

Tan 桓譚. The following contributions focus on medieval poetics or take the medieval period as their point of departure. Cai Zongqi presents a comprehensive analysis of the various meanings of the term *shén* 神 in the *Wenxin diaolong*, based on a historical overview of the uses and connotations of this word in the preceding centuries. Yuan Xingpei's 袁行霈 contribution is also dedicated to the history of a complex aesthetic term, *tiānqū* 天趣, that became an important concept of Chinese poetics. Olga Lomová in her inspiring article about Yongming-style poetry combines the exploration of the court milieu in which this type of poetry flourished with a perceptive description of the literary features of this genre. Stephen Owen, setting out from a late eighteenth century poem, examines the implications of the idea of "painstaking composition" (*kǔyín* 苦吟) and pursues it back to eighth and ninth century China, vividly delineating a new facet of Chinese poetical history. If Stephen Owen is mostly concerned with time, spent on writing poetry and on living one's life, Florence Hu-Sterk in her article emphasizes space, pointing out the impact of Tang-dynasty landscape poetry on Song-dynasty pictorial theory. Charles Hartman not only introduces a little-known Song dynasty primer of poetic composition, *Yinhuang zalu* 吟窗雜錄 (Miscellaneous Notes from the Singing Window), describing the genre of criticism represented by this text along the way (*shīgé* 詩格), but also creates an impressive, evocative picture of this genre's historical and literary background. The poetic and intellectual scene of Song-dynasty China is also at the heart of Jiang Yin's 蔣寅 remarkable sketch of the history of the concept of implicitness (*hánxù* 含蓄), which the author connects to various Chan Buddhist notions such as "not revealing in words" (*bù shuōpò* 不說破). The two succeeding essays deal with aspects of the poetics of late imperial narratives. While Thomas Zimmer offers stimulating reflections on the motives for writing fiction as seen in the prefaces to Ming- and Qing-dynasty novels, Boris Riftin takes an illuminating look at the evolution of character description in Chinese narrative literature, focusing on the representation of outward appearance. The following articles are dedicated to contemporary Chinese poets of Taiwan and the mainland. Lloyd Haft presents a fascinating analysis of palindromic structures in Zhou Mengdie's 周夢蝶 poetry, placing this author within various Chinese and Western traditions. Maghiel van Crevel introduces Xi Chuan 西川 not so much through his poetry, but through his writings on poetics, confirming his distinct artistic approach and thus adding to our understanding of the diversity of contemporary Chinese poetry. Qian Zhixi's 錢志熙 profound exploration of the different historical uses of the term *shīxué* 詩學 rounds off the volume.

All in all, *Recarving the Dragon* is an outstanding collection of original essays by leading scholars in the field of Chinese literature that in an exemplary manner contributes, as Olga Lomová points out in her preface, to the "never-ending task" of understanding "both the uniqueness and universality of the Chinese literary tradition, as well as its transformation over the centuries" (p. 7). It is to be hoped that along with a wider distribution of the book, its brilliant articles will come to enjoy a deeper appreciation than they have so far.

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*Stratifying Zhuangzi: Rhyme and Other Quantitative Evidence.* By DAVID McCRAW. *Language and Linguistics Monograph Series*, vol. 41. Taipei: INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS, ACADEMIA SINICA, 2010. Pp. iv + 135, illus. \$30.

The core of this book is a fifty-one-page essay that asks whether the rhyming patterns in the *Zhuāngzǐ*—particularly the occurrence of non-canonical rhyming (*héyùn* 合韻)—support the notion that the work is a hodgepodge of material by different hands. The question was clearly never in doubt for the author, who answers it in the affirmative.

The book contains no abstract or summary conclusion or index, so I list its main findings here. The first section of the essay considers a variety of Warring States texts and finds that rhyming in most of the *Zhuāngzǐ* has the greatest likeness to the *Lǚshì chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 and *Guānzǐ* 管子, "suggesting

the composite nature of those texts” (p. 15). The author also finds no evidence for a distinctive rhyming style linking *Zhuāngzǐ* and certain other texts with the Chǔ 楚 region, as some have suggested. The second section of the essay considers three competing models of *Zhuāngzǐ* as a composite of three, four, or six layers, and finds that A. C. Graham’s six-layer model is the best supported by rhyming evidence, as well as by the occurrence patterns of distinctive lexicon. The third section of the essay compares the rhyming patterns within one of Graham’s six layers, the seven “Inner Chapters,” and seems to conclude that those chapters can be loosely classified into two groups, whose authors may have two different geographic origins. The essay is supplemented by a twenty-seven-page presentation of the rhyming portions of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, a thirteen-page meditation on the ideas of the different strata of the received text, and various other materials.

The author of this book does not have special expertise in historical linguistics or statistics, but that should not be held against him. What should be held against him is that he has produced a badly organized volume that this reviewer, who has a professional interest in both subjects, finds hard to follow. The author does not explain his methods or conclusions clearly; he does not narrate the results of the statistical experiments concisely; he presents numerical data in too much detail but does not label all the parts of his graphs or compose them so as to draw attention to his most important conclusions; most seriously, he has apparently made poor use of a readily available model in English for studying almost the very problem he is examining: that of William H. Baxter.

The third chapter of Baxter’s *Handbook of Old Chinese* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992) demonstrates, clearly but with no superfluous detail, how to use the probabilistic method called the Bernoulli trial to study rhyming in a received Chinese corpus. Baxter’s discussion is utterly lucid and should be a model for anyone attempting to do the same kind of study. Although McCraw refers to Baxter’s work, he does not model his presentation on Baxter’s or even report on statistical experiments he conducted himself. Rather, he had other people run analyses using SPSS and other software and then tried to explain the results in his own words. I want to stress that it should be no embarrassment if a textual critic such as McCraw finds phonology or statistics a little baffling, but a reasonable solution would have been to have written a report collaboratively with a phonologist and a statistician. Instead, McCraw often sounds as though he is commenting on analysis he isn’t fully comfortable with himself. The result is interlarded with breezy generalizations like “As information theoreticians know well, any attempt to meaningfully parse—cluster—information seeks to optimize cluster numbers so that we get maximum precision without slicing so thin that we lose statistical significance” (p. 32). Narrating the results of statistical study is not aided by asides of this sort. One has to be concise and stick to the point or else lose one’s audience. If McCraw had used Baxter’s presentation as a model, this would be a much better book.

The author also seems uncomfortable with phonology. He says at the outset that he considers the early Chinese rhyming groups (*yùnbù* 韻部) an inadequate tool of analysis and “our current state of knowledge about early Chinese phonology does not allow us to assign specific phonetic values to” them (p. iii). Very well; but in a number of places he provides phonetic interpretations of his phonological evidence. Appendix 5 even shows eighteen competing vowel charts, without explanation, that the author apparently associates with the rhyming observed in different Warring States texts. So which is it to be? If the reader is to consider vocalism at all, then the author has to provide some sort of basic discussion. If reconstruction is to be avoided, then one has to leave out the vowels and stick to abstract phonology as documented by rhyming patterns. I suspect McCraw wants to draw reconstructive conclusions but is not confident about doing so and has found himself a piece of soft middle ground between the two firm options.

As part of William Baxter’s discussion of statistics, he included thoughtful comments on what rhyming actually means and what it may or may not tell us about authorship, a vitally important matter of philosophy in any study of this kind. Some people may differ with Baxter on his conclusions, but no one can deny that he thought seriously about the problem. It is hard to see that McCraw has reflected on these issues at all. In the case of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the fact that there are a great many non-canonical “cross-rhymes” could indeed point to multiple authorship, with each hand characterized by a different cross-rhyming pattern. Could it also point to a single author writing in a style that allows

for non-canonical rhyming, or even simply trying to *sound* non-canonical? The vagaries of interpreting rhyming evidence should have been discussed at the outset of a work like this, so that plausible counter-theories could be decisively disposed of. Which is unclear—the author’s writing or his scholarship? I fear it may be the latter.

The chatty tone of the book does not conceal the fact that the author is uncomfortable with the technical aspects of his material. I find that tone, along with the many contractions used (and abbreviations such as “2x” for “twice”), distracting in a scholarly work; I grant that these are small matters but they make it harder to follow an argument whose logic is less plain than it ought to be.

In short, this book should not have been published in its present form. It deals with an important question but is confusing and awkwardly composed. In its favor, however, I can say that it is a great improvement over the author’s earlier work on this subject, “Pursuing Zhuangzi as Rhymester: A Snark-hunt in Eight Fits” (*Sino-Platonic Papers*, no. 67, April, 1995), which examines the philosophies within the rhyming passages of *Zhuāngzǐ* but has no foundation in either phonology or statistics. This new essay is more coherent than the earlier one was, but its rambling and hesitant presentation makes me wonder about the soundness of its findings.

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*Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present.* By CHRISTOPHER I. BECKWITH. Princeton: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. Pp. xxv + 472. \$35.

The many years Beckwith has dedicated to the study and teaching of the history of Central Eurasia shine through in this intellectually wide-ranging book. Not many scholars are comfortable working with materials in Chinese, Old Tibetan, Arabic, Old Turkic, and a range of other languages. And not many books discuss the Koguryo, whose realm bordered on the Pacific, and the Franks, whose territory touched the Atlantic, on the same page (135). However, the strong points in this book are often overshadowed by glaring flaws. It probably should not be used as a textbook unless the instructor knows the subject well and can help students focus on the book’s strengths and avoid its flaws.

The historical core of the book, twelve chapters long (pp. 29–319), begins with “The Chariot Warriors” and the Proto-Indo-Europeans in the late third millennium B.C. and ends with “Central Asia Reborn” and the twenty-first century. The most important historical points are well covered. The lengthy bibliography (pp. 427–55) and comprehensive index (pp. 457–72) magnify the usefulness of the volume. A book covering such enormous historical geography as this one should contain many detailed maps. Instead, there are only two maps, one inside the front cover on premodern Central Eurasia and a corresponding one inside the back with modern political details. The book would be significantly more useful with more maps, especially if it is intended for use as a textbook.

The author almost seems to seek out and relish the role of iconoclast, frequently and with vigor challenging traditional views. In some cases the traditional ideas deserve to be overthrown and here the author does a fine service. He amply succeeds in showing that Central Eurasia is central to world history rather than peripheral to it, and that Central Eurasia was no more made up of barbarians than any other part of the world. But in other cases the author goes too far with his proposed intellectual revolutions. The idea that Avestan, the Old Iranian liturgical language of Zoroastrianism, was a “phonologically Iranized Indic language” (p. 368) will probably not win converts among Iranian historical linguists. And he wishes to cast away the idea that civilization might come from Sumeria, Egypt, or China: “Central Eurasia is our homeland, the place where our civilization started” (p. 319). The author is also prone to expounding idiosyncratic theories and is often highly opinionated. For instance, in chapter 12 he asks, “Why have Modern artists failed to produce much real art after an entire century of revolution and experimentation?” (p. 314). This is in a section several pages long decrying what he