

A PAST OF WORDS NOT OF STONE: DU MU'S "RHAPSODY ON THE EPANG PALACE"¹

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Abstract

The late-Tang poet Du Mu's "Rhapsody on the Epang Palace," completed in 825, served to immortalise for all time the image of the extraordinary palace said to have been planned (if perhaps never built) by the First Emperor of the Qin in his capital of Xianyang. Inspired by the "Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality" exhibition recently hosted by the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, this paper presents the first published English-language translation of this poem. A brief introduction explores what we know about the palace from the historical sources, and discusses something of its afterlife over the course of the succeeding two millennia.

Translator's Introduction:

...if it was built by ghosts, then it would have exhausted their spirits, if it was built by human hand then it would have caused the folk great suffering.
使鬼為之則勞神矣使人為之亦苦民矣

Sima Qian, "Basic Annals of the Qin," Records of the Grand Historian
(*Shi ji* 史記)

1 I dedicate this paper to Anthony (Tony) Quinn (1962-2018), Asian Languages Specialist Librarian (along with, over time, various other disciplinary areas, including Religious Studies), University Library, Victoria University of Wellington. My understanding of a number of the sources employed below was much enhanced as Tony, Janette Briggs, and I worked our way through them some years ago as part of an Honours course in traditional Chinese biographical writing that I once taught. Tony was particularly insightful about the need always to attend to the possibility of later interpolations in the received versions of the texts we are wont to refer to. That the classical Chinese-language materials held by the university library, particularly, allowed for serious Sinological work was largely the result of Tony's painstaking efforts over many years. Tony was an exemplary librarian; skilled at getting hold of whatever material one needed, always curious about what one was working on. Never unaware of the usages of the various electronic databases of one sort or another available in the field, he nonetheless, above all, loved books. What greater accolade can be accorded the librarian? Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Chinese materials offered below are by the author. I thank Janette for the painstaking care with which she has read through my translation and saved me from errors of various kinds. As so often in the past, Michael Radich, too, has cast his eagle eye over the article and saved me from additional and egregious error.

Pomp and circumstance to scented dust has fallen,
 Ceaseless is the flow of the river as once again spring returns along its banks.
 In setting sun and easterly breeze is heard the mournful song of bird,
 And blood-red petals, scattered, are reminders of the beauty who once flung
 herself from this tall tower.

繁華事散逐香塵流水無情草自春日暮東風怨啼鳥落花猶似墜樓人
 Du Mu, "Golden Valley Garden" ("Jingu yuan" 金谷園)

Between December 2018-April 2019, the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa hosted an exhibition of some 120-odd artefacts sourced from a number of museums in Shaanxi Province, People's Republic of China.² Although the exhibition, "Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality" 秦始皇兵馬俑: 永恆的守衛, curated by Rebecca Rice, Te Papa's Curator of Art, did indeed include ten terracotta figures from the Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum 秦始皇帝陵博物院 (an armoured and an unarmoured general, two armoured military officials, both a standing and a kneeling archer, an unarmoured infantryman, a civil official, and two chariot horses), its focus was not exclusively fixed on either the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE) or the First Emperor (259-210 BCE; r. King of Qin, 247-220 BCE; First Emperor of the Qin, 220-210 BCE), but rather on the variety of funereal objects found in tombs from periods both before and after that first unified dynasty. As an exhibition, "Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality" afforded an opportunity to rethink aspects of this watershed moment in the history of what became China, and in particular to assess the extent to which our understanding of the long-standing historical account of the Qin needs to be reassessed in light of the wealth of newly-uncovered archaeological evidence.³

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- 2 Co-organised with the National Gallery of Victoria, this exhibition is to show in Melbourne between 24 May-13 October, 2019, in conjunction with a work by the noted contemporary Chinese artist Cai Guo-qiang 蔡國強 (b. 1957).
 - 3 Over time, historical evaluations of the First Emperor and the empire that he established have varied. Whereas the overwhelming traditional consensus on the First Emperor himself has been condemnatory, in large part influenced by the powerful rhetorical force of the first denunciation of the man, Jia Yi's 賈誼 (201-169 BCE) "Faulting the Qin" ("Guo Qin lun" 過秦論) that argues that the Qin fell so soon after they had established empire "Because it did not rule with humanity and righteousness and because the power to occupy and the power to retain what one has thereby won are not at all the same" (仁義不施而攻守之勢異也), modern and contemporary views have tended to be somewhat more favourably disposed towards him. A major exception to this traditional consensus, characteristically, was the late-Ming iconoclast Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602); one of the crimes listed in the memorial of impeachment presented to the throne by Zhang Wenda 張問達 (d. 1625) in 1602 and which precipitated Li Zhi's suicide once he had been imprisoned was the favourable remarks he had made about the First Emperor in his *Book to be Hidden Away* (*Cangshu* 藏書). In more recent times, infamously, Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) is reported to have claimed to have far outdone the First Emperor in terms of the scholars that he had had killed. Contemporary views of the First Emperor in the People's Republic of China, particularly since the 1970s, have tended to be muted in the condemnation of the suffering his rule caused the ordinary people of his much-expanded realm. In contrast, the traditional and modern view of the most critical outcome of his rule, unity, has been almost unanimously positive, as by the late-Ming scholar Jiang Yingke's 江盈科 (1553-1605) characterisation

In terms of written history, almost all that we know about this period and the centuries that both preceded and followed it can be found in a single book: Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (ca. 135-86 BCE) magnificent *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shi ji* 史記),

of him in a poem as an “evil sage” (*esheng* 惡聖) who had nonetheless “inaugurated a new age” (*kai tian* 開天), for which see, Huang Rensheng 黃仁生, ed., *Jiang Yingke ji* 江盈科集 [A Collection of the Writings of Jiang Yingke] (Changsha: Yuelu chubanshe, 1997), Vol. 1, p.257. In traditional terms, the most abidingly influential argument in this respect was that advanced by the Tang dynasty scholar Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) in his essay “On Feudalism” (“Fengjian lun” 封建論); when assessing the reasons for the speedy collapse of the Qin empire he argued that: “The fault of the Qin lay in the measures that caused grievances on the part of the people, and was certainly not any failure of the system of commanderies and counties” (咎在人怨非郡邑之制失也). In an essay entitled simply “The First Emperor” (“Qin Shihuang” 秦始皇), Jiang Yingke argues that the First Emperor's four great contributions were a network of roads (*qianmo* 阡陌), territorial division into commanderies and counties (*junxian* 郡縣), the Great Wall (*changcheng* 長城), and the Clerical Script (*lishu* 隸書), for which, see *Jiang Yingke ji*, p. 316. “The appropriateness of the First Emperor's methods for later ages,” he concludes, “are simply as necessary as skin for a tiger or a horn for a rhinoceros. However much the Confucians of this age vilify such methods, can any of them abolish them?” (始皇之法之有當於後世亦若虎之皮犀之角而已矣世儒能譬之烏能廢之) (p. 318). Again, there have been exceptions to this consensus, both traditional and modern. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 195-115), the pre-eminent Han dynasty thinker, argued that the Qin be removed from the sequence of legitimate dynasties, on which, see Gary Arbuckle, “Inevitable Treason: Dong Zhongshu's Theory of Historical Cycles and early attempts to Invalidate the Han Mandate,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 115, No. 4: 585-597. In similar vein, a number of later scholars declared the Qing to have been “Supernumerary” (*run* 潤). The late-Ming loyalist scholar Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695), for instance, in the chapter “On Law” (“Yuan fa” 原法) in his remarkable *Waiting for the Dawn* (*Mingyi daifang lu* 明夷待訪錄), claimed that: “It has been argued that order and disorder in the world are unrelated to the maintenance or absence of Law. Now as to this, among the major changes from the past to the present are one complete upheaval, which came with the Qin dynasty, and another with the Yuan dynasty. Following these two upheavals nothing at all survived of the sympathetic, benevolent, and constructive government of the early sage-kings. So, unless we take a long-range view and look deep into the matter, tracing back through each of these changes until the original order is restored with its land system, enfeoffment system, school and military service systems; then even though some minor changes are made, there will never be an end to the misery of the common people” (即論者謂天下之治亂不繫於法之存亡夫古今之變至秦而一盡至元而又一盡經此二盡之後古聖王之所惻隱愛人而經營者蕩然無具苟非為之遠思深覽一一通變以復井田封建學校卒乘之舊雖小小更革生民之戚戚終無已時也), for which, see Wm. Theodore de Bary, trans., *Waiting for the Dawn: A Plan for the Prince* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 99 (Romanisation altered; Chinese text added). The Republican historian Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980), too, another iconoclast, in his *The First Emperor* (*Qin shihuangdi* 秦始皇帝), first published in 1944, whilst recognizing the immense contribution of the Qin to the history of China, nonetheless seems ambivalent about the value of unity at the expense of the demise of the various states, lamenting their disappearance in each case with the value-loaded term “the state perished” (*wang guo* 亡國), for which, see particularly, Laurence A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1971). For a useful selection (and translation) of post-1949 Chinese views on the Qin, see Li Yu-ning, ed., *The Politics of Historiography: The First Emperor of China* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1975). For an excellent recent assessment of the Qin, from a variety of different perspectives, see Yuri Pines, Gideon Shelach, Lothar von Falkenhausen, and Robin D.S. Yates, eds., *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2014).

written more than a century after the collapse of the Qin but based, Sima Qian tells us, on both living memory and written records, many of which no longer remain extant. The singularity of that source is in stark contrast to the volume of the archaeological evidence uncovered, since the mid-1970s particularly: the terracotta army, of course, stumbled upon in 1974 by a group of peasants sinking a well,⁴ but of equal significance, perhaps, such finds as the cache of bamboo texts found the following year in the tomb of a Qin official serving in the Lair of the Sleeping Tigers or Shuihudi 睡虎地在 Yunmeng 雲夢 County, Hubei Province. Such bodies of material tend to pull us in different directions, the historical focusing our attention on the individuals and on the particular events of history, particularly when narrated by a master historian such as Sima Qian, the archaeological alerting us to the grand continuities over time and across space. In broad brush terms, if this main historical source we have available to us about the Qin, Chapter Six (“The Basic Annals of the First Emperor of the Qin” 秦始皇本紀) of the labour of Sima Qian’s life, in part as an exercise in legitimising the assumption of empire by the Han, seeks to picture the Qin as a tyrannical interruption in the progression of Chinese history, the wealth of the archaeological evidence of the Qin period that continues to be offered up by the yellow loess soil of Shaanxi Province suggests a somewhat more complicated story. Of that single historical source, we can ask a number of questions: to what extent is the text as we have it today “original,” particularly as textual evidence suggests that it was subject to later interpolations (about the First Emperor’s parentage, for instance, or the determination of the cycle of power that decreed that the Qin ruled by virtue of the power of water (*shui de* 水德), having extinguished the power of fire (*huo de* 火德) held by the preceding Zhou dynasty); and to what extent was the book intended as a justification of the legitimacy of the Han dynasty under which it was written (somewhat ironically, as a dynasty, the Han must be regarded as usurper of the Mandate of Heaven, given both the social status of its ruling house and their geographically southern origins)? In the case of Sima Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian*, also, we cannot ignore his personal plight (condemned to castration for daring to speak up at court in defence of a defeated general) and the extent to which his history is in some senses also autobiographical in a particularly filial way, being a task that he inherited, he tells us famously, from his father on his deathbed and which, again as he tells us directly, was an exercise in venting his rancour and resentment at the mistreatment he believed they had both been subjected to. The archaeological evidence, too, often raises more questions than it serves to answer (instance, the terracotta figures), or itself pulls in somewhat different directions (instance, again, the terracotta figures, as contrasted with the cache of legal texts mentioned above). All too often in China (as elsewhere), the written record has served to overdetermine the reading of the artefactual evidence (instance, perhaps, Sima Qian’s description of what might be found once technology allows for the excavation of the First Emperor’s mausoleum).⁵

4 *Warriors: Exploring the Most Intriguing Puzzle in Chinese History* (Pegasus, 2018). More challengingly, see Ladislav Kesner, “Likeness of No One: (Re)presenting the First Emperor’s Army,” *Art Bulletin*, 77.1 (1995): 115-132.

5 On which phenomenon, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, “On the Historiographical Orientation of Chinese Archaeology,” *Antiquity*, 67.257 (1993): 839-49. This phenomenon has a contem-

The power of the Chinese text to determine our reading of the past applies not just to works of history, however. In working recently on some of the material produced to accompany the “Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality” exhibition (the catalogue,⁶ and an audio guide),⁷ and as I thought about that most fabled creation of the short-lived dynasty, the Epang Palace, eternal token of the dynasty’s wanton extravagance, and of hubris and imperial overreach more generally, my mind turned naturally to Du Mu’s 杜牧 (803-852), “Rhapsody on the Epang Palace” (“Epanggong fu” 阿房宮賦). This present essay offers a translation of this rhapsody, along with some reflections occasioned by my reading of it.⁸ Over the many centuries since its composition during the Tang dynasty, it has been this poem above all that, in the absence of any ruins, has largely determined the manner in which later generations have imagined the grandeur of the complex, were it ever to have actually been finished.

On this last point, as we can see below, however precise the Han historian Sima Qian’s description of the palace in the “Basic Annals of the First Emperor of Qin” of his *Records of the Grand Historian* in terms of its planned dimensions, he seems ambiguous about whether or not the gigantic project was ever realised:

Thereupon, the First Emperor, declared: “Many are the inhabitants of Xianyang, but small are the palaces of the former kings. I have heard that King Wen of the Zhou built his capital at Feng, and King Wu his at Hao. A site somewhere in the vicinity of Feng and Hao, then, is the appropriate place for the capital of an emperor.” Thus did construction of imperial palaces begin, to the south of the River Wei and within the Upper Forest Park.⁹ Work on

porary dimension, given the Party-State’s close attention to the policing of history (as taught and as exhibited) in the People’s Republic of China. For a brief recent analysis of the politics of the museum in the context of the People’s Republic of China, see the discussion of the Jianchuan Museum Cluster 建川博物館 established in Sichuan by the property magnate Fan Jianchuan 樊建川 (b. 1957), “Chaguan: A History of China in 8m Objects,” *The Economist*, 1st December, 2018, p. 38. As this article suggests, the sign seen throughout the museums that reads “We do not speak. Let the cultural relics speak” carries considerable symbolic meaning.

- 6 Rebecca Rice, ed. (and with Nathan Woolley), *Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality* 秦始皇兵马俑：永恒的守卫 (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2018).
- 7 Directed by Prudence Donald, Digital Producer, Experience Design and Content, Te Papa, and with Joel Baxendale, and Oliver Devlin (both of the Binge Culture Collective).
- 8 In an odd quirk of happenstance, quite independently of each other, both my friend and ex-colleague John Minford and I were struck at around the same time by the fact that no English-language translation of this rhapsody by Du Mu had been published, both of us having then sat down resolved to rectify that circumstance. John’s lovely version, under the title “The Great Palace of Ch’in,” has been made available on the China Heritage website of the Wairarapa Academy for New Sinology (<http://chinaheritage.net/>). After having lain “doggo” in terms of an English-language translation for the more than a millennium after it was written, as Ezra Pound might have put it, this present translation will thus be the second published of the rhapsody in the course of a single year.
- 9 Sima Qian provides the following description of what was built on the opposite bank of

Epang, the anterior palace, began first, five hundred paces east to west, fifty *zhang* north to south as planned,¹⁰ with, above, room to seat ten thousand people, and, below, space enough to erect flagstaves with banners a full five *zhang* high. Surrounding it was an elevated covered walkway that led all the way from below the main hall to the Southern Mountains, upon the summit of which was built a watchtower. Another walkway led from the Epang Palace across the River Wei and all the way on to Xianyang, designed to resemble the manner in which the Covered Walkway of Heaven's Extremity leads all the way along the Milky Way to the Royal Chambers.¹¹ The Epang palace was never completed; were it to have been completed, it would have been granted an imperially chosen name. Because the palace was constructed "Over There" (*epang*), it was commonly referred to in this manner by All-under-Heaven. Over 700,000 men, sentenced either to castration or to penal servitude, were consigned to work both on this complex and that found at Mount Li. Rock was quarried from the Northern Mountains, lumber shipped in from Shu and Jing. In the territory within the Pass it is estimated that a hundred palaces were built; and more than four hundred throughout the lands beyond the Pass.

於是始皇以為咸陽人多先王之宮廷小吾聞周文王都豐武王都鎬豐鎬之間帝王之都也乃營作朝宮渭南上林苑中先作前殿阿房東西五百步南北五十丈上可以坐萬人下可以建五丈旗周馳為閣道自殿下直抵南山表南山之顛以為闕為復道自阿房渡渭屬之咸陽以象天極閣道絕漢抵營室也阿房宮未成成欲更擇令名名之作宮阿

the river: "Every time the Qin defeated one or other of the feudal states, they would have constructed replicas of their palaces and halls, sited here on the northern bank of Xianyang and looking out over the River Wei to the south" (秦每破諸侯寫放其宮室作之咸陽北阪上南臨渭), for which, see *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), Vol. 1, p. 239. For an enlightening discussion of the "magical meaning...implied by this act of reduplication— analogous to the building, in the emperor's vast tomb, of a model of the entire known world", see Haun Saussy, "Empires, Gardens, Collections: How Each Explains the Others," in Q.S. Tong, Wang Shouren, and Douglas Kerr, eds., *Critical Zone 2: A Forum of Chinese and Western Knowledge* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), pp. 147-165. "A scale model of the conquered territory," Saussy argues, "is a more powerful index of conquest than an undifferentiated treasure-heap" (p. 149). As we see below, Sima Qian ascribes both terrestrial and celestial significance to the design features of the Epang palace.

- 10 In present-day terms, this equates with an east-to-west measurement of 69.3 metres, and a north-to-south measurement of 115.5 metres.
- 11 The terms used here, "Covered Walkway" (*gedao* 閣道), "Heaven's Extremity" (*tianji* 天極), "Milky Way" (*han* 漢), and "Royal Chambers" (*yingshi* 營室) are all astrological references, the last of which refers to one of the twenty-eight Lunar Lodges (*xiu* 宿) the ancient Chinese identified in the night sky. Sim Qian, in the "Monograph on Celestial Officials" ("Tianguan shu" 天官書) section of his history tells us that: "...the six latter stars that pass along the Milky Way and reach all the way to the Royal Chambers are called the Covered Walkway' (後六星絕漢抵營室曰閣道), for which, see *Shi ji*, Vol. 4, p. 1290. On the ancient Chinese understanding of the stars at this period, see Sun Xiaochun and Jacob Kistemaker, *The Chinese Sky during the Han: Constellating Stars & Society* (Leiden, New York, and Boston: Brill, 1997).

房故天下謂之阿房宮隱宮徒刑者七十餘萬人乃分作阿房宮或作鄴山發北山石椁乃寫蜀荆地材皆至關中計宮三百關外四百餘¹²

That the palace was as yet unfinished at the time of the First Emperor's death is confirmed by Sima Qian when he later returns to the topic:

In the fourth month, the Second Emperor returned to Xianyang and declared: "The former emperor determined that the palaces of Xianyang were too small, and so he oversaw work on the construction of the Epang Palace. The chambers and halls of this complex were not yet completed when he met with his death, and so work on the palace was halted in order that the soil that had been excavated for his mausoleum at Mount Li be replaced. Now that work on Mount Li has been largely completed, not to complete work on the palace would be to suggest that the former emperor had been excessive in his actions." Work on Epang thereupon recommenced, and measures were undertaken to pacify the barbarians at all four quarters, just as the First Emperor had planned.

四月二世還至咸陽曰先帝為咸陽朝廷小故營阿房宮為室堂未就會上崩罷其作者復土鄴山鄴山事大畢今釋阿房宮弗就則是章先帝舉事過也復作阿房宮外撫四夷如始皇計¹³

Such were the disordered circumstances of the brief reign of the Second Emperor (Qin Ershi 秦二世; Huhai 胡亥; 229-207 BCE; r. 209-207 BCE) that it is doubtful that much work on the palace could have been completed, even had it actually commenced.

Later historians have tended to believe that in all likelihood Sima Qian's description of the palace exaggerated its dimensions; few however have doubted that whatever of the palace had been built at the time of the fall of the Qin was destroyed when Xiang Yu 項羽 (Xiang Ji 項籍; 232-202 BCE), the unsuccessful contender for the Qin Mandate of Heaven, sacked their capital. Sima Qian's terse description of this tragic moment is justly famous:

Having halted for several days, Xiang Yu then led his troops to the west in order to sack Xianyang, in course of which he had Ziyang, the surrendered king of Qin, slaughtered, and all the Qin halls and palaces incinerated.¹⁴ The fires

12 *Shi ji*, Vol. 1, p. 256.

13 *Shi ji*, Vol. 1, pp. 268-269.

14 Li Zhi's interlinear comment to a sentence that reads: "When the Han army entered the Pass, Ziyang [the third and last ruler of the Qin] surrendered and the Qin was destroyed" (漢兵入關子嬰降而秦亡) is characteristically to the point: "Oh what joy this was!" (忒快煞), for which, see Zhang Jianye 張建業 ed., *Li Zhi wenji* 李贄文集 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000), Vol. 2, p. 18.

burned for a full three months. Once he had commandeered their possessions and their treasures, and seized also their womenfolk, he departed for the east. An advisor happened to speak up in the hope of persuading King Xiang: “The territory within the Pass is secure within its mountain fastness and protected by rivers at all four quarters. The soil here is fertile. Establish your capital here and you will reign supreme.” Seeing that the halls and palaces of the Qin now lay in ruins and wishing also in his heart to return home to the east, King Xiang replied: “Not to return to one’s ancestral land once one has become rich and famous is akin to travelling at night dressed in one’s finest brocade robes; who will know what you have made of yourself!” The advisor was later to exclaim: “Truly it is said of the men of Chu that they are merely apes who have been given a bath and had hats placed upon their heads.” When King Xiang was told what had been said, he had the advisor boiled to death.

居數日項羽引兵西屠咸陽殺禽降王子嬰燒秦宮室火三月不滅收其貨寶婦女而東人或說項王曰關中阻山河四塞地肥饒可都以霸項王見秦宮室皆以燒殘破又心懷思欲東歸曰富貴不歸故鄉如衣繡夜行誰知之者說者曰人言楚人沐猴而冠耳果然項王聞之烹說者¹⁵

Recent archaeological evidence would suggest that the palace, as planned, might have been even larger than Sima Qian claimed it was, that it was indeed never completed, and that, as such, it was never razed to the ground.¹⁶

Down through the ages, however, it has been the image of the palace and its tragic fate as depicted in the words of a Tang poet that most powerfully captured the imaginations of Chinese readers. “Chinese civilization did not lodge its history in buildings,” Frederick Mote argued some years ago.¹⁷ In similar vein, in his resonant

15 “Xiang Yu Benji” 項羽本紀 [Basic Annals of Xiang Yu], *Shi ji*, Vol. 1, p. 315.

16 On the palace and its fate, see Charles Sanft, “The Construction and Deconstruction of Epanggong: Notes from the Crossroads of History and Poetry,” *Oriens Extremus*, 47 (2008): 160-176. My translations of the relevant sources as cited by Sanft and given above, differ from those that he offers in a number of places. See also, Cary Y. Liu, “The Qin and Han Imperial City: Modelling and Visualizing Architecture,” in Zhixin Jason Sun, ed., *Age of Empires: Art of the Qin and Han Dynasties* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2017), pp. 29-37. Of particular interest in the context of my present concerns is Liu’s discussion (pp. 31-32) of the issue of city walls: “...if we accept the absence of a city wall as determinative archaeological evidence by which to model Xianyang, then that knowledge may cause us to rethink the very nature of early Chinese cities. Unexpectedly, the idea that early cities may not have always been walled is substantiated by Western Han Chang’an, which is usually thought to be a walled capital but was actually not encircled in its early formation.” In Chinese on the Epang Palace and its afterlife, see Zheng Yan 鄭岩, “Epanggong: Jiyi yu xiangxiang” 阿房宮：記憶與想像 [The Epang Palace: Memory and Imagination], *Meishu yanjiu* 美術研究 [Art Research] (2011): 55-69.

17 F.W. Mote, “A Millennium of Chinese Urban History: Form, Time and Space Concepts in Soochow,” *Rice University Studies*, 59.4 (1973): 35-66; I borrow the title of my paper from this article.

essay “The Chinese Attitude to the Past,” Simon Leys (Pierre Ryckmans) addressed what he believes to be a paradox: “...cultivation of the moral and spiritual values of the ancients appears to have most often combined with a curious neglect of, or indifference (even at times downright iconoclasm) towards, the material heritage of the past.”¹⁸ He continues: “Thus, the past which continues to animate Chinese life in so many striking, unexpected or subtle ways seems to inhabit *the people* rather than the bricks and stones. The Chinese past is both spiritually active and physically invisible.”¹⁹ The partial exception that lends support to this claim is that whereas (thanks largely to Sima Qian) later generations have had access to the texts of the seven stelae that the First Emperor had erected on various mountaintops during course of his tours of his newly established empire, all of which “extoll the virtues of the Qin” (*song Qin de* 頌秦德), the only authentic fragments that remain are of the stone that was erected (*li shi* 立石) on the “Terrace on Mount Langye” 琅耶臺 (in present-day Shandong) in 219 BCE.²⁰

Constructed in wood on tamped earthen foundations, the palaces of China’s past, especially, left few traces, apart from the clay tile-ends of their once imposing roofs and, as in the Te Papa exhibition, a huge jade door knocker. When the art historian Wu Hung set out to survey ruin images in Chinese painting, he was forced to confront the conclusion that his lack of success in locating such images “...challenges the universality of this European phenomenon and reorients a study of ruins in Chinese art in two essential ways. First, because pictorial portrayals of architectural ruins are virtually absent in traditional Chinese painting, we need to uncover other kinds of visual expressions embodying the *huaigu* [懷古; the poetic genre that engages in ‘laments for the past’ or ‘meditates on the past’] experience. Second, because poetry and painting employ different idioms to convey such experience, we need to discard a rigid parallelism between these two art forms, and to rethink their relationship based on a close observation of actual examples.”²¹ Relevantly, when discussing the work of the modern Cantonese artist Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879-1951) and the extent to which his work served to intertwine the histories of Chinese and global art, Wu Hung mentions Gao’s early and undated painting (based on one done by the Japanese artist Kimura Buzan 木村武山 [1876-1942]) entitled “Burning the Epang Palace” (“Huoshao epanggong” 火燒阿房宮).²²

18 “The Chinese Attitude to the Past,” in Simon Leys, *The Hall of Uselessness* (Collingwood: Black Ink, 2011), p. 239.

19 Simon Leys, *The Hall of Uselessness* (Collingwood: Black Ink, 2011), p. 241; italics in the original.

20 On this issue, see Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 2000).

21 *A Story of Ruins: Presence and Absence in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 19.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

The modern and Western-influenced shift in the manner of engaging with the past in China is illustrated by, particularly, the “invention” of what constitutes something of a National Ruin, that of the Old Summer Palace or Garden of Perfect Brightness (Yuan Ming Yuan 圓明園) in the north-western suburbs of Beijing.²³ It is also illustrated in the domain of museums and exhibitions, now the locus of an intense party-State sponsored re-engagement with the past in the People’s Republic of China. As fundamental as the economic and social transformations that the country has undergone over the course of the past four decades have been, perhaps as remarkable, if far less often remarked upon, are the cultural reformulations that have also taken place over this short period of time. The Chinese past and its various cultural and spiritual traditions, in particular, once firmly consigned to the dustbin of history by some of the finest minds of Qing, Republican, and Maoist China as constituting little more than an obstacle to modernity, has made a quite remarkable comeback and now assumes an ever greater role within contemporary political and cultural discourses, especially those associated with Xi Jinping 習近平 (b. 1953) and his “China Dream” (中國夢). One particular expression of the nexus between this return of the past and the economic transformation of China has been the extraordinary expansion of exhibitory space of one sort or another, both state (*guanfang* 官方) and private (*minban* 民辦), a development that has been described as “China’s great museum race” and which Kirk Denton has labelled “the postsocialist museum boom of the 1990s and beyond.”²⁴ In this connection, it is useful to remember that Xi Jinping’s first public act after being installed as president of the PRC in 2012 was to pay a visit to the ‘Road to Revival’ (復興之路) exhibition at the newly-renovated National Museum of China (Zhongguo guojia bowuguan 中國國家博物館), this being also the first occasion on which he spoke about his particular vision of the future.²⁵ As is only to be expected, the role of the Terracotta Warriors has been fundamental in these developments, both domestically and internationally.²⁶ As David Davies has argued, the Emperor Qin Shihuang’s Mausoleum Site Museum is now a

23 On which, see Wu Hung, *A Story of Ruins: Presence and Absence in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, pp.155-163; Haiyan Lee, “The Ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, How to Enjoy a National Wound”, in Marc Andre Matten, ed., *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 193-231; and Geremie Barmé, “The Garden of Perfect Brightness: A Life in Ruins”, *East Asian History*, 11 (1996): 111-158.

24 See Kirk A. Denton, *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014); Denton intends the term “postsocialist” of his subtitle “to suggest that China has entered a historical period that is at once starkly different from and yet still very much connected to its socialist past,” p. 7. For a discussion of this book and a number of other recent treatments of the topic, see my review essay in *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research*, 2 (2014): 222-227.

25 For an annotated version of the official translation of Xi Jinping’s March 2013 speech, see Geremie Barmé, “Chinese Dreams,” in Geremie R. Barmé and Jeremy Goldkorn, eds., *Civilising China: China Story Yearbook 2013* (Canberra: Australian Centre on China in the World, 2013), pp. 5-13.

26 On this last point, see Magnus Fiskesjö, “Terra-cotta Conquest: The First Emperor’s Clay Army’s Blockbuster Tour of the World,” *Verge: Studies in Global Asia*, 1.1 (2015): 162-183.

significant site "...for representing and negotiating 'Chinese culture' [and]...the silent terracotta warriors have been imbued with meaning and value by tying national identity to the imaginings of place as sited and framed by the museum and the tourist industry... The museum offers a carefully organized 'sight,' a tableau of the ancient Chinese past that is animated by touristic imagination as informed by prior texts of the warrior's significance—with each visit propagating new memories of an ancient China."²⁷

In his short introduction to his selection of poems by Du Mu, Angus Graham says of him that "...there is more joy in him than in any T'ang poet later than Li Po."²⁸ His was a joy (and a delight in wine and women, flowers and birds) that was earned despite rather than because of the circumstances of his life, however, and a joy coloured by nostalgia and frustration. The grandson of the eminent statesman Du You 杜佑 (735-812), with whom he seems to have lived his early life in some considerable degree of opulence, Du Mu's family fortunes appear to have experienced steep decline after the death, first, of his grandfather, followed some few years later by that of his father. Having qualified himself for high office in 825 through passing the Presented Scholar (*jìnshì* 進士) examinations and managing throughout his career to avoid being caught up in some of the worst consequences of the factionalised conflict that characterised the court at the time, he nonetheless never rose to the official heights that he and his contemporaries might have expected of him, or that his talents may have vouchsafed.

As a poet, Du Mu is best known for his quatrains (*jueju* 絕句), an example of which I offer as the epigraph to this paper, a poem that recalls the tragic fate of one of Chinese history's loveliest gardens.²⁹ He was also a prose writer of some considerable

- 27 David J. Davies, "Qin Shihuang's Terracotta Warriors and Commemorating the Cultural State," in Marc Andre Matten, ed., *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity*, pp. 17-49 (this citation, p. 46).
- 28 A.C. Graham, trans., *Poems of the Late T'ang* (Penguin Books, 1977), p. 121. More recently, there have been two selections of Du Mu's poems in English translation published: R.F. Burton, trans., *Plantains in the Rain: Selected Chinese Poems of Du Mu* (London: Wellsweep, 1990); and David Young and Jiann I. Lin, trans., *Out on the Autumn River: Selected Poems of Du Mu* (Akron, Ohio: Rager Media, 2007).
- 29 The celebrated Golden Valley Garden (金谷園) once owned by Shi Chong 石崇 (249-300), the wealthiest man of his age. "The Biography of Shi Chong" in the *History of the Jin Dynasty* (*Jinshu* 晉書) provides the following account of the occasion captured in Du Mu's poem: "At that time, the Prince of Zhao, Sima Lun, had taken power. Shi Chong's nephew, Ouyang Jian, was then in dispute with Sima Lun. Shi Chong owned a concubine named Green Pearl (Lüzhu 綠珠), a dazzling beauty who was a skilled player of the flute. Sun Xiu sent somebody to fetch her away from him. Shi Chong was at the time at his resort in Golden Valley. He had just ascended the terrace to enjoy the landscape, and his women were at his side. After the messenger had stated his request, Shi Chong had each one of his slave girls and concubines (several tens of them altogether) led out and paraded before the messenger. They were all of them scented with essence of orchid and musk, dressed in robes of finest silk gauze. Shi Chong said to the messenger: 'Pick any one of these!' But the messenger replied: 'Indeed, a great display of beauty. I have, however, received express orders to bring Green Pearl. I do not know which one of these is her.' The look on Shi Chong's face changed. 'It happens that I love Green Pearl,' he replied, 'and so she is not available.' The messenger replied: 'Your Excellency, you are conversant with the affairs of past and present,

distinction, the preface that he wrote for a collection of poems by the eccentric contemporary Li He 李賀 (791-817) being justly famous,³⁰ whilst his commentary to *Master Sun's Art of War* (*Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法) is well regarded.³¹ This rhapsody (or *fu* 賦 in Chinese, often also translated as prose-poem), one of only three extant examples of the genre that he wrote and conventionally dated 825, is also the earliest dated of his poems. Later commentators believed that the critique aimed here at the extravagance of the First Emperor of the Qin was in fact a veiled attack on that of the short-reigned Emperor Jingzong 敬宗 (809-827; r. 824-827) of Du Mu's own age.³²

you are equally discerning about affairs remote and close at hand. I beg you to think this over.' 'No, I will not change my mind,' insisted Shi Chong. The messenger departed, only to return sometime later; but Shi Chong remained adamant. Sun Xiu, angered, induced Sima Lun to have both Shi Chong and Ouyang Jian executed. But Shi Chong and his nephew learned about their plans. Together with the Imperial Secretary Pan Yue they secretly induced Sima Yun, Prince of Huainan, to enter into a conspiracy against Sima Lun and Sun Xiu. Sun Xiu, however, got wind of this and he forged an Imperial mandate to arrest the three of them. Shi Chong happened to be having his evening meal in an upper story of the tower in his garden when the armed guards arrived at the gate. He turned to Green Pearl to say: 'The time has come for me to suffer punishment on your behalf.' She burst into tears: 'It is fitting that I should die in front of the officials.' Thereupon, she threw herself from the upper story and died. Shi Chong said: 'I shall probably just be banished to Jiaozhou or Guangzhou.' But when the carriage reached the execution ground of the Eastern Market, Shi Chong sighed: 'Ah-ha, it is my wealth that the scoundrels are after.' The guard answered: 'You well knew that your wealth would bring you ruin; why did you not rid yourself of it long ago?' To this, Shi Chong had no reply. Together with Shi Chong, his mother and older brother, his wife and children irrespective of their ages, were all put to death. Altogether fifteen people died. Shi Chong was at that time in his fifty-second year."

- 30 Of him, Du Mu wrote that: "...deserted kingdoms, ruined palaces, withered grass and grave mounds do not serve fully to express the extent of his rancour and his sorrow; whales spouting and sea turtles whirling, oxen ghosts and snake spirits do not adequately express his air of unreality, of wildness, of extravagance and of illusion." In an odd quirk of history, during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) the expression "oxen ghosts and snake spirits" (牛鬼蛇神) was employed to denounce "landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements, and Rightists."
- 31 For an English-language translation of his interlinear commentary to this work, see John Minford, trans., *The Art of War* (Penguin Books, 2002)
- 32 Reference to the Epang Palace as token of extravagance quickly became a time-honoured trope. Speaking of the Western Capital of Luoyang in his "Two Capitals Rhapsody" ("Liang du fu" 兩都賦), the Han dynasty historian Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) writes (in David Knechtges's translation): "Knight-errantry and excessive extravagance,/ That violate propriety, transgress the rites./ How can they compare with our uniform conformity to rules and standards./ Our respectful and reverent attitude, dignified and stately demeanour?! You know only the Qin Ebang Palace that reaches to the heavens,/ And are unaware that the Capital Luo conforms to set regulations," for which, see David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature: Volume One: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Vol. 1, p. 173. Please note that working from a phonetic gloss attached to Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian*, Knechtges suggests that the pronunciation of the name of the place should best be rendered Ebang.

“Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality” includes a room given over to the architectural dimensions of the first empires of a unified China. Displayed here are a number of bronze beam-fittings decorated with dragon motifs (*xiexing tonggou jian* 楔形銅構件), several hollow (but extremely weighty) decorated pottery bricks (*kongxin zhuan* 空心磚), some gate ring holders (*pushou* 鋪首), and numerous ornate title-ends (*wadang* 瓦當), decorated with various floral and animal motifs, including a large (38.2 x 50.8cm) title-end excavated in 1993 from the Qin dynasty Yellow Mountain Palace at Xingping, Shaanxi Province. Bringing these architectural elements back to life is a remarkable animation of the Epang Palace (by the Wellington-based National Park Studios), as depicted in a painting by the Qing dynasty court painter Yuan Jiang 袁江 (1662-1735), a man who specialized in architectural paintings.³³ In the upper left-hand corner of this painting, now held in the Palace Museum in Beijing, is the text of Du Mu’s rhapsody, with a colophon by the eminent late-Qing dynasty reformist statesman Song Bolu 宋伯魯 (1854-1932), a man who had been born not too far distant from the site of the palace, as follows:

During the fifth month of the *Gengjia* year [1920], my relative Master Tie, the Grand Protector, acquired this vertical scroll by Yuan Jiang in twelve sections and entitled “Painting of the Epang Palace,” and in admiration of the precise beauty of its brushwork and thinking also of the extent to which the tyrannical Qin took as its blessing extravagance in the extreme in pursuit of their wanton desires, he asked me to calligraph on its surface Du Mu’s “Rhapsody on the Epang Palace,” in order both to authenticate the painting and give vent to the manner in which it moved him to a consideration of the waxing and waning of history’s vicissitudes.

Written (along with this colophon) by Song Bolu of Liqian, then in the sixty-seventh year of his life.

33 On Yuan Jiang, and the type of painting style that he mastered, the *jiehua* 界畫 or “boundary drawing,” see Anita Chung, *Drawing Boundaries: Architectural Images in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004). In the absence of detailed biographical information about the practice of this man, and his main disciple Yuan Yao 袁耀 (fl. 1670-1740) (either Yuan Jiang’s son or his nephew), Zheng Yan suggests that the possible sources for Yuan Jiang’s depiction of the Epang Palace were threefold: (i) Song dynasty painting still extant in Yuan Jiang’s day but no longer; (ii) textual descriptions of Song dynasty paintings of the palace no longer extant in Yuan Jiang’s day; or (iii) Du Mu’s rhapsody, for which see his “Epanggong: Ji yi yu xiangxiang”, p. 60. Zheng makes the important point that, given the differing properties of poetry and painting, whereas the former could be explicitly didactic in their depiction of the lavishness and size of the palace, later tended to be celebratory. For the most important general Chinese-language discussion of the differing properties of the two art forms remains that of Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 (1910-1998), “Zhongguo shi yu zhongguo hua” 中國詩與中國畫, in *Qi zhui ji* 七綴集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), pp. 1-28; for an English-language translation of this essay, under the title “Chinese Poetry and Chinese Painting”, see Duncan M. Campbell, trans., *Patchwork: Seven Essays on Art and Literature* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 29-78. The landscape surrounding the palace as depicted by Yuan Jiang bears no resemblance whatsoever to that of the assumed site for the proposed edifice.

庚甲五月吾家鐵某都護獲袁文滯所繪阿房宮圖立軸十二幀愛其筆墨之精美而又以念暴秦之以窮奢極慾己其祚也屬余書杜牧阿房宮賦於其上既以證斯畫且以發其盛衰興廢之感焉醴泉宋伯魯書並識時年六十七

Doubtless, Du Mu's imaginative reconstruction of this ill-fated palace will continue to determine how Chinese readers conceive of both its physical appearance, and the moral lessons it embodies. My hope is that the following translation will allow English-language readers, too, to engage with this palace of the poetical imagination.

“Rhapsody on the Epang Palace” (“Epangong fu” 阿房宮賦)³⁴

The kings of the Six States all brought to their knees,³⁵
 All within the four seas made one.
 Only once the hills of Shu³⁶ had been denuded of their trees,
 Did Epang Palace begin to take shape.
 So far it stretched as to cover a full three hundred li,
 So high it soared, so high as to block off sight of sun.
 To the north of Mount Li it extended, to the west it turned.
 Bubbling and bubbling the two rivers,³⁷
 Flow beneath palace walls.
 A tower every five paces,
 A pavilion at every ten.
 Covered walkways creeping and crawling like a vine,
 Rafter ends pecking at the sky like the beaks of birds.
 Each building hugging the contours of the land,
 Vying with the others, each more exquisite in the detailing of its craftsmanship.³⁸

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- 34 The text of the rhapsody that I translate below is that found in *Bao Rong shiji: Fanchuan wenji* 鮑溶詩集：樊川文集 [Collected Poems of Bao Rong: Prose Writings of Du Mu] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), p. 6; my punctuation.
- 35 In the immortal words of the Han historian Sima Qian (*Shi ji*, Vol. 1, p. 276), the Six States fell to the Qin, one after another, “...like a silkworm devouring mulberry leaves” (稍蠶食諸侯), in the following order: Han 韓 (230 BCE), Zhao 趙 (228 BCE), Wei 魏 (225 BCE), Chu 楚 (223 BCE), Yan 燕 (222 BCE), and Qi 齊 (221 BCE).
- 36 The territory of the state of Shu 蜀 was centred on the Chengdu Plain of what is nowadays Sichuan Province. The fall of the state to the armies of the Qin in 316 BCE gave them access to the reserves of salt and iron that served to underpin that state's later expansion eastwards. Many of the administrative measures advocated by the reformist statesman Shang Yang 商鞅 (c. 390-338 BCE) and subsequently enacted throughout the newly established empire once it had been established by the Qin in 221 BCE were first trailed in Shu.
- 37 The two rivers referred to here are the Wei River 渭水 and the River Fan 樊川, to the north and the east of the palace complex, respectively. Du Mu was born on the banks of this latter river, hence his sobriquet Fanchuan.
- 38 Sources (Bi Yuan 畢沅 ed., *Sanfu huangtu* 三輔黃圖 [Illustrated Description of the Three Capital Districts], 1784) claim that the beams of the palace were made from magnolia wood, and the gates of lodestone, as an early form of metal detection.

Twisting and turning,
Winding and whirling,
Like a hornet's nest or a river's whirlpool,
Uncountable the towers and halls that stretch towards the heavens.
Long bridges suspended above the waves, like dragons but with no scudding cloud.
Covered walkways soaring through the air, like rainbows without any accompanying rain.

A maze of buildings both high and low, how to tell east from west?
Warm sounds resound from music stage, amidst the shimmering rays of spring,
Cold sleeves flutter in dancing halls, chilled by wind and rain.
Over the course of a single day,
Within the confines of a single palace,
The weather seems always so changeable, seems always so very inconstant.
Concubines and palace serving maids,
Princes and royal grandsons,
All now quit their towers, depart their halls,
And in carriages do they process to the state of Qin,
There to sing in the morning,
And to strum at night,
As palace attendants now at the court of Qin.

Like bright stars glittering shine the mirrors of the makeup boxes pulled open,
Like green clouds scudding seem the combs as they go about their morning tasks.
A waxy sheen is lent the surface of the Wei River's flow by the washed-off rouge,
Wafting smoke and drifting mists rise from incense of fragrant pepper and pungent orchid.

And then, all of a sudden, is heard the rumble of thunder as the imperial carriage passes by,

The grind of its axles heard afar, none sure of its destination.
Each feature, every complexion,
Exquisite of winsome beauty.
Standing with necks craned gazing into the distance,
Always with the hope of royal visitation in mind.
Some there are who were left waiting for the full thirty-six years.
The collections of the states of Yan and Zhao,
The manufactures of the states of Han and Wei,
The treasures of the states of Qi and Chu,
Accumulated over many a generation past, now all were seized,
To be piled up as high as a mountain.
Overnight they were dispossessed,
All was removed to rest within the palaces of the Qin.
Tripods and wine jugs, pieces of jade, ingots of gold, and shards of pearl,
Discarded now in a jumble,
For the people of Qin paid no heed to such things.
Alas!
The heart of that solitary man,
Was a heart shared by the ten thousand.

Such was the Qin love of luxury and splendour,
 That this it was what everyone now wished for their own clan.
 Why was it that that they demanded from them even the most trifling amounts,
 To then be wasted as if amounting to little more than dirt?
 More pillars in this palace than peasants tilling the southern fields,
 More rafters in its roofs than women plying their looms,
 More heads of shining nail than millet grains in the granary,
 More rows of tiles than silken threads lining one's gown,
 More balustrades than walls throughout all nine kingdoms,
 And more sobbing sound of string and flute than voices in the marketplace.
 Angered were the people of All-under-Heaven, but none there were who dared
 speak up,³⁹
 As day by day more arrogant grew the heart of the tyrant.
 Then border guards rose up,
 And Hangu Pass was taken.⁴⁰
 A man of Chu, with torch in hand,
 To scorched earth did reduce this pitiable palace.
 Alas!
 It was the Six States themselves that brought about their demise, not the Qin.
 It was the Qin itself that brought disaster upon its own head, not All-under-Heaven.
 Alack!

39 As recorded in the Song dynasty collection of anecdotes entitled *Elegant Tales from Mount Dao* (*Daoshan qinghua* 道山清話) and attributed to Wang Wei 王暉, and as purportedly overheard very late one evening by Su Guo 蘇過 (1072-1123), Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037-1101) third son, his father (then in exile and sitting in Snowy Hall 雪堂) became so overwhelmed by his repeated re-reading of Du Mu's rhapsody on one occasion that he continued poring over it until after the fourth watch of the night, sighing mournfully as he did so, to the immense irritation of his attendants. In a thick "Western" Shaanxi accent, one of them turned to the other to say: "Do you have any idea what is so good about the poem, keeping him out of bed so late on a bitterly cold night like this, moaning away with bitter resentment?", to which his interlocutor replied: "It does contain a good line or two." At this, the first attendant retorted angrily: "And what the hell do you know about it?". "I love that line in it that goes: "Angered were the people of All-under-Heaven, but none there were who dared speak up" was the reply. Much later, in a letter written to his brother, the eccentric Qing dynasty poet, calligrapher, and painter Zheng Xie 鄭燮 (1693-1765), better known as Zheng Banqiao 鄭板橋, makes use of this anecdote as part of his argument that good reading always requires re-reading, for which see, "First Letter to Brother Mo, from the Magistrate's Residence in Weixian" ("Weixian shuzhong ji shedi Mo diyishu" 濰縣署中寄舍弟墨第一書), in *Zheng Banqiao ji* 鄭板橋集 [A Collection of the Writings of Zheng Xie] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1962), p. 15.

40 Chen Sheng 陳勝 (d. 208 BCE), also known as Chen She 陳涉, the leader of the first major uprising against the Qin had been ordered to the northern border to defend again the Xiongnu. He was forced into rebellion, Sima Qian tells us, when a storm prevented him arriving at his post before the stipulated deadline. Hangu Pass 函谷關 separates the valleys of the upper Yellow and Wei Rivers from the North China Plain. Strategically, it played a vital role during the Qin expansion, ensuring that its home territories were impregnable. By legend, it is at this site that Laozi 老子, the putative author of the *Daode jing* 道德經 [The Classic of the Way and Virtue] handed over the text of his work to a border guard before being granted permission to travel off to the west.

If only the Kings of the Six States had loved their people,
This would have been enough to hold at bay the Qin.
And if the Qin in turn had loved the people of the Six States,
Not three generations but a thousand would it have lasted,
For who then could have stood against them?
The people of the Qin had no time to mourn themselves,
But we in later generations have mourned them much.
And yet we mourn them and do not learn their lesson,
And learning not that lesson,
Will not later generations mourn us as we now mourn them?

六王畢，四海一，
蜀山兀，阿房出。
覆壓三百餘裏，隔離天日。
驪山北構而西折，直走咸陽。
二川溶溶，流入宮牆。
五步一樓，十步一閣；
廊腰縵回，簷牙高啄；
各抱地勢，鉤心鬥角。
盤盤焉，囷囷焉，蜂房水渦，
矗不知其幾千萬落。
長橋臥波，未雲何龍？
複道行空，不霽何虹？
高低冥迷，不知西東。
歌台暖響，春光融融；
舞殿冷袖，風雨淒淒。
一日之內，一宮之間，而氣候不齊。

妃嬪媵嬙，王子皇孫，
辭樓下殿，輦來于秦。
朝歌夜弦，爲秦宮人。
明星燦燦，開妝鏡也；
綠雲擾擾，梳曉鬢也；
渭流漲膩，棄脂水也；
煙斜霧橫，焚椒蘭也。
雷霆乍驚，宮車過也；
轆轤遠聽，杳不知其所之也。
一肌一容，盡態極妍，
縵立遠視，而望幸焉；
有不得見者三十六年。
燕趙之收藏，韓魏之經營，
齊楚之精英，幾世幾年，
剽掠其人，倚疊如山；
一旦不能有，輸來其間，
鼎鑪玉石，金塊珠礫，棄擲邈迤，
秦人視之，亦不甚惜。

嗟乎！

一人之心，

千萬人之心也。

秦愛紛奢，人亦念其家。

奈何取之盡鎔錙，用之如泥沙？

使

負棟之柱，多於南畝之農夫；

架梁之椽，多於機上之工女；

釘頭磷磷，多於在庾之粟粒；

瓦縫參差，多於周身之帛縷；

直欄橫檻，多於九土之城郭；

管弦嘔啞，多於市人之言語。

使

天下之人，不敢言而敢怒。

獨夫之心，日益驕固。

戍卒叫，函谷舉，

楚人一炬，可憐焦土！

嗚呼！

滅六國者六國也，非秦也。

族秦者秦也，非天下也。

嗟夫！

使

六國各愛其人，

則足以拒秦；

使

秦複愛六國之人，

則遞三世可至萬世而為君，

誰得而族滅也？

秦人不暇自哀，而後人哀之；

後人哀之而不鑒之，

亦使後人而複哀後人也。

Biographical Note

Duncan M. Campbell has taught (Chinese language, modern and classical; Chinese literature, modern and classical; and aspects of Chinese history and civilisation) at the University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington, and the Australian National University in Canberra. In 2015, he was the Curator of the Chinese Garden with The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, USA.