A Political Eulogy that Dazzles:
Yang Jiong’s (650–ca. 694) “Fu on the Old Man Star”

Abstract:
Canopus (α Carinae), known in China as “Old Man Star,” is the second brightest star after Sirius. In China by the first century BC it was commonly believed that a ruler’s virtue causes the star to be easily visible, which would thus augur well for political legitimacy. The star’s astrological significance was noted when Wu Zhao (regent 664–690; r. 690–705) ascended the throne in 690. The renowned poet Yang Jiong presented to Wu Zhao a fu (or, rhyme-prose) on the Old Man Star that stressed the Mandate of Heaven and promoted Wu Zhao’s authority. This article studies the political, astrological, and literary context of Yang Jiong’s “Fu on the Old Man Star” as well as its linguistic and rhetorical features. It discusses the interplay among astrology, politics, and literature in premodern China and analyzes the narrative structure and literary devices that helped achieve the political efficacy sought by the piece. The present study also sheds light on Yang Jiong’s less-studied works and court eulogistic literature. An annotated translation of Yang’s fu is appended.

Keywords:
Yang Jiong, Wu Zhao, eulogistic literature

Canopus (α Carinae), known in China as Laorenxing 老人星 (Old Man Star), had become a favorite subject of writers by the third century AD. Many literary works that based their arguments on portent astrology were written to celebrate the clear visibility of the star, this being an auspicious omen (xiangrui 祥瑞) believed to reveal Heaven’s approval of and blessings to the ruler. Among such works, Yang Jiong’s 楊炯 (650–ca. 694) “Laorenxing fu” 老人星賦 (“Fu on the Old Man Star”) is considered a masterpiece of eulogistic literature. This article examines the astrological, political, and literary contexts in which Yang Jiong wrote his fu, as well as its linguistic and rhetorical features. An annotated translation of Yang’s fu is appended.

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written in or shortly after 690, demonstrates an individual’s contribution to the creation of political legitimacy for Wu Zhao 武曌 (624–705, r. 690–705) and has some importance in Chinese political, literary, and cultural history.

Yang’s fu has two related and equally important purposes. The political purpose is to justify Wu Zhao’s legitimacy, glorify her, and celebrate the appearance of the Old Man Star as a sign of the receipt of Heaven’s mandate. The literary purpose is to delight, dazzle, and impress, all of which showcases the author’s flamboyant talent. Contemporary political needs motivated Yang as well, and his literary virtuosity helped achieve a political purpose. By weaving together historical precedents and literary conventions, empowering conventional themes, and arousing enthusiasm and awe, his fu perfectly illustrates the political function of congratulatory literature: to legitimize and mythologize the ruler and his or her dynasty, and to praise and propagate his or her authority and power. This article studies the political, astrological, and literary context of “Fu on the Old Man Star” as well as its linguistic and rhetorical features. It explores the lore and literature about the Old Man Star and discusses the interplay among astrology, politics, and literature in premodern China. A chief aim here is to analyze how the narrative structure and literary devices of Yang’s fu help it to achieve its intended political efficacy. An annotated translation of the fu is given in the appendix.

It is the author’s desire to contribute to the history of medieval Chinese literature by shaping the present work as an introduction to two neglected yet important areas, both of which will be briefly discussed. One is Yang Jiong’s non-shi 詩 works, especially his fu and prose that share certain political concerns and literary characteristics with his “Fu on the Old Man Star.” The other area is court eulogistic literature, such

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as the congratulatory memorial (hebiao 賀表) and the eulogy (song 頌), from which Yang’s fu drew inspiration and various conventions.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION, AND YANG JIONG’S INTEREST AND CONCERNS

Judging from several lines in the “Fu on the Old Man Star” such as “majestic and illustrious the venerable Zhou 赫赫宗周” (line 1) and “profound and majestic the divine emperor 穆穆神皇” (line 47), the fu seems to have been written not long after the founding of the empress Wu’s Zhou dynasty in October of 690. The terminus ad quem for the fu is probably 694 when Yang Jiong was appointed commandant of Yingchuan 盈川 (east of modern Qu county in Zhejiang) where he died shortly afterwards.\(^\text{5}\)

The specific circumstance of Yang’s composition is unclear, but the historical background surrounding Wu Zhao’s pursuit of political legitimacy can contribute to our understanding.\(^\text{6}\) Wu Zhao began to involve herself in government affairs after the mid-660s when emperor Gaozong’s 高宗 (628–683; r. 649–683) health began to deteriorate. She ruled as empress-dowager from 684 to 690, and then in 690 proclaimed herself emperor of the Zhou dynasty (690–705). As a woman, her engagement in government was not only unacceptable to but also stigmatized by the traditional patriarchal society,\(^\text{7}\) and her rule met re-

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\(^{4}\) Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Chinese are by the author. Wu Zhao’s title from June 21, 688, to October 19, 690, was “Saintly Mother, Divine and August” 聖母 神皇. See XTS 4, p. 87 and Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) et al., Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956; hereafter cited as ZZT J) 204, p. 6448. On October 19, 690, she adopted a new title “Saintly and Divine Emperor” 聖神皇帝, which lasted till October 13, 693. For an annotated translation of Yang’s “Fu on the Old Man Star,” see the appendix to the present article.


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istance from various court officials and imperial family members. Wu Zhao and her supporters therefore sought various ways to expand her authority, influence public opinion, and, especially during the late 680s, justify her legitimacy. In premodern China, legitimacy was pursued through many, and often related, traditions (for example, the tenets of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, the anonymous so-called weft texts, or apocrypha, which acted as political oracles that spoke through the ancient classics, and astrology) and was manifest through various media such as symbols, texts, rituals, and monuments. As a female ruler, Wu Zhao resorted to a number of alternative sources and methods of legitimation within and beyond the Confucian tradition.

One method that Wu Zhao and her supporters utilized concerned the management and manipulation of symbols. A basic type of political symbol is what Lasswell and Kaplan called miranda, that is, gestures, rites, and the things associated with them that could “arouse admiration and enthusiasm, setting forth and strengthening faith and loyalties.” Howard Wechsler points out that “of all the miranda surrounding the assumption of power by a new dynasty, perhaps the most powerful in its ability to generate sentiments of political legitimacy and diffuse support was the auspicious omen.”

The conception of political legitimacy and its association with auspicious omens were developed from the Shang to the Han dynas-
Already seen early in the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BC) was the idea that being a member in the imperial lineage does not qualify for political legitimacy by default. Rather, Heaven confers its mandate to rule (ming, equivalent to political legitimacy) to a particular virtuous person and his clan. Later, in the Former Han, this idea was combined with the theory of celestial-terrestrial correspondences that had been developed since the late Warring States period. The new doctrine claims that Heaven constantly monitors the behavior of a ruler and his administration and reveals its approval or warning by showing auspicious or calamitous omens.

Auspicious omens therefore came to be regarded as indispensable signs that the ruler possessed the surpassing virtue required by the Mandate of Heaven doctrine.” They were thus eagerly sought after, interpreted, evaluated, and manipulated by “all would-be dynastic founders and insecure rulers” as well as their advisors and supporters, especially during politically sensitive periods. By the third century AD, presenting congratulatory memorials to the
current or the would-be ruler after someone’s report of an omen had become a common practice for court officials. Wu Zhao is said to have been “fond of auspicious omens,” an interest derived mainly from her political needs. To support her rule and cater to her will, many men at or beyond the court reported or fabricated auspicious omens, as had happened during other periods of dynastic transition. A large number of congratulatory memorials on auspicious omens survived from the late 670s to the late 690s when Wu Zhao tried to expand her authority and maintain her rule. Many were written by some of the best writers of the time, for example Li Jiao 李嶠 (ca. 646–ca. 715) and Cui Rong 崔融 (653–706), often on behalf of officials from central or local government.

Considering the political background of the second half of the seventh century, Yang Jiong’s political stance as well as his interest and erudition in astrology can explain why he chose to write about the Old Man Star. Yang’s adult life happened to coincide with Wu Zhao’s rise to power. Born in 650, Yang passed the Examination for Child Prodigies (shentong ju 神童舉) in 659 and was thereupon summoned to the court where he spent most of his remaining life. He experienced a five-year exile to Zizhou 梓州 (modern Santai 三台, Sichuan) in the 680s and spent the last few years of his life in Yingchuan in the 690s. Judging from his extant writings, Yang Jiong was a firm supporter of Wu Zhao. He was not only sensitive to the specific needs and concerns at different stages of her struggle for power but also good at drawing from a variety of traditions and creating new ways to strengthen and promote her authority. In the early 680s when Wu Zhao’s title was Heavenly Empress (tianhou 天后), Yang wrote the stele inscription for

See Lippiello, *Auspicious Omens and Miracles*, pp. 122–54, 265–322. During the Tang, two officials from the Board of Rites (Libu 禮部) were assigned to take charge of auspicious omens. On the different categories of auspicious omens, see *XTS* 46, p. 1194.

19 During the Tang, court officials were required to submit congratulatory memorials (XTS 46, p. 1194).

18 See, e.g., *ZZT* 203, p. 6421.


20 See, e.g., *ZZT* 203, p. 6421.


22 Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et al., *Wen yuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966; hereafter cited as *WYYH*), j. 501–505, contains over a dozen congratulatory memorials for Wu Zhao written by Li Jiao, Cui Rong, Zhang Yue, and other courtiers.

the Temple of the Younger Sister (Shaoyi miao 少姨廟) on Mount Song 嵩. At the surface, the inscription commemorates the imperial couple’s visit to Mount Song and praises emperor Gaozong’s achievements. The underlying purpose was to augment Wu Zhao’s status, champion her involvement in political affairs, and support her plans to establish a new political center in greater Luoyang, including elevating the status of Mount Song.

In autumn of 692, Yang presented “Yulanpen fu” 盂蘭盆賦 (“Fu on Ullambana”) to commemorate Wu Zhao’s presence in the celebration of the Ghost Festival. In this effusive eulogy, Yang praises Wu Zhao as a successor of the lineage of ancient sage-kings and expresses his high hopes for her to be “a model and exemplar for all emperors and kings 作皇王之軌躅.” “Fu on the Old Man Star” adds to these works by its context of astrology. Yang was clearly eager to use his erudition and literary eloquence to extol Wu Zhao through traditional and innovative ways.

An enthusiastic stargazer, Yang had more than a passing knowledge of cosmology, astronomy, and astrology, which is demonstrated mainly in his “Huntian fu” 漢天賦 (“Fu on the Theory of Sphere-Heavens”). In this fu Yang states that after receiving his first official post in 676, he “spent days and nights at the Luminous Terrace studying all the figures on the bronze armillary sphere 朝夕靈台之下，備見渾渾之象.”

24 “Shaoshi shan Shaoyi miao bei ming bing xu” 少室山少姨廟碑銘並序, WYTH 878, pp. 6a–11b; Yang 5, pp. 65–71. The visit was on March 18 of 680. See JTS 5, p. 106. Cui Rong wrote the inscription for an epitaph for Qi’s mother to commemorate the imperial visit on the previous day. Both inscriptions were written soon after the visit and no later than their dedication in early 683. See Jonathan Pettit, “Erotic Empress,” pp. 129–30, esp. n. 22. Cf. Zhao Mingcheng’s 趙明誠 (1081–1129) criticism of Yang Jiong’s inscription in Jinshi lu 金石錄 24, pp. 8b–9a; see Song ben Jinshi lu 金石錄 (rpt. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), pp. 570–71.

25 Rothschild, Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon, pp. 87–90, who comments that Yang and Cui “made a concerted effort to resuscitate the cults [of the Tushan sisters] and invest these neglected sites with ceremonial significance”; idem, pp. 47–51. On the important role that Luoyang and Mount Song played in Wu Zhao’s struggle for legitimacy and power, see Cai Yunzhang 蔡運章, “Shendu, shenyue yu Wu Zhou wangchao” 神都、神嶽與武周王朝, in Wang Wenchao 王文釗 and Zhao Wenrun 蕭文潤, eds., Wu Zetian yu Songshan 武則天與嵩山 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), pp. 225–29.

26 JTS’s compilers highly praised this fu for elegance and eloquence; JTS 190, p. 5009. For its textual history, see Teiser, Ghost Festival in Medieval China, p. 73, n. 46.

27 Perhaps written between 676 and 680.

meanings of the Twelve Emblems further demonstrates his knowledge and concerns on the cosmological and symbolic aspects of proper ritual. It is also clear from his other writings that Yang was interested in astronomical and astrological theories and symbolisms, and that he used them often to strengthen arguments, create atmosphere and emotions, and enhance the expression of his central themes.

Taking into account Yang’s political concerns and personal interest as well as the political situations at the end of the seventh century, there is little surprise that Yang chose to write on an astrological symbol soon after the founding of the Zhou in 690. Written mainly for a non-literary purpose, based on Yang’s erudition in astrology, and empowered by Yang’s literary skills, “Fu on the Old Man Star” is an apt text to show the relationship and interaction among politics, astrology, and literature. Before a detailed discussion of it, we should explain why this particular star was selected as the subject of a fu.

“FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR” IN TERMS OF ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY

Old Man Star is the second brightest star in the sky after Sirius and since ancient times has attracted the notice of observers and writers in all parts of the world. It was important in premodern China for its location on the celestial sphere in relation to the locations of the major dynastic capital cities such as Chang’an (modern Xi’an), Luoyang, Jiankang (modern Nanjing), and Bianjing (modern Kaifeng). The star is invisible to those living north of the 37th parallel. The capital cities of the just mentioned dynasties were located between about 32 to 35 degrees north, very close to the northern limit of visibility of Old Man Star. As observed from the imperial bureaus of astronomy dur-

29 “Gongqing yixia mianfu yi” 公卿以下冕服議, Yang 5, pp. 75–77. The Twelve Emblems refer to twelve patterns embroidered on the ritual robes of the emperor and courtiers, which is first mentioned in Shangshu; see Kong Anguo 孔安國 (fl. 156–74 bc) and Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (fl. 574–648), annot., Shang shu zhengyi 尚書正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999) 5, p. 115.
30 E.g. “Da Tang Yizhou dadudu fu Xindu xian xue xiansheng miaotang beiwen bing xu” 大唐益州大都督府新都縣學先聖廟堂碑文並序, Yang 4, pp. 49–56; “Zizhou Huiyi si chongge ming” 梓州惠義寺重閣銘, idem, 5, pp. 72–73.
32 To be precise, Canopus is currently invisible to those living above latitude 37°18’ north at zero elevation.
33 E.g. the latitude of the center of modern Xi’an is about 34° north.
In these dynasties, the star was close to the southern horizon, barely visible. This is perhaps why the central concern of historical records and literary writings about it, including Yang Jiong’s fu, is its visibility and brightness. The common pattern of the relevant official records is that on a certain day of a certain month the star “appeared” or “became visible.” It should be noted that the Old Man Star is easily visible in the relatively deep southern regions of China. However, the belief that the star is not steadily visible persisted throughout the medieval period. Perhaps this is in part because the imperial court monopolized the observation and interpretation of astronomical phenomena in premodern China, and imperial bureaus of astronomy were in the capital cities where Canopus was not easily visible.

Yang Jiong’s fu draws concepts and phrases about Old Man Star from many pre-Tang sources. Extant documents show that interpretations of the star’s astrological significance began by the fourth century BC and was further developed and politicized after the first century AD. The two earliest extant records about it show a simple “cause-effect” pattern, which is common in early astrological prognostication. The pattern is that a celestial phenomenon’s position, path, or interaction with other bodies can cause changes on the earth. The early astronomer and astrologer Shi Shen (fl. fourth century BC) states that, “When the Old Man Star is bright, the sovereign will enjoy longevity and prosperity and many worthies will appear in the realm.” An entry in the “Treatise on Celestial Offices” of the well-known first-century BC history Shi ji adds astronomical observations, such as where and when to observe the star, as well as some new astrological meaning to Shi Shen’s divination: “In the vicinity of the Wolf [Sirius] there is a big star named the Old Man of the Southern Culmen. When the Old Man Star appears, society will be in good order; if not, armed men will rise. Often one awaits it on the autumnal equinox at the southern suburb.”

In 724, a number of court officials went to Jiaozhou (modern Vietnam) to measure the shadow of the sun. There, in the ocean, they saw Old Man Star at a high ascension; Schafer, Pacing the Void, p. 70.


Not seen, then, then the people will arise.常以秋分時修行南郊." Phrases from these two earliest records are interspersed in Yang’s fu (lines 9–10, 28–30, 37, 83).

Along with the development of the theories of celestial-terrestrial correspondences and the conceptions of Heaven’s mandate since the Former Han, many phenomena came to acquire a two-fold significance in divination works: a phenomenon is caused by the government here on earth and is Heaven’s response to that government. The earliest such extant records about the Old Man Star are found in several weft texts (weishu 纜書, or apocrypha), which emerged as political propaganda only toward the very end of the Former Han. One of them, titled Sun shi ruiying tu 孫氏瑞應圖 (Diagram of Auspices and Correspondences by Mr. Sun) and written during the Wei-Jin period (220–280 ad) notes that, “When the king obediently receives influences from Heaven, Old Man Star will shine upon his realm.王者承天, 則老人星臨其国.”

The uniqueness of the Old Man Star was that its significance tripled by the second century ad. It was believed that a virtuous ruler and his benign government would cause the star to become easily visible, which, in turn, was not only a sign demonstrating Heaven’s approval of the ruler, but also Heaven’s potential bestowal upon him of longevity. One of the earliest extant congratulatory memorials concerning the Old Man Star, written by Bian Kun 下吉 (281–328), reflects this point: “Your Majesty’s sagacious virtue has corresponded with Heaven, [thus] auspicious omens have appeared repeatedly. Mysterious phenomena let down their brilliance, and the Old Man Star reveals the omen: longevity without end.陛下聖德應乾, 嘉瑞屢臻. 玄象垂耀, 老人啓徵, 萬壽無疆.” This trifold significance is also the fundamental underpinning of Yang’s fu, which not only praises the virtue of Wu Zhao but also celebrates Heaven’s mandate and blessings to her and her new dynasty. To emphasize that other auspicious omens do not carry such reports of Heaven-sent longevity, Yang’s fu, section V, comments, after enumerating famous auspicious omens, that they all pale before the bright Old Man Star: “Compared with longevity bestowed from August Heaven,


Jie Wu 楊全
Old Man Star is recorded and depicted numerously in earlier histories, prognostication works, court memorials, poems, and other fu.\textsuperscript{41} By utilizing the structure and topoi of the eulogistic literature and political discourses on legitimation, Yang Jiong intentionally placed his fu in the same political and literary traditions as those writings. In this respect, Yang’s fu is different from the two other extant fu on the Old Man Star.\textsuperscript{42} The next section will discuss these aspects.

**THE THEMATIC AND STRUCTURAL CONVENTIONS OF YANG JIONG’S FU**

This section discusses the structural and thematic conventions of three types of writing that influenced Yang’s fu. The first type concerned political discourse on legitimation, that is, texts that discuss, create, or transfer political legitimacy. Such discourse originated in the Shang dynasty and flourished noticeably in state discussions after the early part of the Former Han.\textsuperscript{43} These discussions were usually delivered through various forms of court communication between the ruler and his advisers, for example in the form of critiques (yi 議), memorials (biao 表), imperial edicts (zhao 詔), patents of enfeoffment (ce 冊), and scholarly treatises (lun 論). The second type of writing is court eulogistic literature, which aimed at praising and glorifying an empire, a ruler, a minister, or a general and is often written in the forms of fu as well as eulogy (song 頌).\textsuperscript{44} The third type, which began to appear by the third century AD and is an overlap between the first two types, may be called congratulatory literature that uses auspicious omens. This

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\textsuperscript{42} Written respectively by Xi Ang 鄭昂 (fl. mid-8th c.) and Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052). See below for further discussion.

\textsuperscript{43} Goodman, *Ts’ao Pi Transcendent*, p. 16: “With the advent of a court culture that relied on advisers, texts, and ritual, the ruling group [of the Han] seems to have become more conscious of the problems of legitimation that were imbedded in history. …The culture of ideas became just as important as the blunt exertion of authority.”

\textsuperscript{44} E.g. Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 (179–117 bc) “Shanglin fu 上林賦,” Yang Xiong’s 揚雄
was done mostly in the form of court memorials or eulogies (*he xiang-rui biao/song* 實祥瑞表/頌). It celebrated the appearance of auspicious omens and thus could praise a current or would-be ruler with the aim of creating legitimation for him. The rest of this section will explore how Yang Jiong’s *fu* utilizes the thematic and the structural convention of the aforementioned three types of writing.

**Conventional Topoi**

A common topos in early political discourses on legitimation might be termed “outdoing.” In this category we encounter the virtue of the current or would-be ruler, the quantity and variety of auspicious omens that have appeared in order to support his enlightened rule, and the extent that the number of those who have been transformed under his influence exceeded those of the past. For example, “[Your Majesty’s] virtue matches that of all who came before, and no one’s achievements can be compared with yours 德侔往初，功無與二.” A related topos is enumeration of auspicious omens. These two topos are often combined, and Sima Xiangru’s *司馬相如* (179–117 BC) “Fengshan wen” 封禪文 (“Essay on the *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices”) is a good example of that. Section V (lines 57–78) of Yang Jiong’s *fu* consists solely of the combination of the two topos (discussed, below, in further detail).

A third topos is to argue for legitimacy via the classics, historical precedents, and/or prognosticatory writings. The memorials presented to Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), then king of Wei, from such Wei court off-

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45 The earliest extant congratulatory memorials, all on the appearance of the Old Man Star, were written during the 3d–4th cc.; *YWJ* 1, pp. 11–13. *WYH* collects a large number of memorials of this kind in j. 561–565, 612.


48 Liu Xie’s *Wenxin diaolong* praises Sima Xiangru’s “Fengshan wen”: it “lets shine the mysterious tallies, mirrors the grand achievements, drives the past and the ancient inferior to the present, extols the brilliant ruler above an array of sages, praises it with auspicious omens 炳玄符，鏡鴻業，驅前古於當今之下，騰休明於列聖之上，歌之以禎瑞”; see Yang Mingzhao 楊明照, annot., *Zengding Wenxin diaolong jiaozhu* 增訂文心雕龍校註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000) 5, pp. 295–96.
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officials as Xu Zhi and Dong Ba to persuade Cao to ascend the throne fall into this category. Yang Jiong in his fu touches on this topos by quoting a weft text and a work of astrological divination to explain the significance of the Old Man Star (lines 27–30).

A fourth topos is to link the current or would-be ruler to the lineage of legendary sage kings or to glorify his genealogy. For example, again in the case of Cao Pi, two Wei officials, Su Lin and Dong Ba, tried to demonstrate in their memorials that Zhuanxu was the ancestor of the Cao clan. Lines 49–50 in Yang Jiong’s fu reflect his effort to employ this type of mythologization for the benefit of Wu Zhao: “How remote, the north of Tai Province, / Indeed deep and profound, the northern bank of Fen River” 遙矣台州之北，窅然汾水之陽. (See the appendix for comments on these lines.)

Last but not least is the topos of joy and celebration: officials, ordinary people, and even animals sing and dance to express joy and enthusiasm. The philosophical background of this comes from the Confucian classics about the will of the people. Section III of Yang Jiong’s fu, especially lines 39–46, is a significant expansion of this topos. In some cases the topos discussed above overlap. For example, that concerning the link back to sage-kings may quote historical precedents or weft texts.

Structural Conventions

Yang Jiong’s fu employs a certain conventional framework for congratulatory memorials, which had become fixed by the end of the sixth century. This framework had a narrative structure, which is analyzed in what follows.

Among the extant, relatively complete pre-Tang pieces, the earliest are three memorials and four eulogies from the 440s. They were written, variously, by He Chengtian 何承天 (370–447), Liu Yigong 劉義恭

49 Xu Zhi’s memorial quotes many weft texts. See Xiandi zhuan 献帝传, preserved in Pei Songzhi’s 岳松之 annotation to Chen Shou’s 陳壽 San guo zhi 三國志 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1971; hereafter, SGZ) 2, pp. 63–65. Cf. the memorial by Dong Ba and others that justifies Cao Pi’s legitimacy with astrological omens and historical precedents in idem, 2, pp. 70–71. For studies on the memorials presented to Cao Pi in 220 urging him to ascend, see David R. Knechtges, “The Rhetoric of Imperial Abdication and Accession in a Third-Century Chinese Court: The Case of Cao Pi’s Accession as Emperor of the Wei Dynasty,” in David R. Knechtges and Eugene Vance, eds., Rhetoric and Discourses of Power in Court Culture: China, Europe, and Japan (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2005), pp. 3–35; Goodman, Ti’ao P’i Transcendent, pp. 61–166.

50 SGZ 2, pp. 70–71; Goodman, Ti’ao P’i Transcendent, pp. 145–55.

51 Jiang Xiaoyuan points out that according to Shi jing and Shang shu, Mandate of Heaven also represents the will of the people and can be known through omens; Xingzhan xue yu chuantong wenhua 星占學與傳統文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), pp. 6–12.

52 As evidenced in Yu Xin’s 楊愷 (513–581) three memorials written in the 570s that pre-
(413–465), and Shen Yanzhi (397–449) and were all presented to emperor Wen of the Liu-Song dynasty (Liu Yilong 刘义隆, 407–453).53 They make full use of the topoi and rhetoric discussed above and share a narrative structure that can be summarized as follows.

1. Introduction to the Mandate of Heaven and heaven-earth correspondence as the main argument and the philosophical foundation of the memorial. For example, “Auspicious omens never fail to appear for a wise lord 休瑞之臻，罔違哲后.”54

2. Praise of the emperor in the form of one or more topoi, discussed above. Praise is common in court communications, but in congratulatory memorials it is more excessive and often serves the purpose of explaining the cause of the omen. For instance, “Your majesty inherited the achievements and virtue of your ancestors, and walks in the steps of your forefathers, ... therefore the nine [hierarchically assigned] territories [all] share the same mind, ... and all auspicious omens appear 陛下重光嗣服，永言祖武，...故能九服混心，...景瑞畢臻.”57

3. Description of the specific auspicious omen for which the memorial is written, including data such as where and when the omen was discovered. A brief explanation was sometimes given that concerned the significance of the omen and did so through quotations from the classics, historical documents, and/or weft texts. The order of 2 and 3 was in some cases reversed.

4. Conclusion that expressed joy. For example, “I cannot overcome the emotions from clapping and swaying 不勝抃舞之情.”58

Yang Jiong’s fu uses this conventional narrative structure. It is precisely by putting the fu in the same literary and political context as that of congratulatory memorials that Yang highlights its political purpose, implying that the fu is not simply a literary piece written for pleasure. In fact, his fu can be divided into six sections based on the change of rhymes and the content. Section I (lines 1–8), an introduction of Heav-

sented auspicious omens to the throne on behalf of Yuwen Xian 宇文憲 (545–578); see Ni Fan 倪璠 (fl. 1705), annot., Xu Yimin 許逸民, punct., Yu Zishan jizhu 庾子山集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980) 7, pp. 526–34.

53 He Chengtian, congratulatory memorial that presented a “Baijiu song” 白鳩頌 in 441; Liu Yigong, congratulatory memorial presenting a “Jiahe ganlu song” 嘉禾甘露頌 in 447; Shen Yanzhi’s “Jiahe song” 嘉禾頌 and his congratulatory memorial presenting a “Baijiu song” in 447. All are preserved in the “Treatise on Auspicious Omens” in Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), Song shu 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter, SS) 29, pp. 830–31, 848–50.


55 From “Guming” 顧命 in Shang shu zhengyi 18, p. 497.

56 From “Xiawu” 下武 in Shi jing, Mao 243.


58 From Liu Yigong’s congratulatory memorial on auspicious grain; SS 29, p. 830.
en’s blessings for the Zhou dynasty and Heaven’s mandate for Wu Zhao in Yang’s own time, leads the narrative to the celestial omen that will be elaborated in the next section. Section II (lines 9–30), corresponding to number 2 in the conventional structure discussed above, is an extensive description of the Old Man Star. Section III (lines 31–46), echoing number 4 in the conventional structure, is about the joy of court officials, common people, and animals. Sections IV through VI are devoted to praises, which, considered together, correspond with number 2 in the conventional structure. Section IV (lines 47–56) praises Wu Zhao’s genealogy and female power. Section V (lines 57–78) is an expansion of the “outdoing topos.” Section VI (lines 79–86) further extols Wu Zhao, celebrates the portent of the star, and expresses the author’s good wishes.

But Yang’s fu is not a mere imitation or expansion of earlier congratulatory memorials. Expansion of traditional topoi already appeared in congratulatory literature by the late-sixth century. A good example is Xu Shanxin’s 許善心 (558–618) preface to his “Shenque song” 神雀頌 (“Eulogy of the Divine Sparrow”) presented to emperor Wen of the Sui (Yang Jian 杨坚, 541–604) in 596.59 The preface, functioning as a congratulatory memorial that explains the reason to present a eulogy, is framed in the conventional structure. All the topoi are fully developed with elaborate description and exaggeration, and each section in the narrative becomes prolonged accordingly. In comparison, Yang’s fu tweaks and rearranges the order of the conventional topoi, expanding some and simplifying some others, to accentuate the emotions of joy and celebration and fulfill his political and literary purposes. The interpretation of the omen in section II of Yang’s fu (lines 29–30), for instance, is very brief. After all, the portent carried by Old Man Star had been established by the early Tang and did not need further explanation. The topos of joy and celebration is often treated with brevity in congratulatory memorials, usually conveyed in a couple of short phrases such as “all of your subjects and concubines far and near rejoice like ducks in duckweed 臣妾遠近, 莫不鳧藻.”60 Yang’s fu, on the other hand, devotes nine lines in section III (lines 38–46) to the topos. In addition, the topoi that are expanded in Yang’s fu are embellished by such literary devices as enumeration and series of parallelism. For example, lines 9 to 26 are perhaps the longest and the most beautiful depiction

60 See SGZ 2, p. 63, Pei Songzhi’s note, which quotes a memorial given in Xiandi zhuan and presented to Cao Pi in 220 by several officials at the Wei court.
of Old Man Star yet seen in any writings about it. The literary devices of Yang’s *fu* will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In terms of structure, Yang’s *fu* is different from the two other extant “*Fu* on the Old Man Star,” one by Xi Ang 郗昂 (*js. ca. 735*) and the other by Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (*989–1052*). These are relatively more descriptive, and they alternate depictions of and praises to the Old Man Star in no particular order; but neither has a clear narrative structure. This is in part because of their different purposes of writing. Xi Ang’s *fu* is on an object (*yongwu 詠物*) and is written probably for amusement or practice. It does not have an explicit political message or any “outdoing topos” that is usually used in eulogistic literature. Fan’s *fu* seems to have been written to wish the ruler a long life, so its focus is not on political legitimacy but stressing the association between the Old Man Star and longevity. It does not use the “outdoing topos” either. The different ways these two *fu* are framed underline Yang’s intention to put his *fu* in the context of political discourses on legitimacy rather than the literary tradition of *yongwu*.

**THE LANGUAGE AND LITERARY DEVICES OF YANG’S “FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR”**

This section takes up first of all the development of literary features of eulogistic writing, which influenced Yang’s *fu*, and then analyzes the characteristics and creativeness of Yang’s *fu*.

Eulogistic literature of the early Tang, including Yang’s *fu*, shows a confluence of several literary genres and styles that had taken place since the first century BC. Blending of literary genres began during the Han dynasty when passages in a variety of genres started to resemble the *fu* style. For example, some political discourses on legitimacy such as Sima Xiangru’s essay on the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices and Yang Xiong’s 揚雄 (*53 BC–18 AD*) “Ju Qin mei Xin” 劉秦美新 (“Denigrating Qin and Praising Xin”) contain short passages of literary description and exaggeration that are reminiscent of the *fu* genre. During the Six Dynas-

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61 Xi Ang’s *fu* can be found in *WYYH* 8, pp. 1a–2a; *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983) 361, p. 3668. For Fan’s *fu*, see *Fan Zhongyan quanji* 范仲淹全集 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2007) 1, pp. 10–11.

62 There are several other indicators that Xi’s *fu* was not written for the imperial house. First, the author at the end of the *fu* addresses himself as *yu 余*, not a self-reference that a subject uses addressing his ruler. Secondly, the tone is not as elevated as that of congratulatory literature.

63 See the discussion in Knechtges, “Literary Interpretation of Yang Hsiung’s ‘Chü Ch’in mei Hsin,” p. 247. A number of scholars have pointed out that during Han the genres of eulogy, encomium (*zan 賞*), inscription (*ming 銘*), and admonition (*zhen 訴*), though having dif-
ties, political discourses and eulogistic prose, including imperial edicts, congratulatory memorials, and prefaces to court gatherings, developed longer passages that incorporated the stylistic elements of the *fu* such as enumeration, hyperbole, and ornate diction. In addition, parallelism, a well-suited vehicle for flowery exposition and showcasing rhetorical eloquence that appeared at the end of the second century, reached a pinnacle of popularity by the sixth century, as most literary genres were developing a strong tendency towards parallelism.

From the Sui to the early Tang, eulogistic literature used hyperboles, elaborate description, and elevated diction more extensively. For example, in a memorial that celebrates the appearance of an auspicious stone in 643, Shangguan Yi 上官儀 (d. 665) devotes forty-six lines to praising the emperor. In addition, the meter, predominantly four and six syllables in pre-Tang literature, developed greater variation. For instance, the twenty-two lines that describe an auspicious stone in a memorial Li Jiao submitted to Wu Zhao use a meter that varies among four, five, six, and eight syllables.

Translated below is a hyperbolic elaboration on the topos “praising the ruler” from a memorial presented by an important courtier to Wu Zhao sometime between 695 and 700 to celebrate the appearing of the Old Man Star:

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63 The **Fu** on the Old Man Star
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[Your Majesty] adds embellishment to the great achievements,
Shines brightly on the imperial throne,
Holds the grand symbol to harness the winds and the clouds,
Blows the giant furnace to revolve coldness and hotness.

You have made the four oceans harmonious,
The six directions effulgent.
Tallies rarely seen for generations have appeared,
Outnumbering this era and surpassing the past.

Like breakers piling up and waves jointing one another,
They come continuously and endlessly.
They appear every day and reveal themselves every month,
In repetition, in succession, and have not yet paused.

Two characteristics in the above are typical in eulogistic literature of the early Tang. One is to mythologize the ruler as a participant in the proper functioning of the cosmos (lines 3–6), which was uncommon before the Tang. The other is the hyperbolic elaboration on the conventional topoi of eulogistic literature, in this case the “outdoing topos” (lines 7–12). The metaphor of cosmological creation and changes (lines 3–4) and the imagery of numerous auspicious omens appearing like breakers and waves continuously piling up on top of each other (lines 9–10) create divinity for Wu Zhao and a feeling of awe. The political message is expressed partly through the change of meter from four to six or seven when the author presents images of gigantic objects and notions of endlessness (lines 3, 4, 10, 12).

These new developments of eulogistic literature can also be found in Yang Jiong’s “Fu on the Old Man Star,” a product of the further blending of genres and styles during the early Tang. The fu is written mainly in parallel couplets, contains many variations in meter, depicts Wu Zhao as the creator of the universe, organizes several conventional topoi within a conventional structure, and contains many passages of elaborate descriptions and hyperboles. In essence it is a rhymed congratulatory memorial on an auspicious omen.

The uniqueness of Yang’s fu, in addition to its individualistic treatment of conventional structure and topoi, is that it creates strong and
multi-layered literary effects designed to articulate its political purposes and enhance its literary value. What is more, despite its use of hyperbole, enumeration, and ornate diction that are typical for its genre, the *fu* is not laden with excessive exaggeration and verbose descriptions as many early-Tang congratulatory memorials are. These unique characteristics remind us of the comment that Yang Jiong made on the literary style that had been in fashion since the early 660s: “[Writers] were outdoing one another to construct the delicate and subtle, vying to make the ornamented and the crafted, confounding the gold and jade, the dragon and phoenix, confusing vermilion and purple, green and yellow.”

This criticism was traditionally believed to be directed at Shangguan Yi’s poetry, but it was perhaps the eulogistic literature from the 660s, including congratulatory memorials by Shangguan Yi and Xu Jingzong late in their lives, that also represents the style that Yang criticizes. For Yang, the ideal style would be “powerful but not empty, vigorous yet able to enrich, refined but not fragmented.”

This section from here forward will discuss four aspects of Yang’s “*Fu on the Old Man Star*”: its overall metrical pattern, its handling of allusions, its variation within regularity, and its methods of describing the star. The discussion will show that the *fu*, with many layers of intricacy, is Yang’s self-conscious display of literary virtuosity and erudition, demonstrating the literary ideal that Yang advocates and revealing his understanding of the political function of literature.

First of all, the overall metrical pattern of the *fu* is carefully designed to create an orderly, solemn feeling. Forty-two of the eighty-six lines are tetrasyllabic. The dominating tetrasyllabic meter is reminiscent of that of the eulogy, and quite a few tetrasyllabic lines are directly quoted from the classics such as the *Shi jing* and the *Shang shu*, giving the entire piece the sort of ritual solemnity that had been associated with that meter even before Tang.

A few things are clear from the table below that shows the metrical pattern of each section. Yang groups shorter lines together and matches them with series of longer lines, as in the case of section I. This pattern repeats itself in sections III, IV, and V. And finally, each section ends with one of the (if not the) longest lines in that section. Each sec-
tion is thus like a pyramid both in terms of visual and auditory effect, conveying a sense of solid foundation and order.

In the following table, the “−” symbol represents a change in the direction of narrative at that point, such as a new subtopic; numbers in parentheses are extra-metrical syllables and prose phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Meter (or, syllables per line)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>4,4,4,4,4,4,4,4,7,7</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>4,4,4,4,7,7,7,7 – 4,4,6,6,4,4,6,6,6,6,5,5 – 6,6,6,6,6,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>4,4,6,6,4,4,6,6 – 4,4,6,6,6,6,6,6,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>4,4,6,6 – 4,4,4,4,6,6</td>
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<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>(2) 4,4,4,4,7,7 – 4,4,6,6,6,6,7 – (2) 3,3,3,4,4,4,4,7,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>(4) 3,3,4,4,4,4 – 4,4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The other two *fu* devoted to Old Man Star, written respectively by Xi Ang and Fan Zhongyan, do not have this kind of orderly metrical pattern. For example, in Xi’s *fu*, the meter of the section that describes Old Man Star (lines 35–54) is as follows: 7,7,4,4,7,7,4,7,4,7,4,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,4,6,6,6,6. The meter of its concluding section (lines 61–74), including a prose line at the beginning, is: (6),(2),3,3,7,7,6,6,4,6,4,6,1,6,6,7,6. Meters like Xi’s here reveal an intention to alter the rhythm and avoid being static: they do not have the organized order and solemnity created by the metrical pattern of Yang’s *fu*.

Secondly, Yang’s use of allusions and references creates solemnity, enthusiasm, and other emotions that show a favorable attitude to Wu Zhao’s rule. The *fu* contains many similes and metaphors that refer to specific objects and concrete historical examples in the form of references and allusions, all of which are further organized by subtopics and into well-designed parallel couplets. This is different from many congratulatory memorials of Yang’s time that are a pile of abstract adjectives or unrelated images.

It will be worthwhile at this point to examine the *loci classici* and the different types of allusion in Yang Jiong’s *fu* and then to focus on the ways in which he handles the allusions. His choice of allusions is closely related to the philosophical underpinning of the *fu* and its handling of emotional elements. He quotes many lines from the Confucian classics. These confer an authority and solemnity that buttress Wu Zhao’s political legitimacy with the power of tradition (the concept of Heaven’s mandate, the importance of a ruler’s virtue, and so forth). For example, half of the beginning section (lines 1, 6, 7, 8) quotes directly from the classics *Shi jing*, *Shang shu*, and *Zhou yi*, and by doing so the references indicate the divinity of Wu Zhao and highlight the
roots of her authority in the Confucian tradition. Daoist allusions are concentrated in section IV, which works by means of myth: it connects Wu Zhao to the origin of the universe and the everlasting heaven and earth (see below for more discussion on this point). Yang adds richness to the mythical flavor by quoting writings that dealt in fantasies, myths, and legends, for example, the "Fu on Gaotang" 高唐賦 (line 12), Shanhai jing 山海經 (line 21), the Nine Songs 九歌 (line 22), Liexian zhuan 列仙傳 (line 24), Shiyi ji 拾遺記 (line 49), and Hainei shizhou ji 海內十洲記 (line 76).71 Lastly, a number of descriptive phrases (lines 3, 11, 32, 45) are quoted from grand eulogistic fu of the Han dynasty, drawing upon their ceremonial pomp.72

Two categories of allusion are particularly pertinent because they are appropriate for the specific political circumstance in which the fu was written. One category points to the ancient Zhou, a dynasty that later generations considered a model of ritual propriety and beneficent rule. It lends historical and ritual legitimacy to Wu Zhao’s namesake Zhou dynasty.73 The very first line of Yang’s fu, which reads “majestic and illustrious the venerable Zhou,” harks back to the ancient Zhou capital mentioned in the Shi jing. Line 6, “issuing orders and giving commands 發號施令,” is from the Shang shu’s chronological section known as the “Book of Zhou” 周書. Line 35, “during the day they observe the colors of clouds 晝觀雲物,” is quoted from Zhou li 周禮 and refers to the proper method of observing meteorological phenomena in the ancient Zhou. The word mumu 穆穆 in line 47 is a Shi jing usage used to describe king Wen of Zhou. Line 48, “[the divine emperor] receives the blessings from Heaven 受天之祥,” is slightly changed from a line in Shi jing that expresses best wishes for the Zhou kings Wu and Cheng, implying that Wu Zhao will receive endless blessings from Heaven just as did the two Zhou kings. Lines 72 and 75, about auspicious grain and a tranquil south sea, are good omens that appeared during the reign of king Cheng.74

71 Hainei shizhou ji, traditionally attributed to Dongfang Shuo 蘇方朔 (fl. 140–130 BC), is a 1-j. collection of strange tales and anomalies compiled during the Six Dynasties.
72 As Jack W. Chen points out, in the early days of empire the fu was arguably the primary genre through which articulations of imperial power were made; The Poetics of Sovereignty: On Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 2010), pp. 267–68.
73 Wu Zhao’s father Wu Shiyue 武士彡 (559–635) was given the title Duke of Zhou 周國公 in 656. Li Jiao’s 李嶠 “Panlongtai bei” 攀龍台碑 (WYHY 875, pp. 1a–14b), the inscription for the mausoleum of Wu Shiyue dated to early 702, made an association between the ancestor of the Wu clan and a younger son of king Ping of the ancient Zhou (d. 720 BC).
74 Mark Edward Lewis argues that imperial power survived in great measure based on the guides to political and social reality that were indicated by numerous signs found in the canon and associated texts; Writing and Authority in Early China (Albany: SUNY P., 1999), pp. 10, 144–45. It is in this textual tradition that Wu Zhao’s Zhou dynasty is compared, le-
The other category of allusion is related to women and is concentrated in section IV. “North of Tai Province” 台州之北 (line 49) is about Huaxu 華胥, either the name of a legendary kingdom where Fuxi 伏羲, an ancestor of the Yellow Emperor, was born, or the name of Fuxi’s mother.25 The word yaooran 遒然 (line 50) in the late-Zhou work Zhuang zi 莊子 not only alludes to a paragraph about the sage king Yao but is also used in another paragraph to describe the Dao, that is, origin of the universe. Line 55, “she resembles the nebulous and the complete, solitary and standing alone 有混成之獨立,” is a clear reference to the Dao, which “was born before Heaven and Earth 先天地生” and “may be regarded as the Mother of all under heaven 可以為天下母.”26 In this way, the category creates a broad sense of “origin,” from the actual ancestral place of Wu Zhao to the beginning of the universe and humanity, serving to link the femininity of Wu Zhao to the mysterious power of the cosmos.27

Yang Jiong’s use of allusion to glorify female power is in line with one of the many methods that Wu Zhao and her supporters used to expand her political authority and empower her female identity. The method is to create female political ancestors and honor female deities. The focus of extant eulogistic literature that was dedicated to Wu Zhao, however, is on the assistant’s role taken up by the spouse or on exemplars for women.28 Few extant court eulogistic pieces after the mid-680s, when Wu Zhao steadily prepared her ascendance and then established a new dynasty, praise the female power of reproducing life or identify Wu Zhao as the origin of the universe and Mother of all, as Yang’s fu does.29

Yang’s deft handling of references and allusions — skillfully modifying original texts, coining new phrases, and packing layers of references in a single line — reveals his great literary skill. His weaving of classical allusions into his narrative, namely, the integrated manner in

25 See notes to line 49, appendix.
26 Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, annot., Lao zi jiaoshi 老子校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984) 25, pp. 100–1: “There was something nebulous and complete, born before Heaven and Earth. It is... standing alone and unchanging. ... It may be regarded as the Mother of all under Heaven. I know not its name, and give it the designation of Dao 有物混成, 先天地生. ... 獨立不改. ... 可以為天下母. 晉不知其名, 字之曰道.”
27 Rothschild, Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon, pp. 145–47. On Wu Zhao’s ancestral place, see the notes to line 50 in the appendix.
28 E.g., Cui rong, “He tianhou zhicao biao” 贺天后芝草表, WYYH 563, pp. 5a–5b; “Songshan Qimu miao bei” 嵩山啓母廟碑, WYYH 878, pp. 1a–6a.
29 Among other extant congratulatory memorials, only one by Zhang Yue advocates imperial authority and power for a female ruler; see “Wei liushou zuo ‘Zou qingshan liquan biao’”
which this is done in section I, is of singular skill. In addition to playing an organic part in Yang’s narrative, some of the quotations also allude to the original context from which they are taken, adding new layers of connotation and tone. Other writers use this method, too, but Yang uses it so extensively that it becomes his trademark. Lines 6, 47, 56, and 76 are good examples. In particular, line 56, “[she] wields the immensity and vastness of the Primordial Breath,” is from Cao Zhi’s \textit{Qi qi} (192–232) \textit{Qi qi}, in which the original context states that the Primordial Breath is everlasting. Yang thus implies longevity, one of the astrological qualities of the Old Man Star, which is decidedly praise for Wu Zhao.

Besides the use of allusions, as just discussed, another method that we encounter in Yang Jiong is the coining of a phrase from multiple sources. Lines 51–54, for instance, interweaves four lines from \textit{Zhou yi} and two lines from \textit{Zhuang zi} to create a rich semantic tapestry of longevity, myth, and praise: “She is said to be continuously shining bright, / Her brilliance is as luminous as the sun and moon. / She is said to be constantly revealing herself, / She shall endure while Heaven and Earth endure.” Moreover, two metaphors in lines 22 and 24 (purple cowry \textit{紫貝} and bright pearls \textit{明珠}, respectively), are found in both “Hebo” and in \textit{Liexian zhuan} and concern river gods or goddesses, which adds a mysterious air to the Old Man Star. Under the surface, however, lies another allusion to a paragraph on auspicious omens in \textit{Baihu tong} which states that big cowries will emerge from rivers and bright pearls will appear from the oceans when the waters resonate with a ruler’s virtue.

These ways of creating multi-layered meaning, connotation, and aura can be found in Yang Jiong’s other writings, including a personal self-assessment written during his exile in the 680s. The short piece

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antics

\textit{Wuyi} 612, p. 4b–5b. A number of ceremonial songs written for the ritual occasions that Wu Zhao participated in implied her gender and political legitimacy; see Doran, \textit{Transgressive Typologies}, pp. 74–79.

80 “All that have forms will decay, / All that have a beginning will be exhausted. / Immense and vast the primordial breath, / Nobody knows when it ends; \textit{誰知其終}; Zhao Youwen \textit{趙幼文}, annot., \textit{Cao Zhi ji jiaozhu} (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1998) 1, p. 7.

81 Chen Li \textit{陳立} (1809–1869), \textit{Baihu tong shuzheng} (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994) 6, p. 285.

82 Yang, p. 183. In 684, Yang was involved in the case of a brother who had joined Li Jingye’s rebellion and was exiled to Zizhou. See Fu Xuancong, “Lu Zhaolin, Yang Jiong nianpu,” in Yang, p. 228.
is worth quoting in whole since it demonstrates all the methods of handling allusion, as discussed above.

“Self-Appreciation of Judicial Manager Yang Jiong”

司法參軍楊炯自贊

1 吾少也賤. When I was young I was poor and lowly,\(^{83}\)

2 信而好古. I believed and took delight in the classics.\(^{84}\)

3 遊宦邊城, Serving the government in a distant border town,

4 江山勞苦. I toil and suffer among the rivers and mountains.\(^{85}\)

5 歲聿雲徂, The year is about to fly by, the clouds drifting about,\(^{86}\)

6 小人懷土. The man of little virtue yearns for his own land.\(^{87}\)

7 歸歟歸歟. Return, oh return,\(^{88}\)

8 自衛返魯. Going back from Wei to Lu.\(^{89}\)

Yang’s masterful choice and handling of allusions here create an evocative self-image patterned on the words of Confucius. Five out of the eight lines are drawn directly from the *Analects* and fit naturally into his narrative. Much like Confucius, the sage nonpareil he seeks to emulate, Yang’s layered self-image depicts a scholar confident of his erudition (lines 1–2), yet capable of healthy self-mockery when confronting adverse circumstances (line 6), and remaining optimistic in exile (lines 7–8). The last two lines express Yang’s wish to return to his homeland and settle down, a desire that Confucius bore in his late years.

Yang’s virtuosity in alternating variation with regularity was yet another technique that he employs to amplify his political message. Section II of the *fu* in particular shows Yang’s skill of adjusting the rhythm by mixing and matching parallel couplets of different meters and content. For example, lines 17 through 24, which describe the color

\(^{83}\) *Analects* 9.6.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 7.1.

\(^{85}\) Lu Ji 陸機, “Wei Gu Yanxian zeng fu” 爲顧彥先贈婦, no. 2: “Serving the government, away from home and not returning for a long time, / Mountains and Rivers are long and wide / 遊宦久不歸, 山川修且闊”; *Lu Ji ji* 陸機集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982) 5, p. 54.

\(^{86}\) “Xiaoming” 小明 in *Shi jing*, Mao 207: “In the past when I set off, / The sun and moon had bid farewell to the old year. / When will I return? / The year is coming to an end” *昔我往矣, 日月方除. 頭雲其還, 歲聿雲莫*.”

\(^{87}\) *Fa yan yishu* 法言義疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987) 10, p. 229: “The clouds drift about to all directions, and the rain flows into the abyss” 雲徂乎方, 雨流乎淵.”

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 5.22.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 9.15.
and the brightness of the Old Man Star, combine two sets of different meters (4,4,6,6 and 4,6,4,6):

晃如金粟, Luminous like a grain of golden millet,
燦若銀燭. Glinting as the flame of a silver candle,
比秋草之一螢, Comparable to a firefly in the autumn grass,
狀荊山之片玉. Appearing like a piece of jade from Mount Jing.
渾渾熊熊, Glowing with vigor and profusion, blazing and
burning,
懸紫貝於河宮. A purple cowrie hangs high in the River God’s palace,
曄曄暐暐, Darting forth its beams, radiant with brilliance,
曜明珠于漢水. Bright pearls glitter by the Han River.

The first set is composed of four similes linked by ru 如, ruo 若, bi 比, and zhuang 状, respectively. In the second set, each couplet has a binome and a metaphor. The second set is also more densely allusive than the first.

Section II ends with four hexasyllabic lines (lines 27–30):
稽元命之攸述, We examine what the Original Mandate states,
按星經之所紀. Inspect what the Star Catalogue records:
見則化平主昌, When it appears, the society shall be peaceful,
the monarch flourishes,
明則天下多士. When it is bright, the realm shall boast myriads of talents.

The preceding two couplets create variations in three ways. The first couplet is grammatically parallel, while the second is metrically parallel. The first couplet places the particle zhi after the third syllable of each line, while the second couplet uses another particle ze after the first syllable.

In section V, it is the adjustment of tempo that accumulates rhetorical forces, gives new life to the two conventional “outdoing topos,” and further evokes the feeling of admiration and enthusiasm. The general pattern of each topos is enumeration and then negation. The first “outdoing topos” (lines 57–68) contains two enumerations. The first is about sage kings of the past and the astrological omens harbingering their birth or ascendance, with a metrical pattern of 4,4,4,4,7,7. The second enumeration is a list of four auspicious omens of stars with a metrical pattern of 4,4,6,6. Both enumerations, with the repetition of a similar metrical pattern (short-long) and the rhetorical force that have been built up in them, are negated in the heptasyllabic lines 67 and 68, both being prose. The second “outdoing topos” (lines 69–78)
glorifies the Old Man Star by putting it on top of a long list of eight auspicious omens with the meter of 3, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4. Affirmative forces accumulate in the repetition of quick tempo, but the two heptasyllabic lines written in prose style at the end negate all.

The power of rhetoric in sections II and V of Yang’s fu stands out among congratulatory pieces that contain the “outdoing topos,” which usually list two examples and then negate. For instance, Xing Shao 邢邵 (b. 496; Shao is also written as 劉) wrote in his congratulatory memorial on the Old Man Star: “Neither [such rare auspices as] the Three Stars emitting the same color nor the Five Elders jointly roaming can match the auspicious splendor of the Old Man Star 虽三星共色，五老同游，擬之於此，故無與匹.”

Lastly, the use of descriptive binomes in section II adds sensory and intellectual beauty to the Old Man Star, arousing the feeling of admiration and serving to effusively praise Wu Zhao and impress the audience. The binomes are carefully chosen for their forms, meanings, and sounds. Both yuyu yueyue [yuk_yuk_yuk_yak_yak] 煜煜爚爚, and huanghuang yingying [ghwang_1 ghwang_1 ghweing_4 ghweing_4] 煌煌熒熒 (lines 11–12), contain two alliterative binomes. These binomes describe stars or lightning in the original texts from which they are drawn. Their original meanings all have to do with fire, as indicated by their shared radical “fire.” The color and brightness these binomes convey also fit the description in a work named Huangdi zhan 黃帝占 (Prognostication of the Yellow Emperor), which says that the Old Man Star portends well if it appears “yellow-colored and bright 色黃明.” Later in section II Yang uses four other alliterative binomes that match [ghwang_1 ghwang_1 ghweing_4 ghweing_4] 煌煌熒熒: hunhun xiongxiong [ghwen_1 ghwen_1 ghung_3b ghung_3b] 渾渾熊熊 (line 21) and ye ye wewei [gep_3x ghiQ_3a ghiQ_3a] 曄旵暐暐 (line 23). These four binomes, except for hunhun that refers to profusion of vital breath (and in this context, profusion of light), mean brightness, as indicated by their radicals “fire” and “sun.” Five of these eight binomes originally refer to concrete objects or ideas, so that the description does not become abstract despite Yang’s repeated use of binomes.


91 I have used David Branner’s Yintong phonological database of Chinese here; <http://yintong.info/yintong/public/index.php>.

92 Gautama, Kaiyuan zhanjing 68, p. 724.
The effect of the eight binomes is enhanced by the four similes and two metaphors that are paired with them. The similes and metaphors themselves also reveal some sense of color and/or brightness, such as the golden millet, the firefly, and the jade. In addition, the firefly born from autumn grass, the jade hidden in the mountain, the cowrie hanging in River Lord’s palace, and the pearl of the River Goddesses all imply the presence of a hidden wonder, revealed only in a rare, exceptional circumstance. This suits an Old Man Star characteristic, namely that it was not easily visible. Yang’s use of binomes in section II reveals his skill of packing carefully chosen alliterations, sounds, colors, brightness, similes, metaphors, and their connotations into well-ordered parallelism so as to create richly layered meaning. For this reason, his writing, while elegant and embellished, is not empty, abstract, or fragmented.

Yang Jiong’s *fu* is the first among extant works on the Old Man Star to have extensively depicted and extolled the star’s beauty. The description in section II influenced later writings on Old Man and other stars, including some thought of as auspicious stars (*jingxing*). For example, although *huanghuang yingying* had been a well-known phrase since the composition of “*Fu* on Gaotang,” it was not widely used to describe any stars until Yang’s *fu*. Xi Ang’s *fu* on Old Man Star, as Yang’s does, also compares the star to candlelight, a pearl, and a firefly. It also borrows from Yang’s *fu* a listing of ancient astrologers and their talents. Fan Zhongyan’s *fu* on the Old Man Star likewise compares the star’s significance with jade discs and pearls. An anonymous Tang-dynasty *fu* on auspicious stars even copied a full couplet from Yang’s *fu* with minor modification: “Bright as golden millet, / Shiny like a silver pebble.”

None of these writings, though, lavished on the star so many binomes, which tended to dazzle the eyes and ears.

**CONCLUSION**

The discussion of Yang Jiong’s “*Fu* on the Old Man Star” has shown that the *fu*, while adopting the basic narrative structure of congratulatory memorials and incorporating some conventional topoi of eulogistic literature, contains a number of innovations. The *fu* also demonstrates a strong literary eloquence that enhances its persuasive and emotional effect and thus helps achieve its political efficacy. For example, it empowers the traditional “outdoing topos” with rhetorical eloquence, and it uses a fairly large number of descriptive binomes as well as allusions associated with female power, both being rare in eulogistic literature related to Wu Zhao.

93. “Jingxing xian fu” 蒨星見賦; *WYTH* 9, p. 9a.
The entire fu, just like its second section that skillfully incorporates literary eloquence with political and astrological traditions, creates multiple layers of intellectual, sensory, and rhythmic connotations. The carefully designed metrical pattern of regularity and order sets a frame and weaves together parallelism and variation. The dense sensory and semantic aggregation of allusions, references, and concrete metaphors and similes elegantly compressed clearly makes Yang’s work more than an abstract pile of descriptive words or hyperboles. In this sense, the fu demonstrates Yang’s ideal that literary works should be “powerful but not empty,” “refined but not fragmented.” By legitimizing, exalting, and mythologizing the imperial power and authority with literary embellishment and rhetorical eloquence, this fu also demonstrates Yang’s comprehensive grasp of the political function of literature.

The political concerns and the literary virtuosity seen in Yang’s fu can be found in his many other writings — court discussions, prefaces, commemorative epitaphs, and some other fu. In one or more aspects, these writings reveal the high premium Yang places on political legitimacy, proper ritual, symbolism, and the Confucian classics and traditions. His knowledge in astronomy and astrology and his frequent references to them, his creation and deployment of many descriptive binomes, and his multiple rhetorical strategies to justify and uphold the authority of a female ruler stand out among the writers of his time.94 Paul W. Kroll points out that the true skill of Yang Jiong “as a writer is best exhibited in the eight fu.”95 This article has shown that Kroll’s evaluation should be expanded to include Yang’s prose. However, neither Yang’s fu nor his prose has received much scholarly attention. The present analysis of Yang’s “Fu on the Old Man Star” can serve as an introduction to his other non-shí works, which contain many concrete examples of the political concerns and literary prowess of a major writer in the second half of the seventh century. More studies on this trove of work will furthermore complement the political and literary history of the early Tang.

This article also hopes to shed light on how court eulogistic literature should be read and thus it might spur further studies on the genre. It has shown that eulogistic literature demonstrates a close relationship between politics and literature. Eulogistic literature played a fundamental role in the fashioning of political legitimacy; it weaved

94 E.g., the extant writings of Lu Zhaolin (ca. 635–ca. 689) and of Luo Binwang (ca. 626–ca. 684) employ very few binomes and little of astrological allusion.  
for the ruler a textual reality based on traditions and legends, a reality that was tailored to contemporary political needs, inspiring awe and arousing favorable emotions among courtiers and the elite public. It not only reveals the development of political and intellectual conceptions concerning sovereignty and authority but also reflects the confluence and transformation of literary genres and styles.

At the end of the seventh century, eulogistic literature served as an important rhetorical vehicle through which Wu Zhao’s supporters legitimized her rule and strengthened her power. It contained a wealth of specific statements on contemporary politics and literary innovations. The large number of surviving congratulatory memorials from Wu Zhao’s years as regent and ruler cannot be dismissed as florid sycophantic efforts to “curry favor.” Indeed, these memorials often express the reason why scholar-officials, including Yang Jiong, supported Wu Zhao’s rule. As Antonino Forte noted, “[T]here certainly was a Tang political elite that was strongly interested in the policies carried out by the first Tang thearchs and in the survival of Wu Zhao as sovereign in order to safeguard those policies.” This reminds us of the main theme of Yang Xiong’s “Denigrating Qin and Praising Xin” much earlier in time. David R. Knechtges once demonstrated that what Yang Xiong found most laudatory about the Xin dynasty was its espousal of classical learning, which matched his own ideal. Therefore, scholars both ancient and modern who dismissed Yang Xiong’s writing as a eulogy to the “usurper” Wang Mang, and who simply have equated eulogistic literature with flattery, miss the point.

Up until now, scholars have overlooked medieval Chinese eulogistic literature, tending to categorize such themes as belonging to that older type of sycophancy. But morality should not be the evaluation

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96 For example, while discussing a number of Li Jiao’s and Cui Rong’s eulogies and congratulatory memorials, Qu Jingyi 曲景毅 constantly passes moral evaluations on those works and their authors. See “‘Wenzhang siyou’ xinlun: yi Li Jiao, Cui rong yingyongwen shuxie wei tantao zhongxin” 文章四友新論，以李嶠、崔融應用文書寫為探討中心, in Shida xuebao: yuyan wenxue lei 師大學報，語言文學類 57.2 (2012), pp. 29–57. Ma Jigao 馬積高 writes that “there is no need to discuss” Yang Jiong’s “Fu on the Old Man Star” and “Fu on Ullambana” because both were “composed on imperial command in order to praise the sage emperor”; Fu shi 赋史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 267.

97 The Commentary to the Great Cloud Sutra 大雲經疏 is “clear on the point that Wu Zhao represented the true continuation of the first three Tang sovereigns”; Antonino Forte, Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century, 2d edn. (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull’Asia Orientale, 2005), pp. xv–xvi.


99 Ibid., pp. 230–34.

100 There are a small number of recent studies on early Tang eulogistic literature. For example, Norman H. Rothschild’s Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon focuses on Wu Zhao’s
standard for eulogistic literature. Eulogistic writings should instead be studied in a deep context. Aspects of that might be, for example: the political needs of a particular short period that gave impetus to certain literary techniques and transformed literary currents and genres; the specific political circumstances and the larger concerns that inspired the composition of a particular work; the recurring literary motifs that supported a political strategy; the methods that a work weaved together from traditional writings associated with the topic; and the way a work created rhetorical eloquence. This article perhaps may provide an example of the deep-context technique, through its analysis of Yang Jiong’s “Fu on the Old Man Star.” It is hoped that future studies on eulogistic literature would not only supplement political and literary history but also reveal how politics and literature interact.

Appendix: Annotated Translation of Yang Jiong’s “Fu on the Old Man Star”

—TEXT—

Section I

1 赫赫宗周. Majestic and illustrious the venerable Zhou,
2 皇天降休. August Heaven sends down blessings.
3 麟典神聖. Magnificent indeed the divine sage,
4 皇天降命. August Heaven sends down the Mandate.
5 設綱布網. Setting guidelines and laying out laws,
6 發號施令. Issuing orders and giving commands.
7 河出圖兮五雲集. The Diagram appears in the river, the five-color clouds gather,
8 天垂象兮三光映. Heaven displays signs, the Three Illuminants shine bright.

strategy of elevating the status of women and expanding her political authority; Jonathan Pettit’s “The Erotic Empress” concerns two temple inscriptions written under the same strategy; Stephan Kory’s “A Remarkably Resonant and Resilient Tang-Dynasty Augural Stone: Empress Wu’s Baoju” discusses a congratulatory memorial by Li Jiao; Tang Studies 26 (2008), pp. 99–124.
“FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR”

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

JTST Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., Jiu Tang shu 舊唐書
SGZ Chen Shou 陳壽, San guo zhi 三國志
SJ Sima Qian 司馬遷, Shi ji 史記
SS Shen Yue 沈約, Song shu 宋書
WSJC Yasui Kōzan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, Weishu jicheng 緯書集成
WYYH Li Fang 李昉 et al., Wenyuan yinghua 文苑英華
XTS Ouyang Xiu 欧陽修 et al., Xin Tang shu 新唐書
Yang Xu Mingxia 徐明霞, Yang Jiong ji 楊炯集
YWLJ Ouyang Xun 欧陽詢 et al., Yiwen leiju 藝文類聚
ZZTJ Sima Guang 司馬光 et al., Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑

Appendix: Annotated Translation of Yang Jiong’s “Fu on the Old Man Star”

—— ANNOTATION ——

The text of the translation is based on WYYH 8, pp. 2a–3a.

LINE 1: From “Zhengyue” 正月, in Shi jing, Mao 192.


LINE 6: See “Jiong ming” 為命, in Shang shu zhengyi 19, p. 531 (edn. cited at n. 29, above): “All their [Zhou king Wen’s and king Wu’s] orders and commands were good 發號施令, 罔有不臧.”


LINE 8: “Xi ci” in Zhou yi zhengyi 7, p. 290: “Heaven displays signs, indicating auspiciousness and inauspiciousness 天垂象, 見吉凶.” The Three Illuminants are the sun, the moon, and the stars.
Section II

9 南極之庭, In the court of the Southern Culmen,
10 老人之星, The Old Man Star,
11 炫熿熿熫熼, Shining and dazzling, flashing and flickering,
12 熠熠熒熒, Bright and brilliant, gleaming and glistening.
13 秋分之旦見乎丙, At dawn on the autumnal equinox it appears in the southeast,
14 春分之夕入乎丁. At dusk on the vernal equinox it disappears in the southwest.
15 配神山之呼萬歲, It matches the divine mountain’s calling out the greeting “Ten Thousand Years,”
16 符水德之兆千齡. Accords with the Water Power’s portent of one thousand ages.
17 暄如金粟, Luminous like a grain of golden millet,
18 燦若銀燭, Glinting as the flame of a silver candle,
19 比秋草之一螢, Comparable to a firefly in the autumn grass,
20 素颲山之片玉, Appearing like a piece of jade from Mount Jing.
21 懸紫蚌於河宮. A purple cowrie hangs high in the River God’s palace.
22 曖熿熫熩, Darting forth its beams, radiant with brilliance,
23 曜明珠于漢水. Bright pearls glitter by the Han River.
24 其光也如丹, Its light approximates that of cinnabar,
25 其大也如李, Its size is close to a plum’s.
26 稽元命之攸述, We examine what the Original Mandate states,
“FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR”

LINE 10: These two lines are from *SJ* 27, p. 1306.


LINE 14: “Treatise on Astronomy and Astrology” in *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974) 11, p. 306: “[The Old Man Star] usually appears at dawn on the autumnal equinox in the southeast, and disappears at dusk on the vernal equinox in the southwest” 常以秋分之旦見於丙, 春分之夕而沒于丁.” On a traditional *luopan* 羅盤 compass, *bing* covers the 15-degree area (157°6’–172°5’) east of due south, and *ding* covers the 15-degree area (187°6’–202°5’) west of due south.


LINE 20: On Bian He’s 卞和 finding the jade on Mount Jing (west of Nanzhang 南漳 county, modern Hubei), see *Han Fei zi jiaozhu* (Nanjing; Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 121–22.


LINE 24: Jiaofu of Zheng 鄭交甫 encountered two goddesses on the bank of the Han River. They wore on their belts two big pearls; *Lie xian zhuan* (CSJC edn.) A, pp. 19–21. The allusions in l. 22 and l. 24 can also be found in *Baihu tong* (cited n. 81, above).

LINE 26: On comparisons like “as big as X” (e.g., 大如錢 “as big as a coin”), a common way to describe the size of stars, supernovae, meteors, sunspots, etc. in premodern Chinese astronomical records, see Zhuang Weifeng 莊威鳳 et al., *Zhongguo gudai tianxiang jilu de yanjiu yu yingyong* (Beijing: Zhongguo kexue jishu chubanshe, 2009), pp. 340–41, 373–74.

LINE 27: This probably refers to the apocryphon *Chungiu yuanning bao* 春秋元命苞; see Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, comps., *Weishu jicheng* 經書集成 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1994; hereafter, *WSJC*), p. 650.
Inspect what the Star Catalogue records:

When it appears, the society shall be peaceful, the monarch flourishes,

When it is bright, the realm shall boast myriads of talents.

SECTION III

To plan and commence the construction of the Numinous Terrace,

Lofty and steep, tall and towering.

On the stars, Tang Du discourses on the arts,

As for auras, Wang Shuo showcases his competence.

During the day they observe the colors of clouds,

At night they examine the shining and revolving Milky Way.

Upon seeing the glowing brilliance at the southern suburb,

They rejoice at the grand peace of the North Pole.

The Three Excellencies assisting and supporting,

Guarding officials civil and martial,

They offer up the longevity of immortals, in blessing Yao,

They submit important speeches, in bowing to Yu.

They look skyward at the great empyrean, leaping and jumping,

Then prostrate in the front court, bowing and stooping.

Then, tens of thousands people sing the harmony,

There, hundreds of animals lead one another to dance.
“FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR”

Line 28: Perhaps this refers to Shi Shen’s *Tian wen* (cited n. 36, above).

Line 30: This couplet combines what Shi Shen said about Old Man Star (n. 36, above) and a line in the “Treatise on Astronomy and Astrology” in *Jin shu* 11, p. 306: “[When Old Man Star] appears, the government shall be peaceful, and the monarch shall have longevity and prosperity 見則治平，主壽昌.”

Line 31: This line is from “Ling tai” 灵台, in *Shi jing*, Mao 242.

Line 32: See “Shanglin fu” quoted in Sima Xiangru’s biography in *S J* 27, pp. 1349. Tang Du was a 1st-c. BC astronomer. Wang Shuo, a magician of the Former Han, was good at reading portents from auras (qi 氣); see *Han shu* 54, p. 2446 (cited n. 21, above).


Line 36: “Yunhan” 雲漢, in *Shi jing*, Mao 258: “Distinct was the Milky Way, / Shining and revolving in the sky 輝彼雲漢，昭回於天.”

Line 37: On “the southern suburb,” see *S J* 27, pp. 1307-8.

Line 38: “Yi Ji” 益稷, in *Shang shu zhengyi* 5, p. 130: “The ruler is intelligent, the assistants are worthy, and all businesses are prosperous 元首明哉，股肱良哉，庶事康哉.”

Line 39: The Three Excellencies refers to the three highest official positions in the central government.


Line 42: This line is from “Gaoyao mo” 高陶謨 and “Yi Ji,” in *Shang shu zhengyi* 4, p. 102; and 5, p. 112, respectively.

Line 45: From “Shanglin fu” (see above, re. line 32): “They present the dances of Taotang, / Perform the songs of Getian. / A thousand voices sing the lead, / Ten thousand sing the harmony 奏陶唐氏之舞，聽葛天氏之歌，千人唱，萬人和”; trans. by Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature* 2, p. 105, ll. 382–85.

Line 46: This happened during the reign of Shun; see “Shun dian” 舜典, in *Shang shu zhengyi* 3, p. 79.
PROFOUND AND GRAVE THE DIVINE EMPEROR,

RECEIVING BLESSINGS FROM HEAVEN.

HOW REMOTE, THE NORTH OF TAI PROVINCE,

Indeed deep and profound, the northern bank of the Fen River.

She is said to be continuously shining bright,

Her brilliance luminous as the sun and moon.

She is said to be constantly revealing herself,

She shall endure while Heaven and Earth endure.

Like the nebulous and complete, solitary and standing alone,

She wields the immensity and vastness of the Primordial Breath.

As for: the giant rainbow trailing onto the islet,

Metal Heaven holds an audience.
“FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR”

line 47: “Wen wang” 文王, in Shi jing, Mao 235: “Profound was king Wen 穆文王.” The second half of the same stanza says that hundreds of thousands of descendants of the Shang became subjects of the Zhou according to the command of the High God.

line 48: A similar line can be found in “Xiawu” 下武, in Shi jing, Mao 243, which praises king Wu and king Cheng of the Zhou.


line 50: “Xiaoyao you” 逍遙遊 in Zhuang zi: Yao, after bringing order and peace to all in the realm, went to Mount Guye to the north of the Fen river to visit the four masters. Upon returning, he fell into a trance (yaoran窅然) and forgot all about his kingdom. “Zhibei you” 知北遊 in Zhuang zi: “As for the Dao, it is deep and profound, difficult to describe” 夫道, 窮然難言哉. See Nanhua zhenjing zhushu 南華真經集疏 1, p. 15; and 7, p. 425 (edn. cited above, re. line 41). The Fen River flows across the central part of Shanxi where Wu Zhao’s ancestral place was located; see Li Jiao, “Panlongtai bei”: “[Wu Shiyue] broke through thorn brushes in the wilderness of Jin, / Borrowed chopsticks [to lay out strategies] on the bank of the Fen river 披荊晉野, 借箸汾圻,” in WYYH 875, p. 14a; Cui Rong, “Zetian dasheng huanghou aicewen” 則天大聖皇后哀冊文: “On the northern bank of the Fen River,… the sage thearch shall prosper 河汾之陽, …聖后其昌”; WYYH 837, p. 4a.

line 54: For ll. 51–54, see “Xi ci” in Zhou yi zhengyi 8, p. 296: “The Way of Heaven and Earth constantly reveals itself. The Way of the sun and moon is constantly illuminating 天地之道, 貞觀者也. 日月之道, 貞明者也”; and “Zai you 在宥, in Huang zi: Guangchengzi廣成子 says that] “I will blend my light with that of the sun and moon, and will endure while heaven and earth endure” 吾與日月參光, 吾與天地為常 (Nanhua zhenjing zhushu 4, p. 221).

line 55: See n. 76, above.

line 56: See n. 80, above.

line 57: The mother of Shao Hao少昊 saw a giant shooting star, a flash of rainbow-shaped light streak, trailing onto the islet of Hua華. She thereupon gave birth to Shao Hao. The story is recorded in several weft texts; e.g., Chun qiu yuanming bao in WSJC, p. 590.

line 58: “Metal Heaven” refers to Shao Hao’s having ruled by the Five Agents power of metal; Han shu 21B, p. 1012. “Holds an audience” refers to Son of Heaven’s standing between the door and the screen 當甯而立 when holding the spring audience (chao朝); see Zheng Xuan鄭玄 (127–200), and Kong Yingda, annots., Liji zhengyi禮記正義 (SSJZS edn.) 5, p. 5a.

83
59 大電繞樞. The huge flash of lightning circles the Pivot,
60 軒轅受圖. Xuanyuan receives the Diagram.
61 殷馗則黃星見楚. Yin Kui predicted the appearance of a yellow star in Chu,
62 雷煥則紫氣臨吳. Lei Huan explained the purple auras hanging above Wu.
63 青方半月. In the east are [the auspicious stars in] half-moon shape,
64 東井連珠. At Eastern Well, the five planets gather like a string of pearls.
65 辰極之齊七政. The Luminary Culmen harmonizes the Seven Regulations,
“FU ON THE OLD MAN STAR”

Line 59: “Pivot” refers to Tianshu 天樞, or the Heavenly Pivot Star (α Ursae Majoris). The mother of Xuanyuan (i.e. Huangdi 黃帝), similar to Shaohao’s mother (see comments, above, at lines 57–58), witnessed a giant lightning that circled the Tianshu and thereupon became pregnant; see Hetu woju ji 河圖握矩記, in WSJC, p. 1144. Cf. Zhang Shoujie’s annotation to SJ1, p. 2; Schafer, Pacing the Void, p. 51.

Line 60: There are several versions of Xuanyuan’s receiving the Diagram; e.g., Chun qiu hecheng tu 春秋合誠圖, in WSJC, p. 763, and Hetu tingzuofu 河圖挺佐輔, pp. 1108–9.

Line 61: During the reign of emperor Huan of the Later Han (r. 146–168), a yellow star was visible in the areas of Song 宋 and Chu 楚. Yin Kui, a master astrologer, predicted that fifty years later a “perfected one” (zhenren 真人) would rise from the areas of Liang 梁 and Pei 沛. The perfected one turned out to be Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220); SGZ1, p. 22.

Line 62: The renowned scholar and political leader Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) saw purple auras between two Lunar Lodgings (namely, Southern Dipper 南斗, including six stars in Sagittarius, and Ox 牛, including six stars in Capricorn). He asked Lei Huan 雷煥, an astrologer from Yuzhang 豫章 (in modern Jiangxi province), to explain it. Lei said that the auras were the spirits of swords rising to the heavens, and the swords themselves were in Yuzhang. This resonates with the traditional theory of “field allocation” (fenye 分野), according to which the field applicable to Southern Dipper and Ox is an area south of the Yangzi River, and Yuzhang was in the southern state of Wu 吳; See Jin shu 36, pp. 1075–76; Ho Peng Yoke, The Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu (Paris and the Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 95; Schafer, Pacing the Void, pp. 75–77, 81.

Line 63: This refers to auspicious stars (jingxing) that are in half-moon shape; some of them appeared as auras in the eastern sky. See Meng Kang’s 孟康 (fl. 3d c. ad) and Zhang Shoujie’s annotation in SJ27, p. 1336.

Line 64: When Liu Bang’s 刘邦 (d. 195 bc) troops occupied the Qin capital in 207 bc, the conjunction of the five planets occurred in the lunar lodge Well 井 (dongjing 東井, including eight stars in Gemini). The field allocation covered areas of Qin, which was based in the Yong 雍 region. See SJ27, p. 1348; Schafer, Pacing the Void, p. 77; Ho, Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu, p. 95.

Line 65: Chenji (Luminary Culmen) is the Northern Dipper. During the Han it was established that the Northern Dipper controls the four directions of the sky as it pivots around the North Star like the emperor’s chariot, and assists the supreme deity to govern the Central Palace. See Tseng, Picturing Heaven in Early China, pp. 306–10. The “Seven Regulations” refers to the total of the sun, the moon, and five planets. See “Shundian,” in Shang shu Zhengyi 3, p. 54: “[Shun] examined the circumpolar constellation template and the three stars of the handle in order to obtain a harmonious system of the movements of the Seven Regulations.” See Yoke, Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu, p. 59. On xuanji and yuheng, see ibid., p. 59, n. b; Needham, Science and Civilisation in China 3, pp. 261–62, 333–39.
On the Grand Stairs the Six Stars are even.

Despite the sagely virtue of former emperors,

How can all of them exceed this [Wu Zhao’s virtue]?

As for: sweet dew flows out,

Delicious spring water gushes forth,

The calendar plant sprouts,

The auspicious grain seeds,

Phoenixes of vermillion color,

Zouyu of white texture,

The south sea’s being calm and tranquil,
Grand Stairs (Taijie) is a group of six stars in Ursae Majoris that is also known as tianjie 天階 or santai 三台. The six stars are arranged in three pairs of two, each pair representing a stair step in the sky that Taiyi 太一, the emperor of the heavens, sets foot on when he ascends and descends from his throne. The set of stars sets yin and yang in harmony and regulates all things. When the three separate steps are in parallel, yin and yang will be in harmony, winds and rain will come in time, and the empire will be in great peace; see Jin shu 11, p. 293; trans. Ho, Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu, p. 80. “Six Stars” (Liufu) refers to the astrological portents of those six stars; see Yan Shigu’s 颜師古 comment quoting Meng Kang, at Han shu 65, p. 2851.

The four auspicious omens mentioned in ll. 69–72 appeared when Heaven and Earth were in harmony and the government was benevolent, and they were traditionally among the most frequently reported; e.g., “Wang dao” 王道 in Lai Yanyuan 賴炎元, annot., Chunqiu fanlu 春秋繁露 (Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1984) 4, p. 87; Chen, Baihu tong shuzheng 6, pp. 283–87; TWLJ 98, pp. 1694–95. For sweet dew, see Lippiello, Auspicious Omens and Miracles, pp. 102–4; TWLJ 98, pp. 1697–98.

This was a legendary auspicious plant associated with the era of Yao. Starting on the first day of the month it is supposed to have grown out a leaf every day, and from the sixteenth day forward it drops a leaf every day. The last leaf would come off on the last day of the month; SS 29, p. 862.

“Weizi zhi ming” 微子之命, in Shang shu zhengyi 13, pp. 355–56. Tang Shu 唐叔 (i.e. Shu Yu 叔虞), a younger brother of king Cheng of the Zhou, presented the king an unusual grain from his fief as an auspicious omen. King Cheng asked Tang Shu to send it to the Duke of Zhou who was at the time away in the east quelling a rebellion. Kong Anguo commented that the grain was a sign of a harmonious empire, and it was the Duke of Zhou’s virtue that had caused its appearance. See Tseng, Picturing Heaven in Early China, pp. 128–30; and Lippiello, Auspicious Omens and Miracles, pp. 109–10.

A zouyu was a virtuous, tiger-like animal with a long tail and black stripes on white fur. It never killed other animals and only ate animals that had died naturally; TWLJ 99, p. 1716.

This was purported to have happened during the reign of king Cheng of the Zhou when the Duke of Zhou was regent; see Han shi waizhuan 韓詩外傳 (Han Wei congshu edn.) 5, p. 7b.
東風入律.  The east wind’s entering into the pitch-pipes.

比夫皇穹之錫壽,  Compared with longevity bestowed from August Heaven,

何足以談其萬一.  How can even one ten-thousandth of them be worth mentioning?

聖上猶復招列仙,  The sagely emperor still continues to recruit ranks of immortals,

擇群賢,  Select throngs of worthies.

日慎一日,  She is discreet day by day,

玄之又玄.  Profound and mysterious more and more.

兵戈不起,  Armed men and weapons will not rise,

至德承天.  Perfect virtue receives influences from Heaven.

臣炯作頌,  Your minister, Jiong, composes this eulogy,

皇家萬年.  May the imperial house last ten thousand years.
line 76: Lü refers to lüguan 律管, a series of twelve bamboo (later, bronze) pipes used for a court’s musicological tuning of the twelve pitches of the ancient Chinese octave. Later, mostly from Later Han forward, bamboo sections of prescribed lengths functioning as flutes were used in court ritual and festive ensembles; and perhaps since Former Han, but more so beginning in the W. Jin and Period of Division, such tubes were used to “watch for the ethers” (hou qi 候氣) that were supposed to come up from the earth at the right seasonal point and blow into the tubes. Watchers would notice the scattering of ash that had been placed on top of the tubes when that blowing occurred. The line here is from the Six Dynasties work Hainei shizhou ji (see n. 71, above) (Baibu congshu jicheng edn.), pp. 6b–7a. It asserts that in 98 BC messengers from Yuezhi 月氏 paid tribute to emperor Wu of the Han, reporting that in their kingdom “the east wind has been continuously going into the pitch-pipes for a hundred xun (10-day periods) 東風入律，百旬不休.” They took it as a sign that a virtuous ruler would appear in the Chinese realm and thus came to pay tribute.

line 80: See Shi Shen’s divination, n. 36, above; also the notes to lines 29 and 30, above.

line 81: “Chujian Qin” 初見秦, in Han Fei zi jiaozhu zu, annot., Han Fei zi jiaozhu 1, p. 9.

line 82: Zhu, annot., Lao zi jiaoshi 1, p. 7.

line 83: SJ 27, p. 1306.

line 84: On “receives influences from Heaven,” see n. 39, above. Under the hexagram “Kun” 坤, in Zhou yi zhengyi (Shisanjing zhushu) 1, p. 13b, we read: “All things owe their birth [to Kun]; it obediently receives Heaven 萬物資生，乃順承天.”