COMMENTARY AND TRANSLATION: EXPLORING THE *DU LÜ YANYI* 杜律演義*

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a preliminary discussion of the status of translation practices embedded in the commentarial entries of the Yuan dynasty anthology *Du lü yanyi* 杜律演義 [Explanation of the Meaning of Du Fu's Regulated Verse] by Zhang Xing 張性. The research moves from a definition of 'translation' that extends beyond the prototypical discourse on the relations between different languages to encompass more varied discursive processes and products within a single language and more extensively within the field of metaliterature. As a case study, the paper examines the characteristics of the commentarial entries appended to two poems of the sequence "Qiu xing ba shou 秋興八首" [Stirred by Autumn] in the anthology *Du lü yanyi*. It analyses how the commentarial notes are related to units or whole portions of the poetic prototext, and for what purpose. As a result, the paper brings to light the juxtaposition and the combination of two fundamental approaches to the mediation of the prototext: one leaning towards commentary by way of explanatory reformulations, and the other leaning towards translation in the form of imitative reformulations.

Keywords: Commentary; intralingual translation; prose reformulation; simplification; *Du lü yanyi*; Du Fu reception

The process of diachronic translation inside one's own native tongue is so constant, we perform it so unawares, that we rarely pause either to note its formal intricacy or the decisive part it plays in the very existence of civilization.
     George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 1998, 29–30.

Steiner's quotation in the epigraph reminds us that matters of translation are relevant not only to the relationships between different languages, but also, and to some extent in a very pivotal way, to phenomena within a single language, hence the significance of intralingual translation.[1] Steiner addresses this issue from the point of view of diachronic variation, but his perspective can be validly extended to other dimensions (diastratic, diamesic, diaphasic) as well.

These phenomena, as Steiner suggests, go mostly unrecognized, or at the very least underrecognized, and above all they are rarely discussed in terms of "translation". To some extent this neglect downplays the role of translation as a fundamental communicative practice within any given linguistic and cultural reality, and in some cases it may constrain the study of the past to a "monolingualism" that is hardly plausible.

In ancient and premodern China, as in other civilizations, translation practices in the form of glosses, paraphrases, and rewritings represented a common component of scholarly work in the commentarial tradition. In literature on commentaries, however, the study of these practices as translational phenomena and their significance in terms of translation practice are relatively marginal topics, usually relegated to a secondary level. In this study, I contend that these phenomena deserve more attention and that the analysis of the different approaches to verbal reformulations within single texts or larger groups of texts could yield valuable (albeit still hypothetical) information on the nomenclature of the commentarial tradition in diachronic and synchronic perspective.

In this paper, I first propose a preliminary outline of the theoretical framework of my research approach and then move to an analysis of the commentary on the poems of the sequence "Qiuxing ba shou" 秋興八首 (Stirred by Autumn) by Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) in the Yuan anthology *Du lü yanyi* 杜律演義 (Explanation of the Meaning of Du Fu's Regulated Verse, hereafter DLYY) by Zhang Xing 張性. Rather than being a point of arrival, this study aims to represent a point of departure for more elaborate analyses of the status of translation practices within commentarial literature.

Commentary, translation, and metatext

In the last two decades, increased interest in studying the role of commentaries in ancient and premodern China has emerged in the West. This interest sprang from the observation that commentarial writing represents, as highlighted by Gardner, "a standard, even dominant, mode of scholarly and philosophical discourse for Chinese literati", and that research into the long and dynamic traditions of literary and philosophical writings "must begin – in a systematic and historically sensitive manner – to take account of the vast commentarial corpus" (Gardner 1995: 397). Therefore, several publications examining the characteristics of individual or collected commentaries that shed light on the position of this genre in the traditional system of scholarly writing have appeared.

In critical discourse, however, commentaries are commonly discussed in relation to exegesis and hermeneutics, while minor attention is paid to their relevance to matters of

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[1] The notion refers to the categorization of the translation types advanced by Roman Jakobson in his seminal 1959 essay on the linguistic aspects of translation. See Roman Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", reprinted in Jakobson 1987: 428–435.

translation. The term *translation*, for example, considered both as process and as product, is rarely indexed in scholarly works on commentaries, while, on the other hand, research on translation and translation history seldom refers to data retrieved from commentarial literature. There are, however, a few notable exceptions, such as the works of Wagner (2000, 2015). In his study of Wang Bi's commentary on the *Laozi*, Wagner singles out translation, and more specifically "intralingual translation", as a fundamental commentarial strategy, while in a more recent paper he openly advocates the need to discuss matters of commentary and translation within the framework of the communication process, highlighting the role of commentators as "brokers of meaning" alongside translators, teachers, and other professional figures. As he aptly observes, "the translator and the commentator plow the same field" (Wagner 2015: 490).

The idea that commentary and translation are proximate, similar fields was not unknown in premodern criticism. We find an interesting instance of this perspective in the opening remarks to the chapter on *xiaoxue* 小學 (philology) in the *Dongshu dushuji* 東塾讀書記 (Records on Reading by the Eastern School) collection by Qing dynasty philologist Chen Li 陳澧 (1810–1882):

> 詁者, 古也。古今異言, 通之使人知也。蓋時有古今, 猶地有東西, 有南北, 相隔遠則言語不通矣。地遠則有翻譯, 時遠則有訓詁。有翻譯則能使別國如鄉鄰, 有訓詁則能使古今如旦暮, 所謂通之也, 訓詁之功大矣哉！[2]
>
> *Glossing* (*gǔ* 詁) is like *ancient* (*gǔ* 古). Languages from past and present are different; to connect them is to allow people to understand.'[3] In time there are past and present, as in space there are East and West, South and North. They are distant from each other, and therefore their languages are not mutually comprehensible. In case of spatial distance, there is translation; in case of time, there is glossing. Through translation it is possible to consider different countries as fellow villagers. Through glossing it is possible to consider past and present as morning and evening. This is what is called to connect them. How great is the achievement of glossing!

Chen Li builds his argument on the authority of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) and his view on lexical glossing, but he further enhances it by noting the comparability of glossing and (interlingual) translation (*fanyi* 翻譯) in terms of motivating causes and intended outcomes. However simplistic his formulation might be, there is merit in his suggestion that commentary and translation are similar in the communicative function they aim to achieve in a shared awareness of *distance*[4] and dissimilar in relation to their primary focus on either time or space.[5] The use of the term *tong* 通 is in my view par-

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2   Chen Li, "Xiaoxue," in *Dongshu dushuji*, juan 11, 1a. Digital edition of the text in Beijing University Library available at https://archive.org/details/02096557.cn (accessed 25-06-2016).
3   This quotation is from Kong Yingda's subcommentary (*shu*) to Mao's edition of the *Shijing* (*Maoshi zhengyi*, juan 1). See http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=84776 (accessed 03-03-2017).
4   According to Cesare Segre, a third fundamental dimension must be added to the chrono-geographical one. This third dimension is culture, and together with time and place it envisages an "epistemic distance": "Commentary is the gauge of difficulties in communication. The most obvious case is that of the chronological or geographical distance between sender and receiver: ancient texts or texts in other languages are most frequently embellished by a commentary. We could talk, more aptly, of epistemic distance: it would consider the cultural distance, alongside the chrono-geographic one." (Segre 1993: 264).
5   It may be of interest to note that, in a short essay dedicated to the theme of communication and society, Roman Jakobson defines in very similar terms the role of language as a communicative tool:

ticularly interesting because, while it conveys a sense of channeling and connecting, it also entails the removal of hindrances – that is, things that may prevent the possibility of knowledge.[6]

Besides a communicative dimension, commentary and translation also share a common metaliterary (Holmes) or metatextual nature (Popovič, Torop), or in other words, both activities (as processes and as products) have a second-degree relationship with a (real or presumed) text or group of texts.[7] The perspective elaborated by Holmes is particularly relevant for the subject of this study because in his analysis of the variety of metaliterature that a poem can accumulate, he explicitly places prose translation and verse translation (or the metapoem) in a contiguous position, at the intersection between interpretation and literature.

Commentary and translation are therefore in a relation of similarity because they strive for the same communicative function and are also in a contiguous position from the perspective of the kind of relation they establish with a text. It is from this perspective that I aim to consider their interplay in the premodern anthology *Du lü yanyi*.

Reformulation in the commentarial notes of the anthology *Du lü yanyi*

DLYY is an anthology of 151 poems selected from the corpus of Du Fu's heptasyllabic regulated poetry.[8] Each poem is followed by a commentarial note written by the hand of Zhang Xing, a late Yuan dynasty scholar hailing from Jiangxi who probably flourished in the middle of the fourteenth century. The work is also known by the alternative titles *Qiyan lüshi yanyi* 七言律詩演義 (Explanation of the Meaning of Heptasyllabic Regulated Verse) and *Du lü qiyan yanyi* 杜律七言演義 (Explanation of the Meaning of Du Fu's Heptasyllabic Regulated Verse); extant editions of the anthology date to the Ming dynasty. During the early Ming period, a very similar work started to circulate under the name of the more famous Yuan poet Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348) with the title *Du lü Yu zhu* 杜律虞註. However, arguments against the authenticity of this work and its attribution to Yu Ji, and claims upholding authorship by Zhang Xing, were already formulated at the end of the fifteenth century (see Zhong Zhiwei 2005: 263–267, Xu Guoneng 2015: 68–70). It is nonetheless a fact that the edition published under the

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"When speaking of language as a communicative tool, one must remember that its primary role, interpersonal communication, which bridges space, is supplemented by a no less important function which may be characterized as intrapersonal communication. […] While interpersonal communication bridges space, intrapersonal communication proves to be the chief vehicle for bridging time." See Jakobson 1985: 98.

[6] To some extent, the term *tong* may offer another perspective from which to consider the process of translation. This perspective would not be limited only to the figure of "transfer" rooted in the term *translation*, which as Stecconi has pointed out can be misleading, but would also consider the condition of opening a channel for communication by removing what (at a certain time) may prevent the possibility of circulation. For the view of Stecconi on the figure of "transfer", see Stecconi 2004: 21. In the Thesaurus Linguae Sericae the term *tong* is included in the group for 'communicate' (accessed 15-08-2017). I am grateful to Olga Lomová for bringing this reference to my attention.

[7] See Holmes 1970: 91–105; Popovič 1975 (It. tr. 2006); Torop 2010 (It. transl. 2010).

[8] All references from the DLYY in this study are taken from the photostatic edition published by Taiwain Datong shuju in 1974.

name of Yu Ji achieved great popularity during the Ming dynasty, in terms of number of editions and readership,[9] and thus it actively contributed to the popularity of its commentarial style.[10]

Previous studies on the DLYY have already pointed out the singularity of Zhang's work compared to earlier collections of Du Fu's poetry, particularly in relation to the structure of the commentarial notes. If it is true that the large corpus of richly annotated editions of Du Fu's poetry that were compiled during the Song dynasty is indicative of the high esteem in which the Tang poet was held by contemporary literati, it is also a sign of the level of knowledge required to fully grasp the poet's imagery and a mark of its difficulty. As suggested by Ji Hao, the traditional form of the "annotation", focused on explaining difficult terms and identifying intertextual references, meritoriously pays attention to every minute detail of each poem but at the same time might lead to the loss of the "big picture" (see Ji Hao 2017: 107). Unlike in earlier models, in his notes Zhang limited the use of lexical and exegetical glosses to a minimum and devoted greater effort to conveying the meaning of each poem or couplet by fully or partially reformulating it in prose.

A detailed analysis of the features of the commentarial notes in Zhang's work extends beyond the scope of this study, and for the moment I limit my considerations to briefly describing a typology of his commentary. Commentarial entries can be classified according to the following categories based on specific content and style: (i) lexical and intertextual glosses, which provide information on specific terms and expressions or explain literary and cultural references; (ii) brief expositions of the general meaning of a poem; (iii) partial or full paraphrases of a poem, which consist of fragmentary prose reformulations of single verses or couplets, sometimes linked through an explicit reference to the jargon of poetic criticism (e.g., *hanlian* 頷聯, *jielian* 結聯, etc.), or of a paraphrase of the whole text; (iv) explanatory notes on the formal structure of the poem; and finally (v) references to other editions, for example, to contest the use of a particular term.[11] In the Ming dynasty edition that serves as the base of the present study, the first and the last of these categories are usually marked with a white circle either before or after the specific textual note to visually separate it from the more explanatory parts.

Explanatory components (particularly points ii and iii on the above list) constitute the bulk of the commentarial entries and are arguably the defining traits of the *yanyi* 演義 category referred to in the title.[12] In what follows I provide a description of the characteristics of these components in relation to the poetic sequence "Qiuxing ba shou", which offers a good starting point for a preliminary investigation of the role of translation in Zhang Xing's commentarial approach. Being a series of eight poems, it allows the comparison of multiple texts, but at the same time it safeguards against the risks of working with a large corpus. On the other hand, given its thematic cohesion, it offers the possibil-

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[9] The work spread to Korea and Japan.
[10] See Luo Lu 2004: 320–321. On the complementarity of the two works, cf. Ji Hao 2017: 106–107.
[11] Zhong Zhiwei (2005: 268–278) divides the commentarial notes into two main groups, "neizhu" 內註 (internal annotation) and "waizhu" 外註 (external annotation), further subdividing each group into different kinds.
[12] I expand on this notion in a forthcoming work provisionally titled "Intralingual Translation and the Making of the *Yanyi* Textual Category", which is part of the project "Intralingual Translation, Diglossia and the Rise of Vernaculars in East Asian Classical and Premodern Cultures" that I have developed with Rainer Lanselle.

ity of considering if and how the global vision of the sequence may affect interpretative and translational practices.

The sequence is classified under the "Shixu" 時序 (Time) category.[13] Unlike in earlier collections, Zhang Xing did not split the series by inserting the poems into different categories, and thus he actively contributed to highlighting the structural continuity of the individual texts (see Ji Hao 2017: 106–107).

As I mentioned above, the explanatory part of the commentarial note is opened by a short explanation of the general meaning of the poem, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

1) 此詩因見峽中秋景而起興略及長安故園而末極言之 (DLYY, 31)
In this poem, [the poet], inspired by the view of the mid-autumn scenery at the gorges, touches upon his homeland in Chang'an, and in the end speaks about it in detail.

2) 此詩因見夔府晚景而望長安極言其思歸之切也 (DLYY, 32)
In this poem, [the poet], after seeing an evening scene in Kui prefecture, gazes towards Chang'an, and speaks to the utmost about his yearning desire to return.

3) 此詩公因坐江樓見秋景而自傷命薄不如長安之少年也 (DLYY, 34)
In this poem, the poet, because he sits in the river pavilion and sees the autumn scenery, laments that his fate is miserable and not like his youth in Chang'an.

4) 此詩專為長安之變更因秋有感而懷思長安自祿山之破至于代宗之世朱泚亂之吐蕃陷之乘輿播越而公久客巴蜀故云 […] (DLYY, 35)
In this poem, because of the disaster in Chang'an, and furthermore because of the autumn season, [the poet] is moved and thinks back to Chang'an. From its fall by the hand of An Lushan to the chaos caused by Zhu Ci at the time of Daizong, when the Tibetans seized it and the emperor fled, the poet was living as a stranger in Ba and Shu and that is why he said […].

5) 此詩用長安事以起興末乃自嘆而懷舊也唐自明皇尊玄元聖祖頗以神仙為事然高宗龍朔三年改大明宮為蓬萊宮已有慕仙之意故此篇借周漢神仙事起興 (DLYY, 36)
In this poem, [the poet] uses the events in Chang'an to evoke feelings and in the end he sighs over himself, full of nostalgia. During the Tang, since the "Bright Emperor" started to venerate the "Divine Ancestor of the Mysterious Origin", they were giving great attention to deities and immortals, but already in the third year of the Longshuo reign, when the Emperor Gaozong remodeled the Daming Palace into the Penglai Palace, there was already the idea of worshipping the immortals. For this reason, this piece takes matters of immortals of the Zhou and Han periods as a source of inspiration.

6) 此詩思曲江而作也 (DLYY, 37)
This poem was composed thinking of the Twisting River.

7) 此詩因昆明池之景而嘆其今不得見也 (DLYY, 38–39)
In this poem, because of the scenery of the Kunming Pond, [the poet] sighs that he nowadays cannot see it.

8) 此詩專為渼陂之景而作按通鑑郭子儀引三千騎自御宿川循山而東北出藍田以向長安公渼陂詩云水面月出藍天闊又云下歸無極終南黑可以見昆吾御宿乃渼陂相近之

地紫閣又終南山之峰名臨乎陂上者也蓋公自長安而往遊渼陂必道經昆吾山御宿川行乃至則見峰陰入陂所謂半陂以南純浸山是也 (DLYY, 40)

This poem is dedicated to the scenery of Meipi. According to the Comprehensive Mirror, Guo Ziyi led three thousand cavalry from Yusu Brook following the hills to exit at Lantian in the north-east, towards Chang'an. In the poem of "Meipi"[14] the poet says: "On the water's surface the moon comes out over Indigo Fields Pass" and again "Receding downward endlessly is the blackness of Mount Zhongnan." It is evident that Kunwu and Yusu are places near Meipi. Purple Tower is the name of a crest overlooking the lake. When the poet went travelling from Chang'an to Meipi, he had to pass through the Kunwu Mountains and Yusu Brook to see the shadow of the crest entering into the lake. This is what it said: "The southern half of the reservoir is purely soaking the mountain."

The introductory part typically focuses on the link between the contextual situation and the poet's feelings, and it gives contextual details useful for understanding what stands behind the composition of the poem (as in excerpt 8 above).

The text that follows this explanatory introduction retells the content of the poem, presenting various degrees of correlation with the first part: from more explanatory reformulations, in which the commentator intervenes in the text to stress a particular point in order to make it more evident (e.g., tracing it back to the general meaning indicated in the introductory part), to more imitative reformulations, in which the commentator almost withdraws from the verbal surface of the prose text and shortens (and sometimes effaces) the distance between his explanatory text and the poem.[15] It should be noted that this last case is usually marked by the presence of a metalinguistic marker such as *yan* 言 or *yun* 云 at the beginning of the reformulation.[16] A continuum of options occupies the middle position between the two forms of explanatory and imitative reformulations in a mixed text format.

The commentarial note added to the first poem of the series presents a good example for examining the interplay of the two forms. The poem reads as follows:

玉露凋傷楓樹林，	Jade-white dew withers and harms forests of maple trees,
巫山巫峽氣蕭森。	On Wu Mountain and in Wu Gorges, the atmosphere, bleak and dreary.
江間波浪兼天湧，	Between river's margins the waves churn level with sky,
塞上風雲接地陰。	wind-driven clouds over passes touching earth in shadow.
叢菊兩開他日淚，	Chrysanthemum clumps twice have bloomed forth tears of another day,
孤舟一繫故園心。	a lonely boat tied up once and for all a heart set on its homeland.
寒衣處處催刀尺，	Everywhere clothes for cold weather hasten ruler and blade,
白帝城高急暮砧。	Walls of White Emperor Castle high, pounding block urgent in dusk (tr. Owen 2016: 353).

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[14] It refers to the ballad "Meipi xing" 渼陂行 [Meipi: A Ballad] by Du Fu. See Owen 2016: 132–135. In the following part of the commentarial note, the text marked off by inverted commas refers to quotations from Owen's translation of "Meipi xing".

[15] Here I adapt, with some changes, the classification of reformulations into "reformulation à visée explicative" and "reformulation à visée imitative" formulated by Catherine Fuch (1994: 7–12).

[16] On the use of *yan* in commentary, see also Wagner 2000: 276–281.

The first part of the commentarial note opens with three glosses to explain the use of the terms *yulu* 玉露 (jade-white dew), *guyuan* 故園 (homeland); *Baidicheng* 白帝城 (the walled town of the White Emperor):

> 玉露露至秋則白故園指長安也杜氏之先在城南杜曲白帝城公孫述自號白帝故築城於夔州 (DLYY, 31)
>
> *Yulu*: At autumn dew is white. *Guyuan* indicates Chang'an. The ancestors of the Du family were in Du qu, in the southern outskirts of the city. *Baidicheng*: Gongsun Shu styled himself as the White Emperor and built a walled town in Kuizhou.

The note continues with a brief explanation of the general meaning of the poem (see excerpt 1 from the above list) and moves then to the reformulation. The underlined parts in the following text indicate passages in which the commentator openly engages in prose reformulation to provide causal links, additional information, and further explanations of difficult passages, as well as critical interpretations:

> 露凋楓葉至於滿林則秋深矣故巫山巫峽之氣蕭殺而蕭森也峽江之間波浪蹴天楚塞之上風雲匝地此皆蕭森之氣公因此自嘆留夔已經兩秋故云叢菊之開我當感此而揮淚矣然下峽孤舟則猶滯此一繫我故園之心也他日言向日也一繫始終心在故園而身滯舟中繫身即所繫心也末言人家感此秋氣蕭森亦備寒衣故曰白城中擣衣之聲天寒歲暮愈關情矣安得不形於嘆咏哉 (DLYY, 31)
>
> Dew withers maple leaves until it covers the whole forest, <u>this means that it is late autumn.</u> For this reason, the atmosphere on Wu Mountain and in Wu Gorges is desolate and dreary. Amid the River of the gorges, the waves dash to the heavens. Over the passes of Chu, wind-driven clouds surround the earth. <u>These are all indications of the desolate atmosphere.</u> <u>Moved by this scene, the poet sighs to himself [that] he has already been in Kuizhou for two years and therefore says,</u> "the bloom of Chrysanthemum clumps, as I see them I shed tears." Thus a lonely boat heading down the gorge still lingers here drawing together my feelings for the homeland. <u>*Ta ri* means 'former days'. *Yi xi* means 'all along'. The heart is at the homeland while the body is constrained on the boat. The constrained body actually means that the heart is constrained. At the end it says,</u> "The people are feeling the dreariness of the autumn's air and have started to prepare the winter clothes." <u>Therefore, it tells of the</u> sound of pounding clothes in the White Emperor Castle. <u>The weather is cold, the year is ending, [everything] is more and more moving. How would it be possible not to express all this in sighs and verses?</u>

By comparing the reformulated parts in the above text with the corresponding parts in the original poem, it is possible to observe the following:

i) recurrent shifts from connotation to denotation, as in the following cases: the term *yulu* 玉露 'jade-white dew' becomes simply *lu* 露 'dew', *daoshang* 凋傷 'withers and harms' is reduced to the single verb *dao* 凋 'withers', and the expressions *cui daochi* 催刀尺 'hasten ruler and blade' and *ji mu zhen* 急暮砧 'pounding blocks urgent in dusk' are substituted by the more common terms *bei hanyi* 備寒衣 'prepare the winter clothes' and *dao yi* 擣衣 'pounding clothes';

ii) the insertion of synonymous terms to intensify in a very direct manner a particular description, as exemplified by the use of the term *xiaosen* 蕭森 'bleak and dreary' in the second verse, which in the reformulation is preceded by the synonym *susha* 蕭殺

'desolate and dreary', a term commonly associated with *qi* 氣 to describe the atmosphere during the autumn and winter seasons;

iii) some (albeit weak) instances of parallelism, as in the case of the second couplet, which maintains a parallel structure in the reformulation as well:

峽江之間波浪蹴天　Amid the River of the gorges, the waves dash to the heavens.
楚塞之上風雲匝地　Over the passes of Chu, wind-driven clouds surround the earth.

The co-occurrence of these elements is particularly significant. On one hand, the prevalent shift from connotation to denotation is an important mark of general simplification that indicates reformulation, and the same can be said for the transformation from poetry into prose as well. As pointed out by Zethsen in her studies on intralingual translation, the process of simplification centers around the parameter of knowledge and points towards the general ability or level of expertise that is required to access the prototext (see Zethsen 2009: 795–812). In the case of the reformulated text above, the shifts from connotation to denotation, and to a minor extent, from poetry to prose, produce a highly functional text, which reduces the complexities of the metaphorical language in order to make it comprehensible and in order to allow the reader to eventually return back to that language with a higher level of expertise.[17] On the other hand, the attention, however minimal, paid in the reformulated text to formal elements (parallelism) and semantic amplification (i.e., the focus on the description of autumn, which is the inspirational element of this piece and the whole series) reveals an effort to balance the predominance of the dimension of meaning with a consideration for some basic elements of the poetic mode (form and imagery). The fact that this balancing act is achieved within the boundaries of the reformulated text and its intermingling with considerations on the functional aim of the derived text is in my view particularly relevant in terms of the translational approach of the reformulated text.

Besides the explanatory model exemplified by the note to the first poem,[18] which features the repeated, visible involvement of the commentator in the reformulated text, other examples in the sequence present very minimal commentarial intervention thereby revealing a more mimetic approach to reformulation. The commentarial notes to the second, fourth, and fifth poems of the series can all be considered illustrations of this kind of imitative recasting. The second poem reads as follows:

夔府孤城落日斜，　On Kuizhou's lonely walls setting sunlight slants,
每依北斗望京華。　then always I trust the North Dipper to lead my gaze to the capital.
聽猿實下三聲淚，　Listening to gibbons I really shed tears at their third cry,
奉使虛隨八月槎。　accepting my mission I pointlessly follow the eighth-month raft.
畫省香爐違伏枕，　The censer in the ministry with portraits eludes the pillow where I lie,
山樓粉堞隱悲笳。　hill towers' white-plastered battlements hide the sad reed pipes.

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[17] The possibility to immediately turn back to the original text is constitutive of the commentarial format and has a fundamental effect on the status of translation within commentarial literature. Similarly to bilingual editions, it envisages a way of reading that requires or stimulates constant comparison and complementarity between the original text and the metatext. Cf. Karas 2007: 137–160.

[18] Similar cases can be found in the commentarial notes added to the third, sixth, seventh, and eighth poems of the sequence.

請看石上藤蘿月，　　Just look there at the moon, in wisteria on the rock,
已映洲前蘆荻花。　　it has already cast its light by sandbars on flowers of the reeds (tr. Owen 2016: 353).

Zhang's commentarial note opens with a series of annotations on the intertextual references and allusions used in the poem:

荊州記曰巴東三峽猿聲啼至三聲聞者垂淚張騫奉使西域博物誌載每年八月見槎來因乘之到天上此非張騫事公每合用之畫省指尚書省也尚書郎入直給女侍二人執香爐燒熏以從粉堞城上女墻以白土塗之 (DLYY, 32)

The *Jingzhou ji* (Records of Jingzhou) says: At the three gorges in Badong, when the gibbons cry, those who listen end up shedding tears at their third call. Zhang Qian accepted orders and went for his mission in the Western territories. According to the *Bowu zhi* (Records of the Myriad Things), every year in the eighth month, when he saw that the raft had arrived, he would ride to the sky. These events are not related to Zhang Qian, but the poet uses them together every time. *Hua sheng* indicates the Department of State Affairs. When the Minister entered in service, two dames were allowed to follow holding an incense burner. *Fen die*: On the city wall, the battlements were plastered with white clay.

Following is the introductory explanation of the meaning of the poem (see excerpt 2 above) and then the reformulation introduced by *yan* 言 (it says):

夔城孤立當日斜之時公登臨其上言我每依北斗而望在其下欲歸長安而未得也嘗聞峽中猿啼三聲客淚自墮今我在此則實聞之而下淚矣嘗聞張騫八月乘槎奉使今我秋不得歸則八月乘槎之事成虛矣我雖檢校工部員外郎而與尚書省入直之香爐相違遠者以病之故但聞此城樓之上雉堞之間笳聲隱隱為可悲也不特此耳適間方見日斜即今請看石上之月已映荻花而明光陰代禪如此其速豈不尤可悲哉 (DLYY, 32–33)

Kuizhou's walls stands isolated, at the time when the sun slants, the poet climbs upon them, saying: "I always trust the North Dipper to lead my gaze to look [at what is] under it, wishing to return to Chang'an, but still cannot achieve it yet. I've learned that at the gorges, when the gibbons cry, at their third call tears naturally fall down from travelers' eyes. And now that I really listen to them while standing here, I shed tears. I've learned that in the eighth month Zhang Qian rode the raft to accept his orders and carry out his mission. But now that, in autumn, I am not able to return, the fact of riding the raft in the eighth month has become pointless. Although I am Acting Vice-Director of the Ministry of Works, I am separated away from the censer used in the Department of State Affairs when entering in service, because of an illness. Merely to listen to the melancholic sound of the reed pipes among the crenellations on these towers is so sad. But this is not the only reason. A moment ago, [I] saw the sun slanting, and now just look there at the moon above the rock, it has already cast its light on the flowers of the reed. Light and shadow [i.e., day and night] replace one another at such a speed, how could it not be even more sorrowful?"

Apart from the reference to the poet as *gong* 公 in the opening line, and maybe the interpretative remark by the commentator disguised in the final rhetorical question, the text of the reformulation reveals here a more marked tendency to shorten the distance between the two texts, and between the reformulated text and the reader, to the point that even new elements introduced for explanatory purposes, such as making explicit that the expression *fuzhen* 伏枕 'the pillow where I lie' refers to an illness that prevents the

poet from fulfilling his official duty, are seamlessly incorporated into the text. The most evident sign of this imitative mode is represented in this case by the recurrence of the pronoun *wo* 我 'I', which is used four times in the text of the reformulation to refer to the persona in the poem. The use of *I* in the reformulated text makes explicit that the persona talking in the poem is the poet and that his voice is the one conveyed in the reformulation as well. Finally, as in the case of the first note, in this text the parallelism of the second couplet is reproduced in the reformulated text as well.

Conclusion

The preliminary analysis of the notes added to the poems of the "Qiuxing ba shou" sequence in Zhang Xing's work has shown the juxtaposition and the combination of two main approaches to the mediation of the prototext (as well as of its author and his world): one leaning towards a direct explanation, the other towards intralingual translation in the form of prose reformulation. If both approaches are based on a common and fundamental condition of distance, they differ in the possibilities they offer to the reader to come to terms with this condition. On the one hand stands the simple acknowledgment of its existence and of the commentator's role in its mediation: what is said supplements the original to facilitate understanding, focuses on something particularly relevant, or provides a summary outline of a portion of text. On the other hand stands the attempt to bridge the distance by offering the reader an optional reading, saying something in a different way. This reading reveals its translational character not just at the surface level of meaning, but also, and primarily, at the deeper level of the residue that this meaning creates. There is certainly an immense distance in metaphorically saying *cui daochi* 催刀尺 'hasten ruler and blade' and explicitly saying *bei hanyi* 備寒衣 'prepare the winter clothes', but once the relationship between these two expressions is established, its properties and meanings can be explored.

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