

Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature. By Bruce Rusk. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012. Pp. xiv + 282. \$39.95/£29.95.

We like to say that China has the longest continuous literary tradition in the world, pointing back to the *Shi jing* 詩經 and the sometimes poetic inscriptions on ancient bronzes. But here is a history of Chinese literature—written from the perspective of successive receptions of the *Shi jing*—that emphasizes discontinuity and innovation. It causes us to question whether our repeating the claims about Chinese antiquity is not just an effect of our socialization as members of one or another of the contemporary publics concerned with Chinese language and literature.

At the outset, as Bruce Rusk reminds us, the *Shi jing* was anything but a literary collection: it was part of the ritualist's toolkit, a set of texts for use, and what we somewhat inaccurately call its early "interpretations" should be better understood as reports on the poems' effect or suitability for ceremonial purposes. Our inveterate habit of updating causes us to see in such documents as the "Great Preface" to the *Shi* a statement about poetry, rather than about that particular collection, a body of poems written in a form and language no longer current at the time of its assemblage. Rusk makes us aware of the many levels of anachronism in our usual understanding of the most familiar aspect of the *Shi*. The treatment of a Classic as a work of literature, indeed, would have violated "hierarchies of prestige and differences in expectation" (p. 14) that only gradually became porous. By reading back over the history of the reception of the *Shi*, Rusk allows us repeatedly to recover the "sense of strangeness" (p. 41) and to "appreciate the novelty" (p. 70) of the successive acts of unwonted familiarity that made the domains of the *Shi jing* and current poetic movements connect.

The book is therefore largely a history of anthologies. It discusses their inclusions and exclusions, their establishment of genres, their selections within a genre, the number of entries in a type—and, of course, the material they left out, insofar as this can be measured. Norms were always evolving, but the field of data evolved too, as with the emergence of "stone and bronze" scholarship in the Tang and Song. The "Stone Drum Poems," for example—are they really poems and do they belong where readers today usually first meet them, in Lu Qinli's 遼欽立 compendious anthology of early poetry *Xian-Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩? Their very identity as poetry "is the outcome of a long process of labeling, classification, and invocations of the *Book of Poems*," a story that in Rusk's hands reveals much about the tacit, long-term operations of critics and poets (pp. 78–81).

Although it is focused on one anthology and its reception-history, the book uses the *Shi jing* more as perspective than as subject. Readings of actual poems are few.

The concern is not usually with aesthetic value as such, but rather with how aesthetic values are established, defended, debated. Nonetheless, the choice of the *Shi jing* as protagonist allows Rusk to take in a great deal of Chinese intellectual history. The story becomes richest and most incredible (dare one say *chuanqi* 傳奇?) in the Ming, when an enterprising scholar named Feng Fang 豐坊 undertook to forge a long-lost *Shi* commentary from the Lu 魯 school as well as side documents attesting to its reliability. As Anthony Grafton has argued, forgers have to be exceptionally acute critics to do their job at all convincingly, and they are the best teachers of the critics who sometimes (not always, doubtless) denounce them. Feng Fang's industrious activity tells us more about Ming expectations and desires than any amount of non-surreptitious literary comment. And indeed, the technical, rhetorical character he ascribed to the long-lost Lu School commentators resonated with the commentatorial culture of the Ming, evidenced by such enthusiastic critics of other literary genres as Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆, Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, or Li Zhi 李贄; Zhong Xing 鍾惺, Tan Yuanchun 譚元春, Ling Mengchu 凌濛初, and others, more interested, it appears, in the mechanisms of style than in the morals or historical provenance of poems, were not embarrassed to cite Feng's imaginative reconstructions (pp. 186–89). Even Yao Jiheng 姚際恆 relied on them, while acknowledging their falsity (pp. 191–92). The line of argument here picks up from Lee Kar-shui's 李家樹 *Chuantong yiwai de Shijing xue* 傳統以外的詩經學 (Studies of the *Book of Poems* from Outside the Tradition).¹

The twentieth century, says Rusk, made the *Shi jing* into “the earliest traces of a newly discovered phenomenon called Chinese Literature” (p. 195)—meaning by this that the whole category of the literary as deployed by twentieth-century people was discontinuous with whatever earlier Chinese had called by the names of *wen* 文, *bi* 筆, *shi* 詩, or the like. “This discovery or invention was inherently comparative” (p. 195)—as are, perhaps, similar discoveries in all the literatures of the world. The *Shi* have constantly pivoted, as Rusk shows, between the statuses of a specific body of documents (“the *Poems*”) and of a style or spirit recognizable in an indefinite number of documents, including those unknown, foreign or yet to be written (“poetry,” “the poetic”). To understand what is at stake in the move to openness or generativity, it is important no longer simply to assert it as a necessary value, as the twentieth-century literary mind would have us do.

It is good, therefore, to desediment the habits of literary pedagogy in China that make the *Shi* the fount and beginning of a thing, “poetry,” that the earliest audiences of the *Shi* probably could not have imagined. In an apparent paradox, the very con-

¹ Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1994.

tinuity of the Chinese poetic tradition is one of the inventions here given a date, a local habitation, and a name (p. 50). Rusk's book causes us to see how recent are the literary ideas we are most apt to think eternal and self-explanatory.

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李爽學：《譯述：明末耶穌會翻譯文學論》。香港：中文大學出版社，2012年。xxi + 518頁。\$30.00。

析論晚明首見文學翻譯的第一本書

寫文章相當忌諱累贅的文字堆砌，不過這次我必須東施效顰，擬一個繞口令式的書評標題：「析論晚明首見文學翻譯的第一本書」。¹這麼做是有原因的，因為效顰的對象正是本書「譯述」這個不順暢的標題。

李爽學的文字一向精緻典雅，多用典故。近期出版的《譯述：明末耶穌會翻譯文學論》(Transwriting: Translated Literature and Late-Ming Jesuits)一書，以「譯述」這麼繞口的文字做為標題，也是有典故的。

「譯述」一詞出自晚明耶穌會士艾儒略《天主降生言行紀略》一書的作者欄：「西極耶穌會士艾儒略『譯述』」。²囿於當時天主教會對聖經翻譯的限制，素有「西來孔子」雅稱的艾儒略，彷彿孔子「述而不作」的異文版，在這本中文第一本福音書翻譯的作者欄題上了「譯述」二字，可以理解為「述而不譯」嗎？實際上，儘管艾儒略不敢直說翻譯《聖經》，但是他名下《天主降生言行紀略》所謂的「譯述」，並非「述而不譯」，而是「以譯為述」。他是以福音書「經文」為基礎，跨越語言，敘述一個「天主降生」的超凡故事。³

李爽學從晚明耶穌會所出版的中文著作中，留意到作者題辭有許多不同用語，包含「授」、「述」、「口授」、「口譯」、「口說」、「譯述」、「演」、「譯義」、「議敘」、「達

¹ 李爽學自謙而未冠上這個「第一」，由書評者加上，應是無可厚非。見《譯述：明末耶穌會翻譯文學論》，頁xii。

² 艾儒略：〈萬日略經說〉，卷首，頁一上；鐘鳴旦、杜鼎克（合編）：《耶穌會羅馬檔案館明清天主教文獻》（臺北：利氏學社，2002年），第四冊，頁23。

³ 詳拙文〈述而不譯？艾儒略《天主降生言行紀略》的跨語言敘事初探〉，《中國文哲研究集刊》第34期（2009年3月），頁111-67。