

# The Two Interpretive Dogmas of *Zhiren lunshi* and *Yiyi nizhi* as ‘Rules of Competition’ and ‘Perspectives of Historicity’: A Study of Annotated Editions of Du Fu’s Poetry from the Late Ming to Early Qing

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## ABSTRACT

This article revisits the history of Du Fu 杜甫 (*zi* Zimei 子美, 712–770) studies and demonstrates that although annotated editions of Du Fu’s poetry claim to follow *zhiren lunshi* 知人論世 (‘knowing the person by considering the age in which he or she lived’) and/or *yiyi nizhi* 以意逆志 (‘inferring the author’s intention through sympathetic effort’), which are dogmatic approaches that seemingly balance objective and subjective views, they nevertheless lead to the development of highly divergent ideas. Treating the two principles as ‘rules of competition’, annotators have attempted to refute other annotations and commentaries in the process of annotating Du Fu’s poetry. The sense of historicity in Du Fu’s poetry in these editions is also strengthened by the use of these two principles.

## KEYWORDS

Annotated editions; Du Fu; Poet-Sage; Chinese poetics; *yiyi nizhi*; *zhiren lunshi*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In attempting to understand the subtleties of Du Fu's poetry, the annotated editions produced during the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties are considered key reading materials for scholars. The study and practice of annotation and commentary (*jianzhu zhi xue* 箋注之學) represent the zenith of Du Fu studies, a field that often refers to and relies on classic works from the late Ming to early Qing period. These works are widely considered essential to understanding the Poet-Sage (*shisheng* 詩聖) and his poetry and include *Du yi* 杜臆 ('A Speculation on Du [Fu's Poetry]') by Wang Sishi 王嗣奭 (1566–1648), *Qian zhu Du shi* 錢注杜詩 ('Qian's Annotations on Du's Poetry') by Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664), *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* 杜工部詩集輯注 ('Collected Annotations of the Poetry Collection of Du of the Ministry of Works') by Zhu Heling 朱鶴齡 (1606–1683), *Du shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 ('Detailed Annotations on Du's Poetry') by Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲 (1638–1717), and *Du Du xinjie* 讀杜心解 ('Reading Du [Fu's Poetry] from My Own Explanations') by Pu Qilong 浦起龍 (1679–1762). These annotated editions are considered essential readings because their unique insights, rich information, and attentive textual scholarship offer readers a reliable retrospective lens.

These editions' legendary pedigrees deserve scholarly attention. Wang Sishi, for example, had been reading and studying Du Fu's works since he was young, and he finalised his manuscript before his death. As a scholar-official and Ming loyalist during the Ming–Qing transition, he resolutely refused to serve the new regime; thus, he was regarded as having been heavily influenced by Du Fu's thought (Liu 1983: 1–2). Another representative figure, Qian Qianyi, who likewise withstood the collapse of the Ming dynasty, was controversial. He was both a famous literatus and a senior official who ultimately resigned from or surrendered to the emerging regime—due to this, his loyalty is debated even today. Nevertheless, his annotation of Du Fu's poetry attracted significant attention due to his scholarship and historical status, despite the latter being negatively assessed (see Yim 2009). In addition to the two scholars mentioned above, Zhu Heling was a lesser known literary figure who served as a private teacher for Qian's family in approximately 1655. While Qian Qianyi and Zhu Heling eventually collaborated to produce annotations on Du Fu's poetry, they argued and even regarded each other as rivals. Today, what may differentiate Qian Qianyi's comments from Zhu Heling's Du Fu studies is that the former offered both annotations and explanations, while the latter provided only annotations and generally omitted explanations (Mo 2007: 108–125; Hao 2000: 59–68).

For many generations of intellectuals, Du Fu's poetry was so highly esteemed and valued that even several decades later, in 1706, Qiu Zhao'ao published a book on the subject after spending more than twenty years gathering a sizeable body of material. For this work he was promoted under the Imperial Academy (*Hanlinyuan* 翰林院; *Du shi xiangzhu*: 3; Mo 2007: 126). Pu Qilong, another scholar-official who lived in the prosperous age of the Qing dynasty, completed *Du Du xinjie* when he was struggling to pass the public official examination around 1721 to 1724. This book went through several revisions and is today considered a well-known achievement from the first half of Pu Qilong's life (Wang 1990: 979–986; Wang 1961: 1). In response to the lengthy and complicated annotations created in the past, Pu Qilong suggested a direct approach from the reader's feelings to Du Fu's writing.

Scholars positively commented on and reviewed the abovementioned annotated editions. For example, Mo Lifeng 莫砺鋒 once noted that in *Du yi*, written during the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Wang Sishi applies his national patriotism and a strong sense of



personal emotion to his study of Du Fu's works. Even the title of the book, 'Speculation' (*yi* 臆), denotes that the annotations are from the annotator's own perspective. Therefore, Mo's explanation of *Du yi* demonstrates how representative the annotation of Du Fu's poetry is of the context in which the annotations were made. Indeed, Wang Sishi's life story and experiences shaped the way he wrote his work; his interpretation of Du Fu's poetry is full of emotion and adopts a unique lens in its critique. Methodologically, *Du yi* adopts the dogmas of *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi*.<sup>1</sup> Wang Sishi's perspective hinges on the classical discussion that "*yiyi nizhi*" is the method of reading poetry by Mencius 孟子 [372–289 BCE]. By reciting the author's poetry, considering the age in which the author lived, and inferring the author's intention [through sympathetic reading], [readers] have been able to greatly resolve previous doubts, and predecessors' confusions have been rectified' (「以意逆志」，孟子讀詩法也。誦其詩，論其世，而逆其意，向來積疑，多所披豁，前人謬迷，多所駁正; Mo 2007: 84–91; *Du yi yuanshi*: 1–2).

Because *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi* are tightly linked with many essential notions in Chinese culture and literature, these two concepts are rendered equally important. In the context of Du Fu studies, it is typical for scholars and annotators to invoke *zhiren lunshi* with reference to Confucian values such as loyalty and filial piety. Du Fu's poetry was always widely regarded as credible for its deeply rooted notions of truth and reality, reflecting the author's deepest feelings towards his relatives, his friends, his lord, and the common people. Regarding *yiyi nizhi*, it is not surprising that the concept also leaves ample room for interpretation in the tradition of Chinese literary criticism. Scholars have explained that *yi* could be understood as 'speculation' or 'the meaning of the text', indicating the ambiguity of *yiyi nizhi* (Cai 2014: 262–288). Traditionally, *yiyi nizhi* and *zhiren lunshi* are closely interlinked concepts (Lin 2008: 109–130). The inscription of *Du yi* highlights the approach of 'reciting the poetry and considering the age in which the author lived', which is, in effect, *zhiren lunshi* immediately following *yiyi nizhi*. This approach of combining the two principles became an established rule in reading poetry.

Many interpretations similar to that of *Du yi* have been presented in the literature. In the annotated editions of Du Fu's poetry produced during the imperial period, various annotators emphasised that the major strategies for dissecting Du Fu's poetry were based on the abovementioned two leading concepts, *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi*. Generally, the former may be understood as a contextual and historical approach that attaches importance to accruing knowledge about authors' lives and the sociopolitical background of their literary works. In contrast, the latter is a type of 'evocation' that allows readers to interpret an author's ideas according to their own understanding. However, in actual interpretations, we find that although annotators adopt these two best-known approaches throughout the history of Chinese literary criticism, their contexts and subjective experiences have had differential effects on how readers understand Du Fu's work. Readers are aware that the ways in which annotators interpret Du Fu's poetry are closely related to the annotators' own life stories and thoughts, and they consider how all these aspects affect the annotators' understanding of Du Fu's poetry. Furthermore, although *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi*

<sup>1</sup> The phrase *yiyi nizhi* is widely known to have come from Mencius, 'Wan Zhang 1' 萬章上. See *Mengzi zhengyi*, *juan* 18: 638; Lau 2003: 201. The original passage on *zhiren lunshi* is from Mencius, 'Wan Zhang 2' 萬章下. See *Mengzi zhengyi*, *juan* 21: 725–726; Lau 2003: 237. In certain contexts, *zhiren lunshi* is expressed as '*lunshi zhiren*' 論世知人. Some prior translations of *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi* are as follows: 'knowing what kind of persons they were [...] therefore, one considers the age in which they lived' and 'use our understanding to trace it back to what was [originally] in the writer's mind' (Owen 1992: 24, 34); 'knowing the ancient by understanding the age in which one lives' and 'meeting the intention of the author with the idea of the text' (Lin 2008: 129).



*nizhi* are always considered to occur together and to be inseparable, annotators sometimes focus on only one of the two, perhaps as a matter of style or technique, and they occasionally use their personal preferences to distinguish between works. These editions all use *yiyi nizhi* (and *zhiren lunshi*) and even *yi Du zheng Du* 以杜證杜 ('to verify facts related to Du Fu through his poetry') in their practice of interpretation; however, only through a closer look at each work are different facets of this approach unveiled.

Closely related to the phrase *lunshi*, the term *shishi* 詩史 ('poetry-history') generally refers to 'narration',<sup>2</sup> 'current events', 'allusions', '*zhiren lunshi*', 'truthful records', and 'a variety of genres', among other definitions.<sup>3</sup> Another concept, *shishi huzheng* 詩史互證 ('inter-attestation of poetry and history'), emphasises that literary works and historical texts should be compared with each other and investigated. This method is arguably the greatest contribution of *Qian zhu Du shi*: Qian Qianyi used this method to supplement the inadequacy of history, correct mistakes in official histories, and discover Du Fu's thoughts in his poetry (Hao 2000: 83–102).

In light of the contexts and issues described above, this article focuses on the essential annotated editions of Du Fu's poetry produced between the late Ming and early Qing to further explore the literary and theoretical approaches used in studies of Du Fu's poetry. At the outset, this study recounts how Ji Hao developed a similarly intricate analysis while investigating Du Fu studies from the late Ming to early Qing. He explored the concept of *yiyi nizhi* by examining Du Fu's work through Jin Shengtan's 金聖嘆 (1608–1661) and Qian Qianyi's works—especially in his most recent study on the reception of Du Fu in imperial China. Ji Hao accounted for the application of *yiyi nizhi* in various editions of Du Fu's poetry by considering many annotators who demonstrated unique approaches to reading poetry based on their own life experiences. Hence, with respect to the editions annotated during the late Ming and early Qing periods, including *Du yi*, *Qian zhu Du shi*, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, *Du shi xiangzhu*, and *Du Du xinjie*, Ji Hao argues that the works are all products of a literary *yiyi nizhi* approach (Hao 2012; 2017; Motsch 2018: 218–220). To further develop Ji Hao's point, this article studies the practice of both *yiyi nizhi* and *zhiren lunshi* in the five editions mentioned above to explain the conscious competition and inheritance of ideas within Du Fu studies. This framing thus goes beyond the limitations presented by applying *yiyi nizhi* in terms of writers' life experiences and social backgrounds. In addition, this article furthers the contributions of previous research to the understanding of *zhiren lunshi* and/or *yiyi nizhi*. In exploring the work of Du Fu and the related interpretive approaches, these studies revealed a holistic picture of the role of either one or both principles in deciphering Du Fu's poetry and focused on the interpretive methods and guiding principles of certain editions.<sup>4</sup> However, this research must be supplemented by knowledge of the specific usages of *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi* and the dynamics of competition and one-upmanship between the different annotated editions using the same interpretative dogmas. In other words, to outline the phenomena in the annotations of Du Fu's poetry and determine the interrelation of these editions, this study first argues that while the historically recognised annotators' thoughts were theoretically underpinned by *zhiren lunshi* and/or *yiyi nizhi*, an even wider range of explanations and usages of these

<sup>2</sup> For the translation of 'poetry-history', see Yim 2005.

<sup>3</sup> *Shishi* is a complicated concept and underwent constantly evolution in imperial China. For different usages and meanings of this poetic term and the proliferation of its definitions, see Wong 2007: 189–220. For the concept of *shishi* as 'poetry as history' in the Ming–Qing transition, see Zhang 2012: 164–174.

<sup>4</sup> Xu 1994: 51–56; Chen 2005: 57–59, 61–88; Sun and Wang 2007: 27–30, 44; Zhang 2008: 67–72; Wu 2011; Tsai 2014: 95–130.



two crucial concepts can enrich our understanding of this twofold approach to Chinese poetic literature across time (Lin 2008: 109–130).

On the one hand, by examining the arbitrary use of these terms, the annotators tried to challenge previous annotators regarding the viewpoints they proposed. On the other hand, the annotators' arguments were constrained by prior discussions; hence, they strengthened the sense of the historicity of Du Fu's poetry and developed extreme perspectives on these annotated editions.

## 2. ANNOTATING DU FU'S POETRY: DEFINING THE 'RULES OF COMPETITION'

First, it can be argued that several scholars preceding the modern era annotated Du Fu's poetry based on their strong passion for poetics and their absorption in the world of poetry. Their passion enabled them to explore the life and world of the Poet-Sage and to develop a rich history and tradition around understanding Du Fu and his poetry—which eventually became an important component of Chinese studies. In the process, the annotators developed the idea of 'competition', that is, the 'enchantment' emerging from the process of competing with other annotators.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the approaches prescribed by the annotated editions helped form 'rules of competition'. As explained by Mo Lifeng, many Song literati agreed that Du Fu had 'read more than ten thousand volumes of books' (*dushu po wanjuan* 讀書破萬卷) and that, in his poetry, 'no word [Du Fu] used was without a source' (*wu yizi wu laichu* 無一字無來處). The annotators affirmed that they had to completely understand the words and phrases adopted by Du Fu, and they also argued that without having read the books that Du Fu's poetry touched on, one could not develop an accurate understanding or interpretation of his words. It is against this background that the notorious 'pseudo-Su [Su Shi, 蘇軾, 1037–1101] annotations' (*wei Su zhu* 偽蘇注) were written.<sup>6</sup> It can thus be deduced that the corollary concepts of *dushu po wanjuan*, or recalling and recounting volumes of books to match Du Fu's reading, and *wu yizi wu laichu*, matching every single word of Du Fu with a relevant source, contributed to the formulation of the 'rules of competition', together with *shishi*, beginning with the emergence of Du Fu studies in the Song period. The annotations of Du Fu's poetry in the Song dynasty on the one hand emphasise importance of facts and allusions and on the other hand include a considerable amount of forged material that affected later critics' and readers' understanding of Du Fu and his poetry. Therefore, the annotations have always emphasised the fallacies of the Song commentaries and then formed a 'consciousness of competition' with respect to commenting on Du Fu's poetry: there are problems with previous annotations, and annotators are thus able to establish their own academic significance for the

<sup>5</sup> This concept of 'competition' is inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004: 102–110): When the players totally engross themselves in the game, the meaning of the game can be conveyed and fully released. From the perspective of the game's essence, the subject of the 'play' is not the player but the game itself. The enchantment of 'play' draws the player into the game; however, this enchantment shows that the player relies on the game to a certain extent. Moreover, in games involving a contest, there is no single player involved because there is no true human opponent, but the player still has a virtual opponent to fight against. Gadamer further said that from the beginning of 'thinking to play', the players differentiate their behaviour from other behaviours and 'plays with serious possibilities'. Because of the idea that 'all playing is being-played', the player attracted by the game is not only drawn into the domain but is also infused with its spirit.

<sup>6</sup> Under the atmosphere of excessive belief in erudition and allusion, anonymous Song literati impersonated Su Shi, annotating Du Fu's poetry with the intention of proving that all of Du Fu's words and phrases were allusions and quotations. See Mo 2007: 37–39.



greatest poet of China by denying previous annotations. In fact, the sense of competition in Du Fu studies came into being at most the same time the viewpoints of previous scholars were being consolidated.

Later generations raised questions about and criticised the problems arising from these concepts, and they intensely criticised this direction of research. For instance, Qian Qianyi's emphasis in his *Qian zhu Du shi* was related to the flaws found in Du Fu studies in the Song dynasty. He noted that 'pseudo-Su annotations' made mistakes in 'impersonating the ancients' (*weituoguren* 偽託古人) and 'counterfeiting the allusions' (*weizao gushi* 偽造故事). Furthermore, he claimed that an overemphasis on allusions and literary quotations had a negative effect and asserted that 'the Song people explained Du's poetry in such a way that every word and every sentence had metaphor and implication' (宋人解杜詩，一字一句，皆有比託; 'Zhu Du shi lüeli': 2–4). Thus, Qian Qianyi believed that very few annotated editions deserved to be handed down to future generations. Therefore, late Ming to early Qing annotators believed that the study of Du Fu needed to be polished or even renewed.

Reinstating the interpretive strategies of *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi* allows the dialogue between these strategies for analysing Du Fu's poetry to be further explored. The Song commentators on Du Fu did not explicitly state their authors' views regarding the principles of *zhiren lunshi* and/or *yiyi nizhi*, although there were discourses that struck a similar tone; Hu Zongyu 胡宗愈 (1029–1094), for example, connected *lunshi* and *shishi* as the effect of reading Du Fu's poetry: by 'reading [Du Fu's poetry, we] may know the age. Scholars and senior officials call it *shishi*' (讀之，可以知其世。學士大夫，謂之詩史; 'Chengdu xin ke caotang xiansheng shibeixu': 2243). In addition, the critics' emphasis on the chronicles and facts of Du Fu's poetry indicates that *zhiren lunshi* is essential in studying the Poet-Sage. Both strategies were mentioned by Wang Sishi and other influential annotators as their approach to understanding Du Fu's poetry. Lin Wei-chieh 林維杰 noted that critics would first outline their textual interpretations of the verses as a means of grasping the gist of the poem and then deepen their understanding of the significance of the work by considering the author's historical context; this approach is guided by *lunshi* ('considering the age') and aims to allow readers to relate to the intentions of the writer (Lin 2008: 125–127). Additionally, Tsai Chih-Chao 蔡志超 (2014: 116–125) insisted that Du Fu's annotators had arranged his poetry in chronological order and then compiled a chronicle of Du Fu; this approach supposedly exemplified the idea of *zhiren lunshi*. In contrast, general readers typically regard the poetic techniques of Du Fu's work as a major factor in determining their subject position, an example of *yiyi nizhi*. Tsai Chih-Chao further noted that some annotators regarded the two concepts (and often referred to both) as one, while some focused more on *yiyi nizhi* and less on *zhiren lunshi*.

*Du yi*, 'the most inventive' annotated edition of Du Fu's poetry mentioned by Qiu Zhao'ao ('Du shi fanli': 24), clearly states that the principles of *yiyi nizhi* and *zhiren lunshi* should be applied when reading Du Fu's poetry and that annotators should be allowed to correct mistakes made by their predecessors; in fact, *yiyi nizhi* is the origin of the title of *Du yi*:

This book is drafted and named *yi*. *Yi* means thought. *Yiyi nizhi* is the method of reading poetry by Mencius. By reciting the author's poetry, discussing the age in which the author lived, and inferring the author's intention [through sympathetic reading], much of the confusion accumulated in the past has been defined and explained, and many of the mistakes





and confusion of the earlier people have been rectified. [I] regret that [I] could not revive Shaoling [Du Fu] from the netherworld and ask him.

草成而命名曰《臆》，臆者，意也。「以意逆志」，孟子讀詩法也。誦其詩，論其世，而逆以意，向來積疑，多所披豁，前人謬迷，多所駁正，恨不起少陵於九京而問之。

(‘*Du yi yuanshi*’: 1–2; Hao 2017: 141)

For Wang Sishi, *yiyi nizhi* serves as the guiding principle of the book; *zhiren lunshi* follows in harmony, reminiscent of the classic phrase ‘reciting the author’s poetry, discussing the age in which the author lived’. Wang Sishi believed that the two dogmas were the only way to approach the Poet-Sage. In commenting on ‘Kuzhu’ 苦竹 (‘Bitter Bamboos’),<sup>7</sup> Wang Sishi intentionally recalls the importance of *zhiren lunshi*, claiming that ‘comments from others do not grasp the main point, so that [one should] discuss the age in which the author lived when reciting his poetry’ (評語皆隔靴爬癢，所以頌其詩當論其世也; *Du yi*, *juan* 3: 94).

In addition to Wang Sishi, Pu Qilong is renowned for applying *yiyi nizhi* in *Du Du xinjie*. As this title implies, Pu Qilong studied Du Fu’s poetry through previous annotations but failed to reach a satisfactory understanding of it. Hence, he adopted a more direct reading strategy based on *yiyi nizhi* to achieve successful results. The beginning of the preface explains his approach in his reading strategies:

In my ten-year reading of Du Fu, I sought Du Fu from his poetry and yet found it difficult to grasp; I sought Du Fu from Du Fu’s poetry with commentaries by hundreds of commentators and yet felt it even harder to grasp. Hence, I use my mind to seek communion with Du Fu’s mind. My mind silently goes out, and Du Fu’s mind actively comes forth. They encounter each other at a nonexistent place out of which my interpretations emerge.

吾讀杜十年，索杜於杜，弗得；索杜於百氏詮釋之杜，愈益弗得。既乃攝吾之心印杜之心，吾之心悶悶然而往，杜之心活活然而來，邂逅於無何有之鄉，而吾之解出焉。

(‘*Fafan*’: 5; Hao 2017: 149)

As a reader and a critic, Pu Qilong emphasised that neither the information from Du Fu nor the commentaries by annotators were reliable; rather, he affirmed that studying Du Fu’s poetry with a receptive approach was more appropriate, thus indicating that his method was actually rooted in *yiyi nizhi*. Pu Qilong also includes a chronology of Du Fu’s life and poetry to ‘revert to the true face of *shishi* [“poet-historian”]’ (還詩史之面目). Pu Qilong further questions the credibility of official histories (*zhengshi* 正史):

‘When one recites the poems and reads the books of the past, can it be appropriate not to know something about the person? Hence, one tries to understand the age in which they lived.’ Shaoling’s poetry is from one man’s nature and feelings encountering the events of three reigns [of the Tang dynasty, i.e., the reigns of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (Li Longji 李隆基, 685–762, r. 713–756), Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (Li Heng 李亨, 711–762, r. 756–762), and Emperor Daizong 代宗 (Li Yue 李豫, 726–779, r. 762–779)]. For the biographies of

<sup>7</sup> The translations of the lines and titles in Du Fu’s poetry in this article are according to Owen 2015.



Du Fu in the new and old *Tangshu* [‘The Books of the Tang’], the material is not carefully chosen, and the language is not clear enough.

「頌其詩，讀其書，不知其人可乎？是以論其世也。」少陵之詩，一人之性情而三朝之事會寄焉者也。《新、舊書》本傳，擇焉不精，語焉不詳。

(‘Shaoling biannian shi mupu’: 60; Lau 2003: 237)

In fact, although annotators were not satisfied with the biographies of Du Fu written in the two *Tangshu*, the official histories were still regarded as essential readings that should be given priority at the beginning of annotated editions.

Unlike Pu Qilong, Qian Qianyi and Zhu Heling did not emphasise the concept of *yiyi nizhi*. Qian Qianyi’s intentions in annotating Du Fu’s poetry are clearly indicated in the preface: ‘[I] vigorously corrected the errors of pseudo-annotations and the confusion of the previous annotations’ (偽注之紕繆，舊注之踳駁者，痛加繩削). He also emphasises that he ‘occasionally offered interpretations of the meaning of sentences and phrases’ (文句字義，間有詮釋; ‘Caotang shijian yuanben xu’: 3). *Qian zhu Du shi*’s method of *shishi huzheng* is the most notable to researchers.<sup>8</sup> The historical aspect of Du Fu’s poetry is highlighted by Qian Qianyi and can be considered his version of *zhiren lunshi*. Zhu Heling also notes that poetry can be either fully explained or not explained at all. Furthermore, poetry will be misunderstood if annotators offer inadequate explanations. As some annotations of Du Fu’s poetry gave rise to many misinterpretations and problems, Zhu Heling decides to correct previous mistakes by assessing and confirming the factual basis of the writings instead (‘Jizhu Du Gongbu ji xu’: 5).

In the reader’s guide to his work, Zhu Heling further illustrates his strategy of interpreting Du Fu and his poetry. As a general principle, Zhu Heling considered the interpretations of historical events, the origin of the citations, and the authenticity of the material in formulating a more objective approach to his annotations. The interpretation of Du Fu’s text and the annotator’s reading experience are clearly not the research focus of *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* (‘Jizhu Du Gongbu ji fanli’: 22). While Zhu Heling’s research methods were based on the concept of *zhiren lunshi*, his perspective was completely different from Qian Qianyi’s. For example, Qian Qianyi believed that in ‘Xi bingma’ 洗兵馬 (‘Washing the Weapons and Horses: [a Ballad]’), the use of sarcastic phrases in the poem seems to diverge from *zhiren lunshi*—and *yiyi nizhi*, for that matter—thus inciting some expected controversy. Qian Qianyi states that the work satirises Emperor Suzong, who did not fulfil his filial obligations to his father, Emperor Xuanzong, and did not trust his father’s virtuous officials to achieve peace and prosperity for the country (Hao 2000: 66–67; Hu 2003: 51; Owen 2015, ‘Book 6’: 74). Hao Runhua 郝潤華 claimed that Qian Qianyi pushed this argument too far, but in doing so, he nevertheless offered insights for later scholars (Hao 2000: 59–68). Although Zhu Heling includes some of Qian Qianyi’s commentaries on ‘Xi bingma’, he does not quote the passage that ‘satiris[es] Emperor Suzong’ in *Qian zhu Du shi* or discuss the subject matter of ‘Xi bingma’ based on historical records (*Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, *juan* 5: 183). Qian Qianyi’s and Zhu Heling’s approaches to annotation are both based on the concept of *zhiren lunshi* but yield different results.

<sup>8</sup> Prior studies point out Qian Qianyi’s focus on explaining the relationship between historical facts and poetry, see Hao 2000.





Among the aforementioned important annotated editions, Qiu Zhao'ao's *Du shi xiangzhu* also follows *zhiren lunshi*; he considers this concept a means of revealing the myth and significance of Du Fu's poetry:

His composition of poems has the fact of poetry and has the root of poetry. Mencius said of poetry, 'When one recites the poems and reads the books of the past, can it be appropriate not to know something about them? Hence, one tries to understand the age in which they lived.' Poetry is about the fortune of the dynasty, and is this not the fact of poetry? Confucius has made a point on poetry and said, 'Gentle and sincere, as *Shi[jing]* ['Classic of Poetry'] teaches.' Also he said, '[Poetry] may stimulate the imagination, endow one with breeding, enable one to live in a community, and give expression to grievances. Inside the family, there is the serving of one's father; outside, there is the serving of one's lord.' Poetry is about the disposition and human relations, and are these not the root of poetry? Hence, when the Song people discussed the poetry, they called Du the *shishi*, saying that from his poetry, one can grasp the principle of 'considering the age to get to know the person.' When the Ming people discussed the poetry, they praised Du the Poet-Sage, saying he attained glory by writing about loyalty, providing a role model for ten thousand generations.

蓋其為詩也，有詩之實焉，有詩之本焉。孟子之論詩曰：「頌其詩，讀其書，不知其人，可乎？是以論其世也。」詩有關於世運，非作詩之實乎。孔子之論詩曰：「溫柔敦厚，詩之教也。」又曰：「可以興觀羣怨，邇事父而遠事君。」詩有關於性情倫紀，非作詩之本乎。故宋人之論詩者，稱杜為詩史，謂得其詩可以論世知人也。明人之論詩者，推杜為詩聖，謂其立言忠厚，可以垂教萬世也。（'Yuanxu': 1; Lau 2003: 237; Lau 2002: 175)

One can see that Qiu Zhao'ao's writing context is informed by *zhiren lunshi*, specifically with reference to the tradition of *shijiao* 詩教 ('civilisation through *Shijing*'). In other words, any poetic composition is arguably a product of the context from which it emerged; it is not only an account of the poet's own subjective position but also a reflection of his community (i.e., *shishi*) and integrity (i.e., Poet-Sage). To illustrate the difference between the annotators' perspectives, one can look at 'Xiari xiaoyuan san bing jiang zhong qiucan du qin gengniu jian shu chumu' 暇日小園散病將種秋菜督勤耕牛兼書觸目 ('On a Day Off in My Small Garden Exercising for My Health, About to Plant Autumn Vegetables, I Superintend the Plow Oxen and Write What I See'), a poem written around 767, which can reflect the different shades of meaning in the annotators' eyes. In this piece, the author states that it is better to be a civilian than to be an official to pursue his true temperament: 'I don't love going to the prefectural seat, / I dread that people will despise my honest nature' (不愛入州府，畏人嫌我真; *Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 19: 1669; Owen 2015, 'Book 19': 159). While Wang Sishi and Pu Qilong praise the poem 'admiring the Elder Master for writing this' (服此老能寫得出; *Du yi*, *juan* 9: 308) and 'wonderful, wonderful' (妙絕妙絕; *Du Du xin jie*, *juan* 1e: 179) for depicting the author's personal conditions, Qian Qianyi, Zhu Heling and Qiu Zhao'ao, the annotators who emphasise *zhiren lunshi*, focus on the allusion and the techniques the poem uses (*Qian zhu Du shi*, *juan* 6: 199; *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, *juan* 16: 640; *Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 19: 1669–1670) instead of describing their own reading. Since Qiu Zhao'ao follows his own preference in interpreting *zhiren lunshi* as a method emphasising cultural tradition, it is not surprising that his view of poetic metaphor focuses mainly on loyalty and filial piety:



Even minor things such as a bird, a beast, grass, and a tree [in Du Fu's poetry], all these are deeply concerned with the righteousness of loyalty and filial piety and are not similar to others' competition in words and sentences that they can be compared. And so for the one who annotates Du's poetry, he must dig in, back and forth repeatedly, to find out the themes, and then carefully scrutinise again and again, so that he may get the author's intention from thousands of years ago, as if experiencing the age in person, meeting the person face to face, and lamenting with endless sadness, and grieving with endless thought.

即一鳥獸草木之微，動皆切於忠孝大義，非他人之爭工字句者，所可同日語矣。是故註杜者必反覆沉潛，求其歸宿所在，又從而句櫛字比之，庶幾得作者苦心於千百年之上，恍然如身歷其世，面接其人，而慨乎有餘悲，愴乎有餘思也。

(‘Yuanxu’: 2)

When considering the principles underpinning prior annotations of Du Fu's poetry, some scholars may insist that the two concepts are necessary reading strategies. Regardless of how the two concepts are categorised, we can observe that annotators had diverse opinions about them and hence developed different and unique viewpoints. For example, Qiu Zhao'ao sought to uphold *zhiren lunshi*. He put enormous effort into identifying the allusions in Du Fu's poetry and enumerated all of these in his annotation. According to Qiu Zhao'ao's annotation, 'Xi bingma' is characterised mainly by allusions, poetic structures, and historical facts, which Qiu Zhao'ao identifies as referring to *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 ('The Book of Later Han'), writings by Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (Xiao Yan 蕭衍, 464–549, r. 502–549), and *Shijing*, to name a few; these allusions include the phrases 'restoration' (*zhongxing* 中興), 'the letter of victory' (*jieshu* 捷書), 'a single reed' (*yiwei* 一葦) in the poem (*Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 6: 514–516; Owen 2015, 'Book 6': 75), as identified by following *zhiren lunshi*. This extreme approach was never previously followed in Du Fu studies. Additionally, even more intriguing is the fact that *Du yi* focuses on the concept of *yiyi nizhi* (rather than *zhiren lunshi*); however, even Qiu Zhao'ao saw *Du yi* as the 'most inventive' annotation of Du Fu's poetry due to the way it foregrounds the reader's relationship with the text. Scholars believe that Qian Qianyi, Zhu Heling, Jin Shengtian, Zhang Jin 張潛 (1621–1678), and Pu Qilong all practiced *yiyi nizhi* in developing their annotations (Chen 2005: 61–88; Hao 2017: 141). In fact, in his explanations of 'Xi bingma', Pu Qilong criticises Zhu Heling's and Qian Qianyi's views and claims that both of their commentaries are incorrect. He further points out, using strong words, that the poem not only is from Emperor Suzong but is also a reflection from Emperor Daizong (*Du Du xinjie*, *juan* 2a: 258–259). We can conclude that the two 'principles' are not only more like one principle with two sides but also flexible interpretive reading strategies that annotators have applied arbitrarily.

Prior annotators suggested that the interpretation of *yiyi nizhi* paid relatively little attention to the concept of *zhiren lunshi* in order to allow the 'competitors' to believe that they could develop more valuable breakthroughs in their exegeses by 'annotating Du Fu's poetry as a "competition"' (see Gadamer 2004: 102–110). Sun Wei 孫微 and Wang Xinfang 王新芳 noted that as strained interpretations in past readings had severely affected how readers understood Du Fu's poetry, annotators hoped to return to the right track by any means. For instance, a few 'annotated editions' produced in the Ming dynasty kept only the original text and omitted comments and explanations. For Chen Rulun 陳如綸 (1499–1552), the editor of *Du lü* 杜律 ('Du's Regulated Verses'), *yiyi nizhi* proved to be the driving force that led him to publish only the plain text. Readers could



appreciate Du Fu's poetry and obtain results simply by following their own feelings; thus, from this perspective, there was no need for annotations (Sun and Wang 2007: 27–29). Chen Rulun was not alone in this viewpoint; Yan Ruoqu 閻若璩 (1636–1704) shared similar thoughts in his preface to Zhang Jin's *Dushutang Du Gongbu shiwenji zhujie* 讀書堂杜工部詩文集註解 (Annotations and Explanations of the Poetry and Prose Collection of Du of the Ministry of Works from the Reading Hall'), in which he also describes 'chanting the plain text' (*fengyong baiwen* 諷詠白文) as the practice of *yiyi nizhi* ('Daoguang ershiyinian Zhang Jian chongkeben xu': 5; Sun and Wang 2007: 29). 'Chanting the plain text' was actually a method for reading *Shijing* proposed by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). He doubted the reliability of 'Shi xu' 詩序 ('Introduction to *Shijing*') and suggested that readers should read the original text repeatedly to grasp the meaning of the poetry in *Shijing* (Yang 1998: 329). Yan Ruoqu may have had faith in 'chanting the plain text' because this approach proved to be a good accompaniment to *yiyi nizhi*. For example, immediately after this citation, the essay asks, 'How can we understand the meaning without grasping the fact?' (世有不得其事，而能通其義乎) to justify the addition of annotations of allusions and background information ('Daoguang ershiyinian Zhang Jian chongkeben xu': 6). On the one hand, we again find that *yiyi nizhi* and *zhiren lunshi* are two sides of the same coin, and on the other hand, both Chen Rulun's and Yan Ruoqu's versions of *yiyi nizhi* shift the emphasis from the readers per se to the 'annotations' readers'.

In addition to comply with the 'enchantment' and 'rules of competition', annotators were not satisfied with the prior interpretations of Du Fu's poetry; this dissatisfaction informed their research purposes, as observed in their confrontations with the initiators of those interpretations. Annotators frequently raised two major points of critique against the annotations in and explanations of the annotated editions. For example, Wang Sishi admits that for him, new interpretations of Du Fu arise every time he reads Du Fu's poems:

I have been enjoying reading Du's poetry since my early years, and because of my involvement in practical writing for public examinations, I could not complete [my reading] in an orderly manner. In the mourning period following my father's funeral in 1609, I was able to undertake a close reading of the whole collection. I was quite enlightened by reading [the poems] one by one. Afterwards, every time I read them, there is a new scene, and the further I read, the more subtle I feel[.]

余自蚤歲喜閱杜詩，而牽於舉業，未能卒其亂。至己酉居先君憂，始得細閱一過。隨覆閱之，頗有所悟。嗣後每一閱之，別是一番光景，轉閱轉妙[。]

('Du shi jianxuan jixu': 2)

Wang Sishi relates that when rereading Du Fu's work, he finds that the writings are naturally special and unique, and he understands Du Fu's poetry from his own experience. Thus, today, we can say that his awareness of these varying interpretations might be the very reason Wang Sishi wrote *Du yi*, which emphasises *yiyi nizhi* more than *zhiren lunshi*.

The common trend in these annotated editions is that they raise the question of the reliability of previous commentaries from the standpoint of *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi*, leading to the 'competition' of annotating the poetry of the most essential poet in all of Chinese history. Because of the status of the Poet-Sage and the rich tradition of Du Fu studies, later annotators felt an urgent



need to establish their own perspectives among and against those of other scholars.<sup>9</sup> *Qian zhu Du shi* is the work that was most strongly opposed by previous annotators. In its preface, Qian Qianyi clearly states that he hopes to correct the errors of the previous annotations, although he also praises his own contributions as, in Qian Ceng's 錢曾 (1629–1701) words, 'chisel[ing] the chaos and hand wash[ing] the sun and the moon, so that it should be strongly praised and made clear to ten thousand generations' (鑿開鴻蒙，手洗日月，當大書特書，昭揭萬世; 'Caotang shijian yuanben xu': 4; Owen 2015, 'Book 2': 58; 'Book 16': 232; 'Book 16': 247). However, later commentators, including Pu Qilong and other critics, repeatedly questioned Qian Qianyi's commentary, particularly its discussion of 'Xi bingma', which shows that Qian Qianyi's annotations were unconventional.

The academic debate between Qian Qianyi and Zhu Heling is arguably the best example of the 'consciousness of opposition'. According to Mo Lifeng, Qian Qianyi initially wanted to work with Zhu Heling to complete the draft of *Qian zhu Du shi*, but their perspectives on the subject matter were different; thus, the two pursued their own studies while viewing each other as competitors. Scholars have generally admitted that both Qian Qianyi's and Zhu Heling's annotations were highly academically meritorious as a result of their debates during their Du Fu studies (Mo 2007: 108–112).

In exploring the remaining annotated editions written by Qiu Zhao'ao and Pu Qilong, we not only discovered how one was influenced by the other but also unearthed their competitive spirit. Qiu Zhao'ao's voluminous annotations clearly aim to promote *zhiren lunshi* as an approach to Du Fu's poetry; thus, Qiu Zhao'ao spent decades identifying the work's allusions and the related citations that Du Fu (might have) used. Of the two approaches of 'explaining the meaning' (*jieyi* 解意) and 'quoting the ancient texts' (*yingu* 引古), Qiu Zhao'ao's annotations are much more inclined towards the latter, and most of *Du shi xiangzhu* is devoted this approach. In contrast to Qiu Zhao'ao's point of view, Pu Qilong did not find the previous annotations satisfactory for understanding Du Fu's poetry, and he relied only on his personal feelings to build a true understanding of Du Fu. Pu Qilong was greatly influenced by Qiu Zhao'ao's contributions, but he sometimes criticised the latter's viewpoints in *Du shi xiangzhu*. For instance, with regard to 'Zi jing fu Fengxian xian yonghuai wubaizi' 自京赴奉先縣詠懷五百字 ('Singing My Feelings in Five Hundred Characters While Going from the Capital to Fengxian County'), Pu Qilong posits, 'This is a long piece in the beginning of the collection, and it shows Lao Du's [Senior Du's] great talent throughout his whole life. Readers have to read it with passion and effort and should not divide it into many parts, as in Zhu's and Qiu's editions. The whole piece has only three major sections' (是為集中開頭大文章，老杜平生大本領。須用一片大魄力讀去，斷不宜如朱、仇諸本，瑣瑣分裂。通篇只是三大段; *Du Du xinjie*, *juan* 1a: 23; Owen 2015, 'Book 4': 208). Zhu Heling and Qiu Zhao'ao divide the whole piece into several paragraphs and insert annotations within the text; Pu Qilong explicitly rejects their 'segmented reading' of Du Fu's long poem and offers a close reading according to his own reading experience. We can thus conclude that during the process of writing annotations and interpretations of Du Fu's poetry, scholars from the late Ming to early Qing insisted on similar rules of the game; while they are basically consistent in using the two principles throughout their own annotations, they still continually reject the views

<sup>9</sup> Harold Bloom's (1980) concept of 'misreading' explains that later generations of authors both respond to and confront the previous generation of writers. This can be aptly applied to the phenomenon of competition among annotators.



of previous scholars. This denial of the validity of previous annotations and the discrepancies among their understandings of the principles, especially in the case of the *zhiren lunshi* of Qian Qianyi, Zhu Heling and Qiu Zhao'ao, highlight their 'consciousness of competition'.

### 3. POET-SAGE, SHISHI, AND THE SENSE OF HISTORICITY

Before the Qing dynasty, Du Fu, as the Poet-Sage, and his work had undergone more than a thousand years of canonisation, and Song critics reinforced Du Fu's already formidable reputation as a figure loyal to the empire and asserted his immortal status in the field of literature. However, Song studies of Du Fu's poetry also created pseudo-Su annotations that were criticised by late Ming to early Qing scholars. During this period, Du Fu specialists conformed to the strong tradition of annotating poetry, but they rejected the assumptions of their predecessors, i.e., that 'no word [Du Fu] used is without a source' and the Song pseudo-annotations.<sup>10</sup>

In accordance with the above assumptions, Wang Sishi's introduction to *Du yi* quotes Han Yu's 韓愈 (768–824) famous poetic lines: 'The works of Li [Bai 李白 (701–762)] and Du [Fu] are alive, the light is so bright that its length goes for ten thousand *zhang*' (李杜文章在，光燄萬丈長). In doing so, he confirms Du Fu's unshakable status within the field of poetry. He also criticises the Song plagiarism of Du Fu's poetry, praising his status as 'an aggregator [of different styles] and achiever of great accomplishments' (*jidacheng* 集大成; 'Du shi jianxuan jiuxu': 1–2). In contrast to Wang Sishi, Zhu Heling first noted how important the acquisition of profound knowledge was for annotating Du Fu's poetry, and his viewpoint could be construed as more inclined towards historical facts, allusions, and *shishi*:

And do you know there are some poems that can be explained while others cannot? While narrating and expressing feelings and while the meaning contains allegory, [a poem] can actually be explained. [On the other hand,] while expressing feelings through things and images and while the affection is triggered accidentally, [a poem] cannot be explained.

且子亦知詩有可解、有不可解乎？指事陳情，意含風喻，此可解者也；托物假像，興會適然，此不可解者也。

('Jizhu Du Gongbu ji xu': 4)

After proposing the notions of 'explicable' and 'inexplicable', Zhu Heling insists on the failure of the annotations: 'what cannot be explained is explained unconvincingly' (*bu ke jie er qiang jie* 不可解而強解), and 'what can be explained is explained unsatisfactorily' (*ke jie er bu shan jie* 可解而不善解; 'Jizhu Du Gongbu ji xu': 4). Some poetic lines in Du Fu's poetry could easily lead to a misunderstanding among readers, and it has been deemed inappropriate to provide explanations based on personal feelings. Zhu Heling's annotations were greatly influenced by the idea of discussing Du Fu's poetry based on erudition, and his work is therefore more oriented towards *zhiren lunshi* and *shishi*.

In contrast to Zhu Heling, Pu Qilong makes it clear in the introduction to *Du Du xinjie* that 'the forms of "annotation" and "explanation" are different: annotations are related to fact and diction, while explanations are related to spirit. Spirit is obtained from fact and diction, while

<sup>10</sup> This section is informed by Gadamer's (2004: 268–306) insights on 'prejudice' and the 'fusion of horizons'.





fact and diction rely on spirit' (注與解體各不同：注者其事辭，解者其神吻也。神吻由事辭而出，事辭以神吻為準)。Furthermore, he supports the idea that Du Fu's poetry should be explained: 'Shaoling's poetry cannot be without annotations, and cannot be without explanations' (少陵詩不可無注，並不可無解)。In effect, Pu Qilong criticises the Song annotations and even presents the idea that recent explanations are the source of disastrous misinterpretations ('Fafan': 5–6). While *Qian zhu Du shi*, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* and *Du shi xiangzhu* focus on *zhiren lunshi*, (part of) *Du yi* and *Du Du xinjie* emphasise *yiyi nizhi*. According to the above annotated editions, 'annotation', more related to *zhiren lunshi*, is the text that illustrates facts, and allusions appear in Du Fu's poetry, whereas 'explanation', the form that Pu Qilong's *yiyi nizhi* takes, offers the annotator's own elucidation and even personal feelings.

What, then, is emphasised in Pu Qilong's 'explanations'? He claims that the standards of previous annotations and explanations have been of mixed quality, hence the necessity of writing *Du Du xinjie*. In the text, this claim is immediately followed by the adoption of a traditional ethical perspective to explore the themes in Du Fu's poetry, although his critique of the 'achievement' of Qian Qianyi's *shishi huzheng* method remains:

Lao Du was born sincere and with the most ethical standards. His poetry touched upon the relationships of lord and official, father and son, older and younger brothers, husband and wife, and between friends, all from his absolute sincerity, especially mentioning lords and officials. Yushan [Qian Qianyi] is disrespectful when he talks about the late integrity of Emperor Ming [Emperor Xuanzong], how Emperor Suzong kept himself from his father-lord, and how Prince Guangping [Emperor Daizong] served as the crown prince and other historical events; for all these, he uses his private judgement and old habits to figure out and eliminate the loophole, so that is why his edition is disordered, and his comments overly condemn the historical figures.

老杜天姿醇厚，倫理最篤。詩凡涉君臣、父子、兄弟、夫婦、朋友之間，都從一副血誠流出，而語及君臣者尤多。虞山輕薄人，每及明皇晚節、肅宗內蔽、廣平居儲諸事跡，率以私智結習，揣量周內，因之編次失倫，指斥過當。

('Fafan': 6)

Pu Qilong is very negative regarding Qian Qianyi's perspective on and assumptions about various rulers, and his annotations also refute the assertions of scholars who criticise the Poet-Sage. Thus, Pu Qilong believes that Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488–1559), and Tan Yuan-chun 譚元春 (1586–1637) are not worthy of attention, and he further emphasises their naïveté and insignificance ('Fafan': 10). In commenting on previous annotations, he argues that the annotators' own arguments are subjective expressions of their personal points of view rather than objective analyses. 'Du Du tigan' 讀杜提綱 ('The Outline for Reading Du') further elucidates Pu Qilong's feelings towards Du Fu. Pu Qilong is sympathetic towards Du Fu's fate, and he opposes the idea of naming Du Fu's collection the 'Thatched Cottage' (*caotang* 草堂) because this was only his temporary lodging during a difficult time. Nevertheless, Du Fu had remained loyal to the emperor and faithful to his country, and according to Pu Qilong, the concepts of lord and official reflected in Du Fu's poetry are consistent with the traditional value of *yuan er bu nu* 怨而不怒 ('resentment but not anger'). Furthermore, Pu Qilong believes that Du Fu's poetry offers a better reflection of the zeitgeist than existing historical records do and that his literary contributions might even have helped enlighten and educate readers ('Du Du tigan': 62–63). Perceiving Du Fu





as the Poet-Sage is indeed the ‘preconceived idea’ of Du Fu studies; Pu Qilong’s own explanations of *yiyi nizhi* are obviously developed based on this preconceived idea.

From the point of view of literary history, Qiu Zhao’ao’s *Du shi xiangzhu* should be considered the annotated edition that collected the most complete information (see Wu 2011: 276–288), and this is why it was historically regarded as the most valuable. In addition to the information and literature he provides, Qiu Zhao’ao also sheds light on the discussion of Du Fu’s emotions and personality, and this approach constitutes the reading style and the theme of *Du shi xiangzhu*. The annotator describes Du Fu’s excellent personality, including ‘Shaoling’s great integrity’ (*Shaoling dajie* 少陵大節) and ‘Shaoling’s generous mind’ (*Shaoling kuanghuai* 少陵曠懷), making it the focus of the introduction of *Du shi xiangzhu*. In the first example of these traits, Qiu Zhao’ao praises the Poet-Sage’s conduct in defending Fang Guan 房琯 (696–763) despite his defeat during the period of 756–757: after the outbreak of the An Lushan 安祿山 Rebellion (755–763), Fang Guan volunteered to lead the government army to recover the capital, Chang’an 長安, but was defeated by the rebels.<sup>11</sup> In the second example, with regard to the similar status ascribed to Li Bai and Du Fu, Qiu Zhao’ao opines that ‘Taibai [Li Bai] is unrestrained and out of control, and Shaoling is unrestrained and pure’ (太白狂而肆，少陵狂而簡). He even suggests that the criticism of Du Fu’s personality in official histories, which describes him as ‘improperly familiar and unruly in conduct with the local junior official and the village people, who are all unrestrained’ (與田峻野老相狎蕩，無拘檢), is excessively harsh. Qiu Zhao’ao comments that this description ‘has the implication of disdaining everything and teasing disrespectfully’ (有傲睨一切、侮玩不恭之意; *Jiu Tangshu*, *juan* 190: 5054–5055; ‘Du shi fanli’: 25).

This interpretation echoes other previously mentioned interpretations. Although the biographies of Du Fu in the two *Tangshu* are essential to all the annotated editions, the annotators recognised that the biographies contain myriad factual and evaluative mistakes regarding the poet and his personality. Thus, the annotators considered Du Fu’s poetry as a reliable and authoritative source. Many works of Du Fu scholars, for example, *Du Fu zhuan* 杜甫傳 (‘The Biography of Du Fu’) by Feng Zhi 馮至 (1905–1993), raise doubts about the fact that Du Fu saw Fang Guan’s good side only and neglected to acknowledge the tactical error that led to his defeat. Moreover, in other Song documents, Du Fu’s words defending Fang Guan are perceived as ridiculous (‘the words are exaggerated and absurd’ [*cizhi yudan* 詞旨迂誕]), although this is not reflected in the annotators’ perspectives (see Wong 2014: 67–97). We can see in the annotations of Du Fu’s poetry that regardless of whether the guiding dogma was *zhiren lunshi* or *yiyi nizhi*, the annotators’ viewpoints were affected or even limited by assumptions based on their understanding of prior literature and annotations.

Therefore, the annotated editions of Du Fu’s poetry strongly emphasise a sense of historical consciousness. The prior interpretations of Du Fu’s poetry, including *Qian zhu Du shi* and *Du shi xiangzhu*, are largely based on ‘historicism’; however, the validity of such an ideology depends on the idea that ‘Du Fu’s poetry is more reliable than the (official) history (as interpreted by the annotators)’. This is why many critics believed that Du Fu’s poetry, as history, was more reliable than historical records. Song scholars were inclined to conduct their studies on the Poet-Sage from the perspective that ‘no word [Du Fu] used is without a source’; famous annotators from the

<sup>11</sup> Fang Guan knew Du Fu when they were civilians. In addition to being defeated, Fang Guan had a minion, Dong Tinglan 董庭蘭 (695–765), who relied on Fang Guan’s power and status from taking bribes. Fang Guan was thus impeached and demoted. See *Jiu Tangshu*, *juan* 111: 3320–3321.



late Ming to early Qing had similar ideas of ‘historicism’, and the two different approaches of *Qian zhu Du shi* and *Du shi xiangzhu* offer the most discursive value in this respect.

According to scholars, Qian Qianyi’s Du Fu studies can be categorised into a first phase, represented by ‘Du Du xiaojian’ 讀杜小箋 (‘A Brief Note on Reading Du’) and ‘Du Du erjian’ 讀杜二箋 (‘The Second Note on Reading Du’), and a second phase, represented by *Qian zhu Du shi*, which arose after the collapse of the Ming dynasty. Qian Qianyi emphasised the relationship between his life and his interpretation of Du Fu’s poetry, and his interpretations are inseparable from the literary context of the late Ming and early Qing. Indeed, in his early Du Fu studies, Qian Qianyi uses Du Fu’s poetry as a device to imply defeat in factional struggles. Qian Qianyi was dismissed from the political centre as Fang Guan was; thus, his interpretation of ‘Xi bingma’ somewhat emphasises the criticisms of Emperor Suzong and conflicts in the royal court. In the later stage of his life, Qian Qianyi regarded annotating Du Fu’s poetry as a method of positioning himself within the history of Chinese poetry. Qian Qianyi’s Du Fu studies constitute a show of loyalty to the Ming royal family. Although *Qian zhu Du shi* was an updated compilation of ‘Du Du xiaojian’ and ‘Du Du erjian’, Qian Qianyi removed discussions of Du Fu’s art of poetry from the latter to mitigate the subjective nature of the commentary and to demonstrate reading in a broader sense. The academic debate between Qian Qianyi and Zhu Heling and the rule of the Qing dynasty had some impact on the content of *Qian zhu Du shi*. Qian Qianyi’s arguments are sometimes opposed to Zhu Heling’s insights, as Qian Qianyi also sought to prove his loyalty to the Ming through his contributions to Du Fu’s classics. For example, in his explanation of the fourth poem of ‘Qiuxing bashou’ 秋興八首 (‘Stirred by Autumn’), he remarks that Du Fu was looking to restore the capital and not only to lament his own situation—factors that could be read as supporting the restoration of the Ming dynasty (Hao 2012: 124–199; Hao 2017: 173–205; Owen 2015, ‘Book 17’: 353). In contrast, Wang Sishi and Pu Qilong, annotators who focus more on *yiyi nizhi*, think that the fourth poem was mainly written for Du Fu to bemoan his country and his own destiny (*Du yi*, juan 8: 275, 278; *Du Du xinjie*, juan 4b: 653) but was not necessarily related to saving the Tang court. As their titles suggest, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* and *Du shi xiangzhu* focus on ‘annotation’ rather than ‘explanation’. Zhu Heling’s and Qiu Zhao’ao’s studies of Du Fu focus on *zhiren lunshi*; thus, their commentaries on the fourth poem of ‘Qiuxing bashou’ mainly concern facts, allusions and additional information (*Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, juan 13: 529–530; *Du shi xiangzhu*, juan 17: 1489–1490). However, it is because of *shishi huzheng*—or, more accurately, the ‘*yiyi nizhi* perspective of *zhiren lunshi*’—that Qian Qianyi’s annotations elicited avid interest not only from Qing scholars of Du Fu’s poetry but also among researchers of related subjects, such as writers and analysts of historical texts. These successors were able to link Qian Qianyi’s method with the traditional concept of *bixing* 比興 (‘analogy and stimulation’), comprising two literary devices referring to, respectively, applying figuration and associating feelings with things, and eventually developed it into a more influential strategy of interpretation. Chen Yinque 陳寅恪 (1890–1969) adopted the principle of *shishi huzheng* in his writings, and the resulting insights in the field explain why his studies became significant (see Hao 2000: 103–146). Although Qian Qianyi’s subjective consciousness led to the strained interpretations in *Qian zhu Du shi* (of ‘Xi bingma’ and ‘Qiuxing bashou’, for example), it still had a significant impact that was a potential breakthrough in Du Fu studies and influenced later generations of scholars.

Another kind of ‘historicism’ is more visible in Qiu Zhao’ao’s commentaries. In contrast to the more original work by Qian Qianyi, in *Du shi xiangzhu*, Qiu Zhao’ao pursues objectivity, unity, and ethics in literary studies:



For many years, I first form the outline to dredge the context and then widely cite [sources] to study the allusion. By eliminating the scattered and fragmented old views and contesting the far-fetched and fragmented new views, I also refer to the poetics of Confucius and Mencius to explain Du [Fu's poetry] and do not dare to speculate according to my assumptions.

矻矻窮年，先挈領提綱，以疏其脈絡，復廣搜博徵，以討其典故。汰舊說之植釀叢脞，辯新說之穿鑿支離。夫亦據孔孟之論詩者以解杜，而非敢憑臆見為揣測也。  
(‘Yuanxu’: 2)

In this approach, ‘reasonable evidence’ and not personal hypotheses are adopted to understand poetry. In *Du shi xiangzhu*, ‘Dushi shixi’ 杜氏世系 (‘Du’s Family Tree’), ‘Du Gongbu nianpu’ 杜工部年譜 (‘The Chronicle of Du of the Ministry of Works’), and ‘Du shi fanli’ 杜詩凡例 (‘The Reader’s Guide to Du’s Poetry’) immediately follow the biographies of Du Fu taken from official histories. These texts highlight the importance of historical facts and chronology, and they all echo the intention of *Du shi xiangzhu* to treat Du Fu’s work as the primary source for reconstructing the author’s world.

In fact, Qiu Zhao’ao spends equal time explaining the segmentation of Du Fu’s poetry, quoting ancient texts, and listing annotations of Du Fu’s poetry from past dynasties. All of these sources receive significant attention in Qiu Zhao’ao’s annotations. For example, in ‘Beizheng’ 北征 (‘Journey North’), Qiu Zhao’ao’s first step is to understand the topic and then to explain each section. The annotator’s personal opinions are mainly expressed in the comments on the content of the sections, such as ‘coming home with sadness and happiness’ (歸家悲喜) and ‘worry about the lord and the country’ (憂在君國). The rest of the annotations rely primarily on textual allusions in order to realise the academic vision of *Du shi xiangzhu* (*Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 5: 395–407; Owen 2015, ‘Book 5’: 332). Relatively speaking, Wang Sishi not only discusses the themes and meanings of poetic lines but also, more importantly, elaborates that the lines carry satire: ‘His Highness’s heart prefers to wait, doing nothing, / all spirit is virtually lost in current policy debates’ (聖心頗虛佇，時議氣欲奪; Owen 2015, ‘Book 5’: 341). This elaboration indicates that Du Fu opposes borrowing the Huihe 回紇 army to defeat the rebellious power (*Du yi*, *juan* 2: 59). Qiu Zhao’ao’s findings reveal the close relationship between Du Fu’s poetry and history (allusions and criticism).

To conclude, the studies of Du Fu’s poetry written before the late Ming are characterised by a strong historical sense shared by the annotators; this historical sense was not ignored during the late Ming to early Qing. These annotators were inclined to rely on Du Fu’s poetry (the original text) whenever they encountered mistakes in the Song annotations; thus, the act of ‘returning’ in their annotations entailed recalling the concepts that Du Fu, *shishi*, and the Poet-Sage wove into his texts. In addition, the differences among the annotated texts and the annotators themselves are valuable for further understanding Du Fu’s subject position as a poet. On the one hand, editions such as *Du yi*, *Qian zhu Du shi*, and *Du Du xinjie* emphasise the perfect personality of Du Fu, trusting his collection of poetry as their source material more than other historical records from that time, which goes beyond (official) history. On the other hand, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* and *Du shi xiangzhu* represent another historical approach of offering detailed annotations regarding allusions, quoted texts, the meanings of words, and historical events and figures. Owing to Du Fu’s immortal status, the fallacy of previous annotations, and the desire to boost their own academic status as well as different understandings and usages of the two principles, the ‘compe-



tition of annotating Du Fu's poetry' gave rise to these variations in *zhiren lunshi* and/or *yiyi nizhi*. The annotators' different views on 'Ba ai shi' 八哀詩 ('The Eight Laments'; *Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 16: 1372–1420; Owen 2015, 'Book 16': 238–285), for example, represent their stances on how to understand Du Fu. Wang Sishi asserts that the eight poems are biographies of the eight great men and are indeed stylistic innovations according to *shishi* (*Du yi*, *juan* 7: 235). In his detailed annotation and explanation of the poems, Qian Qianyi applies the concept of *shishi huzheng*, using Du Fu's poetry to supplement the missing records of (official) history. 'Zeng zuo puye Zheng guo gong Yan gong Wu' 贈左僕射鄭國公嚴公武 ('Lord Yan Wu, Posthumously Made Vice-Director of the Left, Duke of Zheng'), the third poem of the series, is a historical document that can correct the errors of the biography of Yan Wu 嚴武 (726–765) in *Jiu Tangshu*. According to the poem, Qian Qianyi points out that Yan Wu was actually visiting the emperors because of Emperor Xuanzong's order (*Jiu Tangshu*, *juan* 117: 3395–3396; *Qian zhu Du shi*, *juan* 7: 204). To Pu Qilong, 'Ba ai shi' is a series in which Du Fu devotes his strong feeling of sorrow regarding both the subject and the author (*Du Du xinjie*, *juan* 1e: 143–159). In contrast, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* and *Du shi xiangzhu* tend to offer 'objective' discussions on allusions and historical facts based on annotations and quotations from previous authors and scholars (*Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, *juan* 14: 553–573; *Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 16: 1372–1420).

This section ends with a brief account of *Qian zhu Du shi*. This work became a classic not only because of its reputation, the historical evaluations (both positive and negative) of the annotator, and the surprising impact of the epic failure of the Ming dynasty but also because through the text's *zhiren lunshi* that was actually *yiyi nizhi*, the concept of *shishi huzheng* gained a more important place in literary history. Therefore, to offer comments on the many annotated editions of Du Fu's poetry, we must explore the threefold perspectives of the poetry, the interpreters, and the external world.

#### 4. COMPARISON OF COMMENTARIES BY LATE MING AND EARLY QING ANNOTATORS

Although the annotators considered *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi* golden rules for interpreting Du Fu's poetry, many factors affected their application of the two rules in attempting to understand Du Fu's work. These factors included the environment in which the annotators lived and the influence of their personal viewpoints, together with the process of developing written work, the competition of annotating Du Fu's poetry, and the annotators' (or interpreters') participation in forming richer points of view. Gadamer notes that all understanding is shaped by the fusion of diverse horizons (Gadamer 2004: 305). This section takes Wang Sishi and Qian Qianyi as the focal point and uses other annotations for comparison to illustrate that their life experiences with the Ming–Qing transition influenced their annotations of Du Fu's poetry and that their views also had a far-reaching impact on later annotations. The annotated editions produced in the late Ming and early Qing certainly reflect the phenomenon of a 'fusion of horizons'.

Wang Sishi's own history with Du Fu studies offers the best evidence of the importance of readers' experiences to literary research. At the beginning of *Du yi*, Wang Sishi states that the book was started in 1644 and completed in 1645; at that time, the annotator was eighty years old, so this work could be considered a deep reflection undertaken during his final years after the disintegration of the Ming dynasty. In retracing his study of Du Fu, he mentions that by the time



he was forty (1608), he had read almost the complete collection of Du Fu's poetry: 'When reading Lao Du, I felt that I understood [his poetry]; however, after reading it a few times, the meaning changed. Reading more, reading deeper and reading farther are similar to exploring a deep ocean where it is too turbulent to find the borderline and too quiet to measure the bottom' (閱及老杜，覺有會心；隨覆閱之，光景又別。愈閱愈深愈遠，若探淵海，洵然不得其涯，靚然不測其底也；'Du yi yuanshi': 1–2; Liu 1983: 2). He once hoped to compile a selection of Du Fu's poetry but failed; in 1635, Wang Sishi annotated Du Fu's poetry again and said,

For those that are easy to understand, I put down my comments, and for those that are difficult to understand, I put down my comments tentatively. In writing the explanations of the poetry, seven to eight out of ten [of them] have broadened [my] understanding, and I frequently obtained understandings that I had never had before. Perhaps because I have infused it with my spirit, no matter whether I am walking, living, sitting, or lying, there is nothing other than this thing [.]

易解者置之，不易解者姑置之。解及文章，十可七八，引伸觸長，往往得未曾有。蓋精之所注，行住坐臥，無非是物[。]

('Du yi yuanshi': 1)

Wang Sishi admits that as time went by, he was able to provide further explanations of Du Fu's poetry, many of which were new to him. He also believed that the old annotations merely outlined Du Fu's art of subtlety, but he came to realise that properly handling such poetry is all about 'refinement' (*lian* 鍊; 'Du yi yuanshi': 2). In this restructured personal research history, Wang Sishi mentions a statement quoted above, 'Yi means thought. *Yiyi nizhi* is the method of reading poetry by Mencius', indicating that the fusion of the author's and reader's perspectives could be viewed as the necessary foundation for achieving *yiyi nizhi*.

The many excerpts in *Du yi* are closely associated with the annotator, and for readers, Wang Sishi's image comes alive when turning the pages. For instance, he explains 'Zi jing fu Fengxian xian yonghuai wubaizi', and in discussing the lines 'But I turn to consider that ant-breed, / seeking only their own little holes' (顧唯螻蟻輩，但自求其穴), he elucidates that 'it is about condemning the mediocre officials as deeply as piercing to the bones. Today, our country is encountering unexpected change, and that is the problem. While reading this, I am unknowingly dropping my tears' (罵庸臣刺骨。今日國家遭此奇變，病正坐此，余讀之不覺墮淚). He is able to link his destiny and that of the Ming dynasty with the fates of Du Fu and the Tang dynasty; the interpretation of this long poem seems reasonable. In addition, regarding Du Fu's representative work of realism, the text of 'Xin'anli' 新安吏 ('The Official of Xin'an') is easily understood. To Wang Sishi, the following lines of this poem should have expressed profound meaning: 'The silvery waters flow eastward at twilight, / in green hills there is still the sound of weeping. Don't let your eyes be wept dry-- / cease your tears that flow so freely' (白水暮東流，青山猶哭聲。莫自使眼枯，收汝淚縱橫). *Du yi* remarks, 'Focusing on the only diction of "weeping", it stays in the "green hills", [even though all the people are actually gone] and includes different sounds of weeping. How powerful it is; how restrained it is' (止着一「哭」字，猶屬「青山」，而包括許多哭聲，何等筆力，何等蘊藉). Towards the end, Du Fu writes, 'the Vice-Director is like a father or an older brother' (僕射如父兄). Wang Sishi posits that Guo Ziyi 郭子儀 (697–781) was then *zhongshuling* 中書令 ('Director of the Imperial Secretariat'), but Du Fu would have considered Guo Ziyi famous because of his distinguished military achievement and clemency towards his





subordinates during his tenure as *puye* 僕射 (‘Vice-Director’). Thus, the author seems to have used ‘Guo *puye*’ to encourage the soldiers. The annotator claims that these are recent insights he received from studying Du Fu: ‘When I was twenty years old, I read this poem, and reaching eighty, I get this explanation on the pillow and it is a true pleasure’ (余年二十而讀此詩，年八十而於枕上得此解，為之一快; *Du yi*, *juan* 1: 35; *juan* 3: 81; Owen 2015, ‘Book 4’: 210–211; ‘Book 11’: 82–85). The formation of the academic value of *Du yi* was thus in accordance with and drawn from the annotator’s life experiences and his own personal feelings towards Du Fu’s poetry, which are inspiring to readers.

Qian Qianyi believes that Du Fu’s poetry was written to satirise the Tang emperors, and this interpretation seems to have been devised with reference to his own situation and position. At this time, Pan Lei 潘耒 (1646–1708) had already raised questions about Qian Qianyi’s annotations, saying in ‘Shu Du shi Qian jian hou’ 書杜詩錢箋後 (‘Written After Reading Qian’s Annotations of Du’s Poetry’), ‘It is only that he praises his own original ideas. The saying, “Chisel[ing] the chaos and hand wash[ing] the sun and the moon”, is actually talking about Shaoling being very resentful towards Emperor Suzong. Many [of his poems] satirise him, so “Xi bingma” and “Xiu jing” [“Retaking the Capital”] are satirical poems’ (唯其自矜獨得，所云「鑿開鴻濛，手洗日月」者，乃謂少陵大不滿於肅宗，多所譏切，〈洗兵馬〉、〈收京〉諸作皆刺詩). He further adds, ‘These will greatly ruin ethics and damage the truth. Fallacies spread, and it will harm others’ thinking’ (此則傷教害義之大者。謬說流傳，或至壞人心術; *Suichutang wenji*, *juan* 11: 579; Hao 2000: 206; Owen 2015, ‘Book 6’: 77; ‘Book 5’: 356). Pan Lei notes that Qian Qianyi was ‘too hungry for innovation’ and that his interpretations of textual meanings and themes mainly focus on the irony of Du Fu’s poetry, possibly misleading readers. By comparing Wang Sishi’s and Qian Qianyi’s discussions on *puye* in ‘Xin’anli’, we can distinguish the two annotators’ approaches. Qian Qianyi suggests that

Fenyang [Guo Ziyi] at first lost [the battle] at the Jue River, and he went to the emperor’s palace asking for a demotion. He was then demoted to left *puye* and soon after given the title of *situ* [‘Minister of Education’] before being promoted to *zhongshuling*; this is why he is called *puye* again. In line with the defeat of Xiangzhou, [Du Fu] chose the title of the first demotion; it is also the historical writing style of *Spring and Autumn*.

汾陽初敗于潏水，詣闕請貶，降為左僕射，已而加司徒，進中書令，此復稱僕射者。本相州之潰，舉其初貶之官，亦春秋之書法也。

(*Qian zhu Du shi*, *juan* 2: 75)

Du Fu’s use of *puye*, in Qian Qianyi’s opinion, could have reflected an evaluation of Guo Ziyi. Because of the close relationship between *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* and *Qian zhu Du shi*, Zhu Heling’s thoughts are similar to those reflected in Qian Qianyi’s annotations. He considers the poem a record of events following Guo Ziyi’s demotion; thus, in ‘Xi bingma’, Guo Ziyi is called ‘Chancellor Guo’ (*Guoxiang* 郭相; *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu*, *juan* 5: 195).

Wang Sishi believed that the ‘weeping scene’ in the first half of ‘Xi bingma’ was well written, as were the middle verses of the poem: ‘the imperial court is in crisis, so the [conscriptions] could hardly be lenient, but they are not really merciless’ (朝廷方急，勢難寬縱，非真無情). In closing, the annotator postulates that the author used ‘*puye*’ to invigorate the soldiers serving the imperial court (*Du yi*, *juan* 3: 81). This point of view appears more legitimate considering the readers’ understanding and expectations of Du Fu’s loyalty to his lord and country and provides a





better explanation than Qian Qianyi's sarcastic statement. To further explain Qian Qianyi's point of view, the commentaries on 'Tongguan li' 潼關吏 ('The Official at Tong Pass') may help explain the influence of personal experience on annotating Du Fu's poetry. 'Tongguan li' suggests that the guards should protect the pass and not go into battle lightly and that they should take the defeat of Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (?–757) as a warning. In two lines of the poem, 'Please advise the general guarding the pass / not to follow the model of Geshu Han' (請囑防關將，慎勿學哥舒; *Qian zhu Du shi*, *juan* 2: 76; Owen 2015, 'Book 7': 85–87), Qian Qianyi specifically expresses sympathy for Geshu Han, emphasising that the defeat was not because of him but was due to Yang Guozhong's 楊國忠 (?–756) mistake in urging Emperor Xuanzong to war. Qian Qianyi's view may be a self-reference to the Ming–Qing transition.

As a follower of Wang Sishi, Qiu Zhao'ao quotes all of the comments of 'Xin'an li' in *Du yi*. Towards the end of the poem, Qiu Zhao'ao even refers to the same book, in effect agreeing with Wang Sishi's viewpoints regarding 'the sound of weeping' and 'the imperial court in crisis'. Echoing *Du yi*, Qiu Zhao'ao remarks that the passage reading 'What's more, the king's army is obedient, / and His kindly concern is quite clear. / Don't weep blood as we see you on your way— / the Vice-Director is like a father or an older brother' (況乃王師順，撫養甚分明。送行勿泣血，僕射如父兄) was intended to comfort people in their sadness, and he concludes with Wang Sishi's explanation of *puye*. Furthermore, *Du shi xiangzhu* cites the opinion of Zhang Yan 張縵 (fl. 1513), even emphasising that most of Du Fu's poems are not ironic—only 'Bingju xing' 兵車行 ('The Army Wagons: [a Ballad]') and the first and second series of 'Chusai' 出塞 ('Going Out the Passes') are satirical poems. In contrast, concerning the use of military force as a last resort, as in 'Xin'anli', the annotator opines that Du Fu was 'relieved and lamenting the situation of the time' (慰而哀之). Nevertheless, in Qiu Zhao'ao's citation, Zhang Yan maintains the view that the poem is largely ironic and that the 'relief and lamenting of the situation are still [done] for the purpose of satire' (慰哀之者，是亦刺也; *Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 7: 523–525; Owen 2015, 'Book 7': 85; 'Book 2': 76; 'Book 2': 82).

Like Qiu Zhao'ao, Pu Qilong cites Zhang Yan's views, but *Du Du xinjie*'s interpretation is obviously more 'personal' than that of *Du yi* and *Du shi xiangzhu*. Pu Qilong asserts that 'Xin'anli' is based on righteousness, expressing a very strong subjective consciousness: 'Righteousness is in benevolence, how could this be an ordinary style?' (義行於仁之中，此豈尋常家數?) Moreover, *Du Du xinjie* echoes Zhang Yan in suggesting that the first half of the poem emphasises the forcible recruitment of soldiers and lamentation for the previous failure in the war. Heaven (*shangtian* 上天), apparently, had not yet blessed the people by ending the disaster (*Du Du xinjie*, *juan* 1b: 53). Thus, *yiyi nizhi* provides an argument for the use of annotators' personal views in their annotations of Du Fu's poetry.

Another example worth examining is 'Xi wei liu jueju' 戲為六絕句 ('Six Quatrains Done Playfully'). Most likely because of *shishi huzheng*,<sup>12</sup> Qian Qianyi regarded this series of poems as Du Fu's own commentary on the unfavourable situation at the time. The words on 'Xi wei liu jueju' in *Qian zhu Du shi* are almost the same as those in 'Du Du erjian' (*Muzhai youxueji*, *juan* 107: 2170–2171), and both quote Han Yu's lines as evidence. Qian Qianyi notes that the word *xi* 戲 ('done playfully') in the title is apparently used to describe both literature and the author himself. He argues that Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581) and other authors in the poems are used to illustrate Du Fu's own underrated position (he was slandered by many people at the time) and to explain his

<sup>12</sup> Before Qian Qianyi, scholars thought of this series as Du Fu's 'self-narration'. See Guo 1978: 4.



mental enmeshment with the commentaries of past great writers. In the poems, when ‘you guys’ (*ercao* 爾曹) appears twice, Qian Qianyi explains that it refers to ‘the children’ (*quner* 羣兒) in Han Yu’s lines: ‘Do not understand why the children are so stupid, they use the old [standard of poetry] to criticise [Li Bai and Du Fu]’ (不知羣兒愚，那用故謗傷). The second line of the fourth quatrain, ‘Who of all those today is so dominant, standing out from the crowd’ (凡今誰是出羣雄), reflects Du Fu’s self-expectation; furthermore, the fourth line of the sixth quatrain, ‘even more benefit having many teachers as your own teacher’ (轉益多師是汝師), is a reference to the *ercao* mentioned earlier (*Qian zhu Du shi*, *juan* 12: 407; Owen 2015, ‘Book 11’: 113–115).

Qian Qianyi’s commentary on ‘Xi wei liu jueju’ had such a strong impact that Zhu Heling’s and Qiu Zhao’ao’s annotated editions also quote this observation. Of these annotators, Zhu Heling relies the most on Qian Qianyi, even citing the whole paragraph (*Du Gongdu shiji jizhu*, *juan* 9: 344–346), while Qiu Zhao’ao proposes that Qian Qianyi’s comment was a concluding remark (*Du shi xiangzhu*, *juan* 11: 898–902). In light of the dialogue from *Qian zhu Du shi*, Qian Qianyi’s view of the self-implication had its own advantages. Taking Han Yu’s words as the basis of the discussion, Qian Qianyi’s view became the essential reference for several classic annotated editions. *Qian zhu Du shi* quotes it extensively and in detail, using Han Yu’s poetic lines as a ‘premise’ to explore the possible implications of ‘Xi wei liu jueju’. Additionally, because of the *shishi huzheng* method, Qian Qianyi used a great deal of information from outside the texts for his interpretation and thus took ‘threefold perspective’ consisting of the poetry, the interpreters, and the external world. Like Zhu Heling and Qiu Zhao’ao, the annotators were inclined to accept Qian Qianyi’s evidence and explanations, which are related to the belief in *zhiren lunshi* as the ultimate interpretive strategy for Du Fu’s poetry.

In contrast, two annotated editions, *Du yi* and *Du Du xinjie*, emphasise *yiyi nizhi* as the primary reading strategy and do not share the idea proposed in *Qian zhu Du shi*. Wang Sishi claims that Du Fu’s poetry is extraordinary, and in ‘Xi wei liu jueju’, we can even see the author’s respect for the early generation of poets. Furthermore, Wang Sishi explains that the words and sentences, including ‘grew more perfect in old age’ (老更成), ‘without belittling the moderns, I love the ancients’ (不薄今人愛古人), ‘excise false forms’ (別裁偽體), and ‘even having more benefits having many teachers’ (轉益多師), help establish the features of the series of poems (*Du yi*, *juan* 4: 133; Owen 2015, ‘Book 11’: 113–115). Pu Qilong’s annotations are more detailed than Wang Sishi’s. The former explains the poems but also mentions that contemporary poets overvalue the pre-imperial writers, belittle modern poets and, moreover, plagiarise others’ works and are unfamiliar with the origins of the academic circles and schools. The first three poems comment on recent poets, praise Yu Xin and *Chu Tang sijie* 初唐四傑 (‘The Four Heroes of the Early Tang’) and seek to appeal to others to abandon the innovative attitude of ‘treasuring the pre-imperial writers [and] belittling the modern poets’. Du Fu believed that not only *Shijing* but also the Northern and Southern dynasties deserved attention for motivating young poets. After quoting Han Yu’s words and Qian Qianyi’s views, Pu Qilong simply replies, ‘This is not the original meaning’ (此非正意; *Du Du xinjie*, *juan* 6b: 841–843). Therefore, the analysis of ‘Xi wei liu jueju’ revealed that the five annotators focused on *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi*, and the difference between the five annotated editions became more evident. In fact, Qian Qianyi’s view on Du Fu’s self-explanation, similar to the commentaries of ‘Xin’an li’, may be a defence of his own situation after the Ming–Qing transition.



Late Ming to early Qing annotators understood Du Fu's poetry through their personal experiences, and these classical arguments affected later scholars of Du Fu studies. For one, Wang Sishi wrote about himself in *Du yi*, which established the cornerstone for understanding Du Fu among later generations and was highly regarded by Qiu Zhao'ao. Wang Sishi and Qiu Zhao'ao were known for practicing *yiyi nizhi* and *zhiren lunshi*, respectively. Du Fu and his poetry served as a way for Qian Qianyi to express his own feelings; if 'Xi wei liu jueju' was the author's 'self-implication', then Qian Qianyi's annotations were also a kind of interpretative 'self-implication'.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The previous three sections outlined the interpretations of Du Fu's poetry from the late Ming to early Qing, with specific reference to five annotated editions. The sections described *zhiren lunshi* and *yiyi nizhi* as the annotators' major interpretive methods and, more specifically, as the rules for the 'competition' of annotating Du Fu's poetry. As discussed, on the one hand, the annotators were both inspired and restricted by the presumption of historicism, and on the other hand, various personal factors also influenced their understanding.

The preface to *Qian zhu Du shi* written by Ji Zhenyi 季振宜 (1630–?) states, 'Now, with the work of Mister Muzhai [Qian Qianyi] being completed, the spirit of Du's poetry is then more obvious' (牧齋先生之書成，而後杜詩之精神愈出; 'Xu': 2). The readers of annotated editions 'reinvented' Du Fu through these writings more than the annotators perpetuated Du Fu's spirit. The significance of his poetry was thus, to a large extent, assigned by past readers.

From the perspective of mutual influence, Wang Sishi's *Du yi* can be viewed as one of the most influential editions produced between the late Ming and early Qing periods; in fact, *Du shi xiangzhu* cites many of Wang Sishi's interpretive insights from his later years. Comparing this work with *Qian zhu Du shi* shows that although Qian Qianyi always claimed to be a historian (Hao 2017: 202), he was more inclined to integrate the various details of his life into his interpretations of Du Fu's poetry than to merely apply *zhiren lunshi*. In contrast, *Du Gongbu shiji jizhu* and *Du shi xiangzhu*—especially the latter—can be regarded as two books that attempt to reveal the 'true face' of Du Fu through the practice of 'textual objectivity'. With this method, however, the Du Fu represented in *Du shi xiangzhu* may be merely a subjective reflection. As an outcome of both extreme subjectivity and extreme objectivity, Yang Lun's 楊倫 (1747–1803) *Du shi jingquan* 杜詩鏡銓 ('A Mirror Judgement on Du's Poetry'), produced in the mid-Qing era, inherited the advantages of the five annotated editions. This work balances the perspectives of the poet, past annotators, and the external world (academic context). Without the presumption of the academic achievement of the previous generation and their own situation in their contemporary environment, the annotators of Du Fu's poetry might not have achieved the academic success represented in their studies and annotation and commentary practices.

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