流漸淺。 O X 我有惆悵詞， X X
幽人步林後， O O 待君醉時說。 O O
歎此年華晚。 X O 長來逢九日， O X
倚杖送行雲， X O 難與菊花別。 X O
尋思故山遠。 O O 摘卻正開花， X O

歸山招王逵 (QTS 284.3233) 暫言花未發。 O X

日長原野靜， O X 蕪城 (QTS 284.3233-34)
杖策步幽巖。 X O 昔人登此地， O X
雉雊麥苗陰， X O 邝臚已前悲。 X O
蝶飛溪草晚。 O X 今日又非昔， X O
我生好閒放， X O 此去殊未返。 X X
此去殊未返。 X X 春風能幾時。 O X
自是君不來， X O 風吹城上樹， O X
非關故山遠。 O O 草沒城邊路。 X O

城裏月明時， X O
精靈自來去。 O O
荊州泊（QTS 284.3234）

南樓西下時，O X
月裏聞來棹，X O
桂水舟飄回，X O
荊州津濟闌。O X
移帷望星漢，O O
引帶思容貌。X O
今夜一江人，X O
唯應妾身覺。O O

春遊樂（QTS 284.3234）

游童蘇合彈，O X
倡女蒲葵扇。X O
初日映城時，X O
相思忽相見。O X
絮裳踏路草，O X
理鬟回花面。X O
薄暮不同歸，X O
留情此芳甸。O O

憶姣然上人（QTS 285.3247）

未得從師去，X O
人間萬事勞。O X
雲門不可見，O X
山木已應高。X O
向日開柴戶，X O
驚秋問敝袍。O X
何由宿峯頂，O O
窗裏望波濤。X O

千里思（QTS 284.3234-35）

涼州風月美，O X
遙望居延路。X O
泛泛下天雲，X O
青青綠塞樹。O X
燕山蘇武上，O X
海島田橫住。X O
更是草生時，X O
行人出門去。O O

邊頭作（QTS 285.3249）

邠郊泉脈動，O X
落日上城樓。X O
羊馬水草足，X X
羌胡帳幕稠。O X
射雕過海岸，O X
傳箭怯邊州。X O
何事歸朝將，X O
今年又拜侯。O X

與苗員外山行（QTS 284.3235）

古人留路去，O X
今日共君行。X O
若待青山盡，X O
應逢白髮生。O X
誰知到蘭若，O O
流落一書名。X O

酬前大理寺評事張芬（QTS 285.3246）

君家舊林壑，O O
寄在亂峰西。X O
近日春雲滿，X O
相思路亦迷。O X
聞鐘投野寺，O X
待月過前溪。X O
悵望成幽夢，X O
依依識故蹊。O X
送友人還洛 (*QTS* 285.3250)  宿雲際寺贈深上人 (*QTS* 285.3254)

去國渡關河， X O  暫別青藍寺， X O

蟬鳴古樹多， O X  今來發欲斑。 O X

平原正超忽， O O  獨眠孤燭下， O X

行子複蹉跎。 X O  風雨在前山。 X O

去事不可想， X X  壞宅終須去， X O

舊遊難再過。 O X  空門不易還。 O X

何當嵩嶽下， O X  支公有方便， O O

相見在煙蘿。 X O  一顧啟玄關。 X O

送丁少府往唐上 (*QTS* 285.3250-51)  送義興元少府 (*QTS* 285.3255)

因君灞陵別， O O  逢君惠連第， O O

故國一回看。 X O  初命便光輝， X O

共食田文飯， X O  已得群公祖， X O

先之梅福官。 O X  終妨太傅識。 O X

江風轉日暮， O X  路長人反顧， O X

山月滿潮寒。 X O  草斷燕回飛。 X O

不得同舟望， X O  本是江南客， X O

淹留歲月闌。 O X  還同衣錦歸。 O X

送古之奇赴安西幕 (*QTS* 285.3252)  臥病別鄭錫 (*QTS* 285.3255)

疇昔十年兄， X O  病來喜無事， O X

相逢五校營。 O X  多臥竹林間。 X O

今宵舉杯酒， O O  此日一相見， X O

隴月見軍城。 X O  明朝還掩關。 O X

埃火經陰絕， X O  幽人愛芳草， O O

邊人接曉行。 O X  志士惜顏顏。 X O

殷勤送書記， O O  歲晏不我棄， X X

強虜幾時平。 X O  期君在故山。 O X
送諸暨裴少府 (QTS 285.3256)  
曉發瓜州 (QTS 285.3257)

山公訪嵇紹，O O  
趙武見韓侯。X O  
事去恩猶在，X O  
名成淚欲流。O X  
一官同北去，O X  
千里赴南州。X O  
才子清風後，X O  
無贻相府憂。O X  

曉發悲行客，X O  
停棧獨無前。O X  
寒江半有月，O X  
野戍漸無煙。X O  
棹唱臨高岸，X O  
鴻嘶發遠田。O X  
誰知避徒禱，O O  
對酒一潸然。X O  

晚夏聞蟬寄廣文 (QTS 285.3257)  
酬秘書元丞郊園臥疾見寄 (QTS 285.3258)

昨日鶯喚聲，X X  
今朝蟬忽鳴。O X  
朱顏向華髮，O X  
定是幾年程。X O  
故國白雲遠，X O  
聞居青草生。O X  
因垂數行淚，O X  
書報十年兄。X O  

聞說漳濱臥，X O  
題詩怨歲華。O X  
求醫主高手，O O  
報疾到貧家。X O  
撒枕銷行蟬，X O  
移杯失畫蛇。O X  
明朝九衢上，O O  
應見玉人車。X O  

歸山居寄錢起 (QTS 285.3257)  
送夏侯審游蜀 (QTS 285.3259-60)

憐望青山下，X O  
回頭淚滿巾。O X  
故鄉多古樹，O X  
落日少行人。X O  
鬢鬚將回色，X O  
簪纒未到身。O X  
誰知武陵路，O O  
亦有漢家臣。X O  

西望煙綿樹，X O  
愁君上蜀時。O X  
同林息商客，O O  
隔樓見眾師。X O  
石滑羊腸險，X O  
山空杜宇悲。O X  
琴心正幽怨，O O  
莫奏鳯凰詩。X O
單推官廳前雙樺詠 (QTS 285.3260)
封植因高興， X O
孤貞契素期。 O X
由來得地早， O X
何事結花遲。 X O
葉重凝煙後， X O
條寒過雨時。 O X
還同李家樹。 O O
爭賦角弓詩。 X O

送宋校書赴宣州幕 (QTS 285.3260)
浮舟壓芳草， O O
容裔逐江春。 X O
遠避看書吏， X O
行當入暮賓。 O X
夜潮沖老樹， O X
曉雨破輕蘋。 X O
鶯鶯多傷別， X O
樂家德在人。 O X

宿瓜洲寄柳中庸 (QTS 285.3260)
懷人同不寐， O X
清夜起論文。 X O
月魄正出海， X X
雁行斜上雲。 O X
寒潮來蠹蠹， O X
秋葉下紛紛。 X O
便送江東去， X O
徘徊只待君。 O X

送單少府赴扶風 (QTS 285.3262)
少年趨盛府， O X
顏色比花枝。 X O
范勛非童子， X O
楊修豈小兒。 O X
叨陪丈人行， O O
常恐阿戎欺。 X O
此去雲霄近， X O
看君逸足馳。 O X

送雍丘任少府 (QTS 285.3263)
叢車饜才子， O O
路走許東偏。 X O
遠水同春色， X O
繁花勝雪天。 O X
鳥行侵楚邑， O X
樹影向殷田。 X O
莫學生鄉思， X O
梅真正少年。 O X

酬晉侍禱見寄 (QTS 285.3264)
野客蒙詩贈， X O
殊恩欲報難。 O X
本求文舉識， O X
不在子真官。 X O
細雨雙林暮， X O
重陽九日寒。 O X
貧齋一叢菊， O O
願與上賓看。 X O
送銅澤王歸城 (QTS 285.3265) 奉送閔中丞使河源 (QTS 285.3266)

昔聞公族出，OX
其從亦高車。XO
為善唯求樂，OX
分貧必及疏。OX
身承漢枝葉，OX
手習魯詩書。OX
尚說無功德，OX
三年在石渠。OX

東周遣戍役，XX
才子欲離群。OX
部領河源去，OX
悠悠隴水分。OX
筋聲悲塞草，OX
馬首渡關雲。OX
辛苦逢炎熱，OX
何時及漢軍。OX

送黎兵曹往陝府結婚 (QTS 285.3265) 送王羽林往秦州 (QTS 285.3266)

東方發車騎，OO
君是上頭人。XO
奠雁逢良日，OX
行媒及仲春。OX
時稱渡河婦，OX
宜配垣床賓。OX
安得同門吏，OX
揚鞭入後塵。OX

秦州貴公子，OO
漢日羽林郎。OX
事主來中禁，OX
榮親上北堂。OX
轅車花擁路，OX
寶劍雪生光。OX
直掃三邊靖，OX
承恩向建章。OX

留別故人 (QTS 285.3265-66) 送友人關 (QTS 285.3266)

此別不可道，XX
此心當語誰。OX
春風灞水上，OX
飲馬桃花時。OX
誤作好文士，OX
只應游宦遲。OX
留書下朝客，OO
我有故山期。OX

聞君帝城去，OO
西望一沾巾。OX
落日見秋草，OX
暮年逢故人。OX
非才長作客，OX
有命懶謀身。OX
近更嬰衰疾，OX
空思老漢濱。OX
宿洞庭 \((QTS \ 285.3268)\)

白水連天暮， X O
洪波帶日流。 O X
風高雲夢夕， O X
月滿洞庭秋。 X O
沙上漁人火， X O
煙中賭客舟。 O X
西園與南浦， O O
萬里共悠悠。 X O

奉和元丞侍從游南城別業 \((QTS \ 285.3268)\)

垂朱領孫子， O O
從宴在池塘。 X O
獻壽回龜顧， X O
和羹躍鰲香。 O X
高松先草晚， O X
平石助泉涼。 X O
餘橍期相及， X O
門生有陸郎。 O X

送郭良輔下第東歸 \((QTS \ 286.3278)\)

獻策不得已， X X
馳車東出秦。 O X
暮年千里客， O X
落日萬家春。 X O

和張尹憶東籬菊 \((QTS \ 286.3279)\)

傳書報劉尹， O O
何事憶陶家。 X O
若為籬邊菊， X O
山中有此花。 O X

蓉城 \((QTS \ 286.3280)\)

風吹城上樹， O X
草沒城邊路。 X O
城裏月明時， X O
精靈自來去。 O O

贈山中老人 \((QTS \ 286.3280)\)

白首獨一身， X X
青山為四鄰。 O X
雖行故鄉陌， O X
不見故鄉人。 X O

拜新月 \((QTS \ 286.3280)\)

開簾見新月， O O
便即下階拜。 X O
細語人不聞， X O
北風吹裙帶。 O O

贈何兆 \((QTS \ 286.3280)\)

文章似揚馬， O O
風骨又清羸。 X O
江漢君猶在， X O
英靈信未衰。 O X

雜詩 \((QTS \ 286.3280)\)

主第辭高飲， X O
石家赴賓會。 O O
金谷走車來， X O
玉人騎馬待。 O X

感興 \((QTS \ 286.3280)\)

香爐最高頂， O O
中有高人住。 X O
日暮下山來， X O
月明上山去。 O O