

**Poetic Diplomacy : The Practice of *Fu-shi* 賦詩 in Parallel Passages
from the *Zuo zhuan* 《左傳》 and *Guo yu* 《國語》**

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子玉請殺之。楚子曰：「晉公子廣而儉，文而有禮。其從者肅而寬，忠而能力。晉侯無親，外內惡之。吾聞姬姓唐叔之後，其後衰者也，其將由晉公子乎！天將興之，誰能廢之？違天，必有大咎。」乃送諸秦。

“Ziyu [Cheng De-chen of Chu] begged to be allowed to kill him [Chong’er of Jin]. The ruler of Chu said, ‘The prince of Jin is broad-visioned and disciplined, refined and courteous, and his followers are respectful and generous, loyal and of great strength and ability. The present ruler of Jin is without allies; those inside and outside the state alike hate him. I have heard it said that the family of the Ji surname, the descendants of Tang-shu, will be the last to wane in power. This must be because of this prince of Jin. When Heaven is about to raise a man up, who can put him down? To oppose Heaven can only lead to grave consequences!’ So in the end the Chu ruler sent Chong’er off to the state of Qin.”

– *Zuo zhuan*, “Duke Xi 23rd Year” 僖公二十三年 (635 B.C.E.)¹

The above quote prefaces the well-known anecdote of Chong’er’s consultation with the sovereign of Qin as described in both the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*. While these passages have long been valued for their historical import, scholars of ancient Chinese literature would do well to pay equal attention to the intricacies of the *fu-shi* 賦詩

¹ All Chinese citations for the *Zuo zhuan* are based on the *Chongkan Songben Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhushu* 重刊宋本春秋左傳注疏 or “Song dynasty Edition of the Commentaries and Subcommentaries to the *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan*” re-cut by Ruan Yuan 阮元 in 1816, as proofed and rendered in the Chinese Ancient Texts (CHANT) Database from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The translation here is adapted from that of Burton Watson in *The Tso Chuan*, p.43. All citations from the *Guo yu* are based upon the *Tiansheng Mingdao* (TSMD) edition as rendered by the editors of the Chinese Ancient Texts Database.

practice described therein, as recitations from the *Poetry* (*shi* 詩)² formed one of the foundations of the interstate diplomatic negotiations of the era. In this study I compare the depictions of this historical event in the “Duke Xi 23rd Year” 〈僖公二十三年〉 chapter of the *Zuo zhuan* and the “Jin yu” 〈晉語〉 chapter of the *Guo yu*.

The purpose for the comparative analysis of these passages is twofold: First, to examine what has long been regarded as a paradigmatic example of the *fu-shi* practice in the *Zuo zhuan* in light of the further degrees of complexity revealed when the long interlocution found in the parallel passage from the *Guo yu* is incorporated, and second, to see what insights the nature of the differences between the two passages leads to regarding the reliability of the *Guo yu* interlocution and its possible source(s). While full treatment of the nature of the relationship between the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Guo yu* is well beyond the scope of this paper, I will take the conclusions drawn by Bernhard Karlgren, David Schaberg, William Boltz and Burton Watson as my starting point.³ Most relevant

² I use the term “the *Poetry*” rather than “Classic of Poetry” or *Shi jing* 《詩經》 as I think it would probably be best to view this corpus as analogous to the “three hundred poems” (*shi san bai* 詩三百) referred to in *Analects* II.2 and XIII.5. Due to the existence of quite a few “lost poems” (*yi shi* 逸詩), primarily quotations in both received texts and excavated materials marked as being from the *shi* 詩 but which are not found in the Mao 毛 recension (which formed the basis for the received text), I think we can view the number “three hundred” in the *Analects* as simply a rough approximation of the number of individual poems rather than a fixed amount, and thus the corpus would have included substantially more or different poems, particularly during the very early and formative period when the sources for the *Zuo zhuan* were compiled.

³ In his landmark 1926 essay “On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso chuan”, Bernhard Karlgren applied a statistical analysis of grammatical auxiliaries to several classic texts, reaching the conclusion: “I have found in all the Chou, Ts’in and early Han literature no text which has entirely the grammatical physiognomy of the Tso chuan. The nearest approach is found in the Kuo yü, and I have found no other book so closely resembling the Tso chuan in grammar.” (p.61) In *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography*, David Schaberg makes the following observation: “In content it [the *Guo yu*] is closely related to the *Zuo zhuan*, but it differs in organization, in emphasis, and in many of the historical details it presents....The *Zuo zhuan* includes extended narratives of a sort not found in the *Guo yu*, and a few of the speeches in the *Guo yu* are longer than any in the *Zuo zhuan*, but the basic features of anecdotes in the two works are the same. At least since the Han dynasty, the works have been treated as a pair.” (p.6-7) In his 1990 article “Notes on the Textual Relation between the *Kuo Yü* and *Tso Chuan*”, William Boltz states that “30% of the *Kuo yü* bears some textual relation to the *Tso chuan*”, concluding that both texts were likely compiled from a third common textual source. (Boltz, p.491 and 501-2. Boltz’s views on

to the current study, in the introduction to his 1989 translation of the *Zuo zhuan*, Burton Watson prefaces a comparison of passages from the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* (distinct from those in the current study) by stating the *Guo yu* is a text which closely resembles the *Zuo zhuan* in style and content, as both passages depict rulers being lectured by their ministers on the need to heed advice and remonstrance and cite persons whose duty it was to admonish the ruler and enlighten him with examples from the past. This archetype of the enlightened minister as a master of *fu-shi* hermeneutics plays a central part in the passages from the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* compared below.

In his 1975 doctoral dissertation “The Use of Poetry in Tso Chuan: An Analysis of the ‘Fu-shih’ Practice”, Koo-yin Tam outlines 79 total cases of *fu-shi* where one or more stanzas from the *Poetry* are recited (or chanted), including 3 “lost poems” (*yi shi* 逸詩) and 13 poems quoted more than once.⁴ In general, the practice of *fu-shi* as found in the vast majority of the cases in the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* can be defined as the use of recitation of poems (or portions thereof) from the *Poetry* in a diplomatic context to convey expressions of hospitality, solidarity and as an elegant means for conducting sensitive political negotiations.⁵ It is worth noting that the maxim “poems speak of aims”

“historical intentionality” and “authorial intent” are addressed later in this study.) I do not address the question of the attribution of the authorship of either or both the *Zuo zhuan* or *Guo yu* to Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (*Analects* V.25), as it seems there is no empirical evidence to support or deny these claims.

⁴ Tam, p.24. Tam differentiates three general types of poems designated by the verb *fu* 賦 in the *Zuo zhuan*: improvisation of poetic lines (2 cases), composition of original poetry (4 cases), and by far the most common, the recitation of one or more stanzas from the *Poetry* 詩. Naturally, the six cases he designates as “improvisations” or “original poetry” could also be now-unknown poems from the *Poetry* corpus. Regardless of these distinctions, Tam’s divisions are useful to point out the 79 cases which can be directly attributed to the *Poetry*, wherein the text the speaker “*fu* 賦”, “recited” or “chanted”, followed by the title of the poem (and occasionally gives the stanza recited as well).

⁵ As Steven Van Zoeren remarks in *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis and Hermeneutics in Traditional China*, p.38-9: “As depicted there [in the *Zuo zhuan*], the *Odes* [=Poetry] were chanted by various figures—princes, ministers, a palace lady—as a means to elegant or persuasive expression. Very likely the practice was associated with banquets and diplomatic missions; it may have served a function roughly analogous to the toasts or speeches made at diplomatic functions today. As with toasts and

(*shi yan zhi* 詩言志) from the “Canon of Shun” 〈舜典〉 in the *Book of Documents* 《尚書》 is also found in the “Duke Xiang 27th Year” 〈襄公二十七年〉 chapter of the *Zuo zhuan*: “Poems are used to articulate aims” (*shi yi yan zhi* 詩以言志), as well as in other contemporaneous texts.⁶ Therefore, we can treat the use of the *Poetry* in the parallel passages reviewed below as representative of their use within the *fu-shi* practice, including as a direct indication of the *zhi* 志, the aims or intentions, of the participants. However, first the question of how the passages parallel each other and their reliability must be addressed.

Table I on the following page lays two depictions of the same historical event from the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* side-by-side. The far left column enumerates the rhetorical sections. The second column provides the text from the “Duke Xi 23rd Year” chapter of the *Zuo zhuan*, and the third column contains the parallel text from the “Jin yu” chapter of the *Guo yu*. Light grey text highlighting indicates phrases identical in both texts.

speeches generally, the messages delivered by the recitation of the *Odes* would have tended toward polite compliments and expressions of hospitality and solidarity, although there was room for the subtly veiled threat as well.”

⁶ Other roughly contemporaneous textual examples of the relationship between “poetry”(*shi* 詩) and “intention” (*zhi* 志) can be found in the *Guo yu*, “Poems are that by which one synthesizes intentions, song is that by which one intones the poems.” 詩所以合意，歌所以詠詩也。《國語•魯語下》魯樂師師亥語; the “Yu cong yi” excavated manuscript from Guodian, “Poetry is that by which one brings together the aims of the ancient and the contemporary.” 詩，所以會古今之志也者。《郭店楚墓竹簡•語叢一》； the *Xunzi*, “The Sages were the channel of the way...the Poems express their aims.” 聖人也者，道之管也。。。。詩言是其志也。《荀子•儒效》； the Mao preface to the *Shijing*, “Poetry is that which goes out from the will; in the heart it is will, expressed in words it is poetry.” 詩者，志之所之也，在心為志，發言為詩。《毛詩序》 and the *Shuo wen jie zi*, “Poetry is will.” 詩，志也。《說文解字•詩》

Table I. Parallel Passages in the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Guo yu* Describing a Banquet and Dialogue between the Earl of Qin and Chong'er, the Ducal Heir of Jin, in 635 B.C.E.

	<i>Zuo zhuan</i> , "Duke Xi 23rd Year" 僖公二十三年	<i>Guo yu</i> , "Jin Yu" 晉語
A)	他日，公享之。	他日，秦伯將享公子，公子使子犯從。
B)	子犯曰：「吾不如衰之文也，請使衰從。」	子犯曰：「吾不如衰之文也，請使衰從。」使子餘從。
C)		<p>秦伯享公子如享國君之禮，子餘相如賓。</p> <p>卒事，秦伯謂其大夫曰：「為禮而不終、恥也，中不勝貌、恥也，華而不實、恥也，不度而施、恥也，施而不濟、恥也。恥門不閉，不可以封。非此，用師則無所矣。二三子敬乎！」</p> <p>明日宴，秦伯賦《采芣》，子餘使公子降拜。</p> <p>秦伯降辭。</p> <p>子餘曰：「君以天子之命服命重耳，敢有安志，敢不降拜？」</p> <p>成拜卒登，子餘使公子賦《黍苗》。</p> <p>子餘曰：「重耳之仰君也，若黍苗之仰陰雨也。若君實庇蔭膏澤之，使能成嘉穀，薦在宗廟，君之力也。君若昭先君之榮，東行濟河，整師以復疆周室，重耳之望也。重耳若獲集德而歸載，使主晉民，成封國，其何實不從。君若恣志以用重耳，四方諸侯，其誰不惕惕以從命！」</p> <p>秦伯嘆曰：「是子將有焉，豈專在寡人乎！」</p> <p>秦伯賦《鳩飛》。</p>
D)	公子賦《河水》。	公子賦《河水》。
E)	公賦《六月》。	秦伯賦《六月》，
F)	趙衰曰：「重耳拜賜！」公子降拜，稽首，	子餘使公子降拜。
G)	公降一級而辭焉。	秦伯降辭。
H)	衰曰：「君稱所以佐天子者命重耳，重耳敢不拜？」	子餘曰：「君稱所以佐天子匡王國者以命重耳，重耳敢有惰心，敢不從德？」

The sections laid out in the table clearly show the striking parallelism of these two passages. Of the 66 graphs in the *Zuo zhuan* passage, 46 are in virtually the same location in the *Guo yu* passage, a rate of 70%. If parallel names are ignored (for example, the *Zuo zhuan* uses *gong* 公 where the *Guo yu* has *Qin bo* 秦伯), then the rate increases to 78%. The nearly identical nature of the two passages seems to support Boltz's contention that the texts were either copied, one from the other, or (as Boltz argues) share a common source.⁷

The historical background for the historical events covered in the passages below are as follows: Chong'er 重耳, son of the late Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公 and later to become the renowned hegemon Duke Wen 文公, has been in exile from his state for 19 years, travelling, with a loyal retinue, among the small states of north and central China during the seventh century B.C.E. He has decided at last to return to Jin to take the reins of power currently held by his brother, Duke Huai 懷公, who had been raised to power thirteen years previously with the help of Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公,⁸ but recently there has been animosity between the two states. Needing outside support to accomplish his mission, Chong'er has come to Qin to ask for help overthrowing his brother, and thus this meeting with the leader of the state of Qin is of utmost importance.

The parallel opening lines of Section A set the scene, beginning with "another day" as the temporal setting, followed by the participants and the event: the Earl of Qin

⁷ Boltz cites Chang Yi-jen 張以仁, stating he has "shown, persuasively in my opinion, that neither possibility (ii) nor (iii) [that the *Guo yu* borrowed from the *Zuo zhuan*, or vice-versa] will account satisfactorily for the textual relation between the *Tso chuan* and the *Kuo yü*, irrespective of whether one treats them as having been compiled by the same person, or by two different people."

⁸ Duke Mu of Qin technically holds the rank of Earl 伯 under the Zhou hierarchy (as Qin is a second-level state) and is thus consistently called the Earl of Qin (*Qin bo* 秦伯) in the *Guo yu* and "the Duke" (*gong* 公) in the *Zuo zhuan*. For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to refer to him mainly as "the Earl of Qin" or "the Earl" in this study, but include both titles in the passages where he is named in the *Zuo zhuan*.

(Duke Mu of Qin) feasted Chong'er ("the ducal heir" *gong zi* 公子)⁹ at a formal diplomatic banquet. In the *Guo yu* this is followed by an additional comment, "the ducal heir let Zifan¹⁰ accompany him," in order to provide a context for the next line.

Section B provides the clearest case for direct parallelism between the texts, as both the speaker's name and the quotation are mirrored exactly: "Zifan said, 'I am not as *wen*¹¹ as Cui; I beg you to let Cui accompany you.'¹² Cui was a former high minister (*da fu* 大夫) of Jin whose wise counsel and great knowledge of the classics, particularly the *Poetry* and the *Book of Documents*, is referred to in several places in the *Zuo zhuan*, most prominently in the "Duke Xi 27th Year" chapter. As a thorough knowledge of court protocols and the hermeneutics of classic texts played critical roles in the nuanced diplomatic maneuverings of the time, Zifan, recognizing his colleague's outstanding abilities in these areas, urges Chong'er to instead bring Zhao Cui 趙衰 (*Ziyu* 子餘), who then becomes the central figure in the proceedings. The *Guo yu* adds the remark that Chong'er lets *Ziyu* accompany him.

Section C contains a very long interlocution (a total of 251 graphs, more than three times longer than the rest of the sections combined) which occurs only in the *Guo yu*, the majority of which is taken up by two long speeches (52 and 99 graphs respectively), the first by the Earl of Qin and the second by *Ziyu*. It begins by

⁹ In these passages, in direct speech, the name Chong'er 重耳 is always used. Outside of direct speech, Chong'er is referred to as "the ducal heir" *gong zi* 公子 in these passages; in the *Zuo zhuan* he is indicated in this line simply by the object pronoun *zhi* 之.

¹⁰ Zifan 子犯 is the *zi* 字 ("courtesy name" or cognomen) of Hu Yan 狐偃; he is both Chong'er's uncle (mother's brother) and a former minister of Jin and one of the five wise advisors who follows the ducal heir into exile.

¹¹ *Wen* 文 here literally means "cultured" and carries the additional connotation "well versed in court protocols and rhetorical ability".

¹² Cui is Zhao Cui 趙衰, referred to by his *zi* 字 *Ziyu* 子餘 in the *Guo yu*, who along with Zifan was one of the great ministers who served as retainer and counselor to Chong'er while in exile. Zhao Cui is also related to Chong'er by marriage, as his second wife is the ducal heir's first wife's sister.

reintroducing the participants and specifies that the type of banquet rituals followed in this circumstance were as those used in formal meetings between heads of states, with Ziyu in the formal position of honored guest. Upon the conclusion of the formal proceedings, the Earl of Qin addresses his high ministers and delivers a soliloquy on the importance of proper conduct and avoiding “disgrace” (*chi* 恥), possibly meant as an oblique compliment on his guests’ propriety (and thus credit to Ziyu, who has been advising the ducal heir).

The text then states “at the banquet the following day” a formal reciprocal recitation of poetry took place. The Earl of Qin, as host, recites the poem “Gathering Beans”¹³ to formally welcome to his guests. The first stanza¹⁴ reads:

采菽采菽、筐之筥之。	When one gathers beans, gathers beans, One puts them in baskets square or round.
君子來朝、何錫予之。	The princes have come to Court; With what gift can I present them?
雖無予之、路車乘馬。	Although this is nothing to give them, It shall be a great coach and four.
又何予之、玄袞及黼。	What besides this shall I give them? Black robe and brodered skirt. ¹⁵

The choice of this poem holds several implications: first, it is a formal message of welcome and gives the pretense of anxiety over the desire to please his guests; second, reflecting the larger context of the poem, it raises the Earl to the level of the son of

¹³ “Gathering Beans” *Cai shu* 《采菽》 is from the Lesser Elegies (*Xiao ya* 小雅) section of the *Shijing*, Mao no. 222.

¹⁴ There is some conjecture as to whether the entire poem or simply a stanza would have been recited; in this case, as the entire poem contains words of welcome to visiting “princes” (*junzi* 君子), particularly the final stanza, I tend to favor the idea that the entire poem was recited. However, according to the principle of “when reciting the *Poetry*, break off a stanza” (*fushi duanzhang* 賦詩斷章) as found in the “Duke Xiang 28th Year” chapter of the *Zuo zhuan*, only a portion of the poem would have been recited. In the *Zuo zhuan* the stanza to be recited is sometimes indicated, and later commentarial tradition favors the idea that when no stanza is explicitly given in the text, the first stanza is the one which would have been recited. Thus, as this method does seem to work here without irreconcilable difficulties, I have included only the first stanza of this and each subsequent poem in this section, despite my strong feeling that in this case the entire poems would likely have been recited as part of the ritual.

¹⁵ All translations of the *Poetry* presented here come from Arthur Waley’s *The Book of Songs*.

Heaven and lowers Chong'er to the status of a vassal lord; and third, it seems to be subtly inquiring of the ducal heir why he has made this formal visit. The text then says that Ziyu makes the ducal heir descend and make a sign of obeisance (most likely a kowtow) to acknowledge humble acceptance of the Earl's poem, to which "the Earl descended and formally declined" (*jiang ci* 降辭)¹⁶ the honor. Ziyu then interjects a flattering statement directed at the Earl (and also insinuates that the Earl had just offered assistance to the ducal heir, which was the main reason for their visit), asking "As the Lord employs the command of the son of Heaven to command Chong'er, how would he dare not feel at ease in his aspirations, how could he dare not make obeisance?" Thereupon, after concluding the ritual protocols, Ziyu has the ducal heir recite the poem "Young Millet"¹⁷ (or at the very least its first stanza) to flatter the Earl, which reads:

芄芄黍苗、陰雨膏之。	Lusty is the young millet;
悠悠南行、召伯勞之。	Copious rains have fattened it.
	Long, long was our march to the south;
	But the Lord of Shao has rewarded it.
我任我輦、我車我牛。	Oh, our loads, our barrows,
我行既集、蓋云歸哉。	Our wagons, our oxen!
	But now the marching is over
	And at last we are going home.
我徒我御、我師我旅。	Oh, our footmen, our chariot-drivers,
我行既集、蓋云歸處。	Our armies, our hosts!
	But now our marching is over
	And at last we are going back.
肅肅謝功、召伯營之。	Noble is the palace at Xie;
烈烈征師、召伯成之。	The Lord of Shao planned it.
	Glorious was the army on the march;
	The Lord of Shao gave it victory.

¹⁶ *Jiang* 降 could also be understood as "to lower oneself", as I think it also reflects a metaphorical lowering of the Earl vis-à-vis his guest(s), but given the description of the Earl physically stepping down one level as described later in the text, "descended" seems most appropriate. See also footnote 20.

¹⁷ "Young Millet" *Shu miao* 《黍苗》 is from the Lesser Elegies, Mao no. 227.

原隰既平、泉流既清。	The highlands and the lowlands were made safe;
召伯有成、王心則寧。	The springs and streams cleared.
	The Lord of Shao has vanquished,
	And the king's heart is at rest.

This poem also carries the weight of at least a dual meaning; first, the ducal heir uses the millet under the influence of the “copious rains” as a metaphor for his being aided by the generous assistance of the Earl of Qin, placing himself in a very humble position.

However, the latter lines of the first stanza and the rest of the poem repeatedly evokes the glory of the celebrated Lord of Shao (who during the Western Zhou dynasty led a victorious campaign in Xie against the hostile tribes of the South), thus making an analogy between the assistance the Earl of Qin had offered, insinuating that it would create a success on the order of the great campaign of the Lord of Shao. Ziyu then takes the opportunity to clarify the meaning of the poem and its relevance to the current discussion, explaining the metaphor of the young millet and that with the bountiful aid of the Earl, Chong'er plans to return to his state and take up leadership of the Jin, asking “who among the Mark-lords would then not fear them and follow their command?” The Earl seems a bit taken aback by this overt statement of purpose, and asks what special need there is for him (and his army) to be a part of the plan. He recites the poem

“Diminutive” (the name of which is given as *Jiu fei* 鳩飛 in the text),¹⁸ which reads:

宛彼鳴鳩、翰飛戾天。	Diminutive is the calling dove,
我心憂傷、念昔先人。	Who soars to the Heavens above;
	My heart is filled with grief and pain;

¹⁸ “Diminutive” *Xiao wan* 《小宛》 is from the Lesser Elegies, Mao no. 196. Although there is no poem named *Jiu fei* 鳩飛 in the *Poetry*, Wei Zhao 韋昭 of the Three Kingdoms period connected the title given in the text with the image in the opening line of the poem, and subsequent commentators have generally accepted the reference, as the content of the poem seems to be somewhat suitable for the situation and the tenor of the negotiations. However, if this is indeed a reference to “Diminutive”, it must be pointed out that the first stanza is not ideal for the larger connotations in the poem, and so I believe it is more likely that the entire poem would have been recited here.

明發不寐、有懷二人。	Thinking of men of former times. I lie awake till the dawn does break, Missing the two people of my life.
人之齊聖、飲酒溫克。 彼昏不知、壹醉日富。 各敬爾儀、天命不又。	People enlightened and wise, Drink wine but remain mild and restrained. Those who are benighted and dumb, Get drunk and are ever more extravagant. Each of you, take heed of your demeanor, Heaven's charge is never to be repeated.
中原有菽、庶民采之。 螟蛉有子、蜾蠃負之。 教誨爾子、式穀似之。	The large beans grow in the plain, The common folk go to pluck them. The eggs laid by the mulberry bug Are nourished by the mother wasp. Teach your children well, Then fortune like this will be theirs.
題彼脊令、載飛載鳴。 我日斯邁、而月斯征。 夙興夜寐、無忝爾所生。	See that wagtail bird, How it flies, how it calls. Each day there I go forth Every month, I journey off. Up early in the morn, to bed late at night; Be sure not to bring shame to those who bore you.
交交桑扈、率場啄粟。 哀我填寡、宜岸宜獄。 握粟出卜、自何能穀。	Flitting about is the mourning dove Across the threshing yard eating the grain. Take pity on us forever alone— Off to prison, off to jail, Grasping straws for divination, Whence will fortune ever come?
溫溫恭人、如集于木。 惴惴小心、如臨于谷。 戰戰兢兢、如履薄冰。	Be mild and modest with others, As if you were alighting in a high tree. Be fearful, be timid, As if you were approaching a ravine. Be careful, be cautious, As if you were treading on thin ice.

As can be seen above, the poem repeatedly urges extreme caution and careful planning, warning of the dire consequences brought about by rash behavior. This recitation ends the interlocutory section unique to the *Guo yu*.

Section D, identical in both the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu*, states that the ducal heir then recited the poem “In Flood” (called *He shui* 《河水》 in the text),¹⁹ the first stanza of which reads:

沔彼流誰、朝宗于海。	In flood those running waters
馱彼飛隼、載飛載止。	Carry their tides to join the sea.
嗟我兄弟、邦人諸友、	Swift that flying kite
莫肯念亂、誰無父母。	Now flies, now lights.
	Alas that of my brothers
	My countrymen and all of my friends,
	Though each has father, has mother,
	None heeds the disorders of this land!

This poem is clearly a call to rebellion; not only the last two lines of the first stanza but the tenor of the following stanzas also evokes the sorrow of viewing a society in turmoil. Chong’er is possibly again subtly flattering the Earl here, likening himself to a river and the Earl to the great sea, but the obvious message remains the call to arms and a plea for the Earl to lend his support to help him rectify “the disorders of this land”, an obvious metaphor for the current situation in Jin.²⁰

In section E, identical (except for the Earl’s moniker) in both texts, the Earl of Qin (“the Duke” in the *Zuo zhuan*) acquiesces, reciting “The Sixth Month” to signal his willingness to give Chong’er the military assistance he asks for.²¹ The first stanza of the poem reads:

¹⁹ “In Flood” *Mian shui* 《沔水》 is from the Lesser Elegies, Mao no. 183. No poem named “River Water” *He shui* 河水 is found in the *Poetry*. Du Yu claims it describes how the waters of the rivers all flow into the sea, and thus that the ducal heir is implying that in like manner the feudal lords all pay homage to the ruler of Qin. According to the most common theory, “He shui” is simply an error for “Mian shui”, and this would probably be where Du Yu derived his description of the lost poem. There is also a fragment from the Warring-States period “Kongzi Shilun” 孔子詩論 manuscript (strip #71) which bears simply the title “He shui”, but this does not resolve the question of whether or not it is an variant title for the poem now known as “Mian shui” or a completely different and now lost *Ode*.

²⁰ In *Zuo zhuan yin Shi fushi zhi shijiao yanjiu* 《左傳引詩賦詩之詩教研究》 p.17, Zeng Qinliang 曾勤良 identifies this poem as an example of “seeking assistance” (*qiuzhu* 求助).

²¹ Zeng Qinliang describes this poem as “giving a promise” (*yunnuo* 允諾). “The Sixth Month” *Liu yue* 《六月》 is from the Lesser Elegies, Mao no. 177.

六月棲棲、戎車既飭。	In the sixth month all is bustle,
四牡騤騤、載是常服。	We put our war-chariots in order,
玁狁孔熾、我是用急。	Our four steeds are in good fettle,
王子出征、以匡王國。	We load our bow-cases and quivers.
	The Xianyun are ablaze,
	We have no time to lose,
	We are going out to battle,
	To set aright the king's lands.

“The Sixth Month” is one of the most martial poems in the *Poetry*, an urgent cry to battle hearkening to the great victories won by the armies allied with the royal house of the Western Zhou over the invading tribes of the Xianyun. The poem repeatedly situates the warriors as fighting on behalf of the king (or the son of Heaven), which perhaps indicates the Earl sees his assisting Chong'er reestablish himself in Jin as being for the greater good of the entire empire. In taking on this task in the name of the royal house, as at this point the Zhou king does not have the military power to intercede, the Earl is situating himself (while ostensibly still subservient to royal authority) very close to the king, in the position of leader of the most powerful military force in the land.

In section F, for the first time, the *Zuo zhuan* contains two small interlocutions not found in the *Guo yu*. In the *Zuo zhuan*, Ziyu says aloud, “Chong'er humbly accepts this favor!” to make clear the offer has been understood and accepted (thus cementing the compact, and underscoring what Chong'er surely took as a successful conclusion to the negotiations). In both texts, the ducal heir then “descends”²² and pays obeisance to the Earl. The *Zuo zhuan* adds the further comment that Chong'er “knocks his head upon the ground” (*qishou* 稽首), in a most abject sign of deference and gratitude.

²² Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 asserts that the *jiang* 降 here means that Chong'er descended from his raised position to the floor of the hall (*jiang jie zhi tang xia* 降階至堂下) in order to show obeisance (kowtow) to the Earl.

The final sections, G and H, are not exactly parallel but share most of the main elements. In the *Guo yu*, the comment from midway through section C is simply repeated, that “the Earl descends and formally declines” the honor, while in the *Zuo zhuan*, the Earl “descends one level” (*jiang yi ji* 降一級), likely to indicate he physically stepped down one level to show proper modesty, and then “politely declines” (*ci* 辭) the great compliment.²³

In the final section, while the words are again not identical, the flattery and sentiment is virtually the same, and it is the *Guo yu* passage which has filled out the line slightly for clarification. In the *Zuo zhuan*, Cui remarks, “My lord has referred to Chong’er as one capable of ‘assisting the Son of Heaven’; how could Chong’er dare not to show obeisance?” This clever remark flatters the Earl of Qin by raising him to the same level as the Son of Heaven, insinuating that this is the reason for the ducal heir’s abject gesture of gratitude. The *Guo yu* version of this line adds the purpose of their campaign, “to rectify the kingdom” (*kuang wang guo* 匡王國), and finishes with a slightly more prosaic version of the rhetorical question: “How could Chong’er dare to be so negligent as to dare to not follow the virtuous (model of propriety)?” This final comment in the *Guo yu* neatly encapsulates several of the issues which came up during the course of the *Guo yu*’s version of the negotiations, as well as providing the level of flattery and honor appropriate for the Earl of Qin.

²³ As noted above, this all follows what seem to have been the standard protocols for heads of state to properly indicate their gratitude, followed by polite acknowledgement by the giver. (According to Yang Bojun, these would have been the rituals as laid out in the *Classic of Etiquette and Rites* 《儀禮》.) Whether the receiver’s gratitude or the giver’s humble response were genuine or not is immaterial, though I imagine Chong’er was indeed very grateful to receive such powerful backing, giving his plan to take the throne the ability to succeed. The Earl of Qin was primarily following the rules of propriety by “declining” the show of gratitude, as he had just committed his army to a significant military campaign, but as Chong’er is the heir to a Duke and will be a powerful ally, the Earl is naturally showing him every courtesy.

While the content of the long interlocutory section in the *Guo yu* fits neatly with the sections paralleled in both texts, there are two further pieces of secondary evidence which add additional support for its inclusion. First is the passage from the “Duke Xiang 19th Year” 〈襄公十九年〉 chapter of the *Zuo zhuan* which contains a similar example of the *fu-shi* practice:

季武子如晉拜師，晉侯享之。范宣子為政，賦《黍苗》。季武子興，再拜稽首，曰：「小國之仰大國也，如百穀之仰膏雨焉。若常膏之，其天下輯睦，豈唯敝邑？」賦《六月》。

Ji Wuzi (of Lu) went to Jin to give thanks for the military assistance, and the Mark-lord of Jin feasted him at a formal banquet. Fan Huanzi, as principal minister, recited the Ode “Young Millet”. Ji Wuzi arose, twice made obeisance by knocking his head upon the ground, and said, “Small states revere and depend upon large states like the hundred grains revere and depend upon the fattening rains. If they constantly fatten them, all under Heaven is at peace, and how could this be true of only our small state?” He then recited “The Sixth Month”.

Although the positions of the major figures are reversed when compared with the above passages, the important detail which relates to our inquiry is that the poem “The Sixth Month” would have been considered an appropriate affirmative reply to the poem “Young Millet”, similar to the result in the passages above when “Young Millet” from the *Guo yu* interlocution is read into the closing parallel sections.

Second, the “Jin Hereditary House” (*Jin shi jia* 晉世家) chapter of *Records of the Historian* 《史記》 also contains a heavily abridged version of the events when Chong’er visited the Earl of Qin:

繆公大歡，與重耳飲。趙衰歌《黍苗》詩。繆公曰：「知子欲急反國矣。」趙衰與重耳下，再拜曰：「孤臣之仰君，如百穀之望時雨。」

Duke Mu was greatly pleased to have a drinking banquet with Chong’er. Zhao Cui chanted the poem “Young Millet”. Duke Mu said, “I know of your urgent desire to return to your state.” Zhao Cui and Chong’er descended, saluted

twice, and said, “Your lonely servant reveres and depends upon you, my lord, just as the hundred grains revere and depend upon the seasonal rains.”²⁴

The account in *Records of the Historian* essentially paraphrases solely the *Guo yu* interlocutory section, reducing Duke Mu’s speech to a direct statement. As current evidence indicates that Sima Qian had editions of the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* readily available to him and used them both extensively,²⁵ the reasoning behind this choice must remain an open question, but as nothing from the outer narrative found in both the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* is mentioned, it is worth noting that the only parts he chose to transmit were events detailed in the interlocution, with the quote in the last line taken verbatim from the *Guo yu*.

Given the nearly identical phrasing in the parallel sections, there can be no doubt that the two texts came in large part from a common source. While I disagree with the efficacy of his methodology,²⁶ I agree with Boltz’s conclusion that both came from a now-unknown third source or sources. I believe this is demonstrated by the fact that both texts contain small additions and interlocutions even within the parallel sections; it seems that if one were copied from the other, it would be more likely that these interlocutions would be found primarily in only one of the texts.

²⁴ Translation adapted from Jeff Bissell’s 1996 dissertation, “Literary Studies of Historical Texts: Early Narrative Accounts of Chong’er, Duke Wen of Jin”, p.163.

²⁵ There are some excellent recent studies which detail how the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* were used in the compilation of *Records of the Historian*. For the *Zuo zhuan*, see Gu Lisan 顧立三, *Sima Qian chuan xie Shi ji caiyong Zuo zhuan de yanjiu* 《司馬遷傳寫史記採用左傳的研究》 (Taipei: Zhongzheng, 1981), and Grant Hardy’s 1993 article “The Interpretive Function of *Shi chi* 14, ‘The Table of Years of the Twelve Feudal Lords’” (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 113.1, p.14-24); for the *Guo yu*, see Stephen W. Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.165.

²⁶ Boltz uses a technique he calls “isocolometrical analysis”, essentially the division of the text into regular sections which would correspond to bamboo strips containing a consistent number of graphs. However, the available paleographic evidence does not seem to support this theory, and I can find no systemic correlation between the numbers of graphs in the parallel sections and the number of graphs in the *Guo yu* interlocution.

Unfortunately, as there is no other evidence at present which can speak directly to the events which transpired during the meeting between Chong'er and the sovereign of Qin, the question of whether the above evidence is sufficient to determine if the long interpolation in the *Guo yu* was part of the original source on which the passages paralleled in the *Zuo zhuan* and *Guo yu* were based or an addition by a later author or editor must remain unresolved. Perhaps an early version of one of our two source texts or a completely different historical record of the meeting will be excavated at some point in the future and provide direct evidence of the textual history of these passages and their source(s), but for now, we are simply left with a wonderfully rich example of the *fu-shi* practice deftly employed at a critical juncture of diplomatic negotiations at the highest level.

The *Guo yu* interlocutory passage seems to have been written expressly to venerate the conduct of Ziyu in his role as the wise minister, and also to underscore the need for ritual propriety, as the Earl's speech emphasizes. I believe we can conclude that the *Guo yu* has performed a great service by preserving its extended version of what transpired at the banquet, both the speeches and subsequent negotiations, as it at the very least provides valuable early insights into the depth and complexity of the *fu-shi* practice. Taking the example from this study as a starting point, perhaps a full investigation into other lengthy interpolations unique to the *Guo yu* within narratives with parallel (or virtually identical, as seen here) versions in the *Zuo zhuan* could similarly augment our understanding of these historical events and the texts which recorded them for posterity.²⁷

²⁷ An excellent foundation for an inquiry of this type would be the extensive lists of incongruities presented in the 1962 article by Chang Yi-jen 張以仁, "Lun Guo yu yu Zuo zhuan de guanxi" 〈論國語與左傳的關係〉 (published in 《歷史語言研究所集刊》, vol. 33, p.233-86; Taipei: Academia Sinica), perhaps initially focusing on those passages where, as seen in this study, the *Records of the Historian* chose to

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transmit the *Guo yu* version instead of that from the *Zuo zhuan*, which according to Zhang was generally the more preferred source.