

Selected Poems of the Three Caos:

Cao Cao, Cao Pi, and Cao Zhi

三曹诗选英译

〔美〕吴伏生 编译 〔英〕格雷厄姆·哈蒂尔 Wu Fusheng Graham Hartill





中国古典文学英译丛书

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前言

三曹,又称"曹氏父子",是指曹操(155-120)和他的 儿子曹丕(187-226)、曹植(192-232)。曹操是三国时期 的一代枭雄。他占据北方,与南方的吴、蜀三分天下,死后 谥称魏武帝。曹丕在曹操死后继承父业,并且代汉称帝,建 立魏国,谥称魏文帝。曹植少年时才华横溢,曹操一度曾有 意立他为太子。后因曹植行为放纵,曹操只好放弃,最终传 位给曹植之兄曹丕。曹丕对此始终耿耿于怀,在继位后对曹 植横加迫害。他曾令曹植于七步内作诗一首,不成便将他处 死。曹植从容地于七步内吟出了著名的《七步诗》,令曹丕 愧色满颜。这些故事,两千年来经由各种文学和艺术表现, 在中国已经是家喻户晓。

在中国文学史中,三曹的诗歌创作也是一个世代流传的 佳话。早在南北朝时期,人们便开始把他们相提并论。刘勰 (?-520)在《文心雕龙·时序》中说:

魏武以相王之尊,雅爱诗章;文帝以副君之重,妙善辞赋;陈思以公子之豪,下笔琳琅。

刘勰进而把建安时期文学,尤其是诗歌的繁荣归功于曹氏父子。由于他们对诗歌创作身体力行,加之本人"体貌英逸",使得当时"俊才云蒸",各路英杰纷纷望门投止,献功效力。钟嵘(约468-518)在《诗品·序》中也说由于"曹公父子笃好斯文",使得"盖将百计"的文士云集于邺,形成了"彬彬之盛,大备于时"的局面,使两汉以来"吟咏靡闻"、"诗人之风顿已缺丧"的诗坛为之一振,重现新生。不仅如此,刘勰还就以曹氏父子为代表的建安文学之特点做了如下经典描述:

观其时文,雅好慷慨,良由世积乱离,风衰俗怨,并志深而笔长,故梗概而多气也。

用现代批评术语对刘勰、钟嵘的上述评论加以诠释和补充,便是建安诗歌扎根于当时的社会历史土壤,既具有现实主义的内容,也充满了强烈的抒情精神和主体意识,因而突破了"质木无文"(《诗品·序》)的两汉诗歌之沉寂与局限,恢复了《诗经》、《楚辞》中的"言志"传统,为后代中国诗歌的发展起到了承前启后的作用。两千年来历代对曹氏父子诗歌的评论基本上不出上述文字所勾勒的大致轮廓。

曹氏父子之间的间隔虽然不长,但从他们的诗歌中, 我们可以看到中国诗歌演变的一个重要阶段,即由民间 杂言体向文人五言诗的过渡。在《诗品》中,钟嵘分别把 曹操、曹丕、曹植列在下、中、上三品。他虽然没有对如

此排列做出明确的解释, 但是他对三曹诗歌的评语却向我 们透露了其中的玄机。在谈到曹操的诗时,他只说其"古 直, 甚有悲凉之句", 只讲内容, 根本没有涉及诗歌的体 式和语言风格, 言外之意无非是曹操的诗在艺术上尚还粗 糙,故列为下品。相比之下,曹丕的诗虽然"率皆鄙直如 偶语", 但毕竟"美瞻可玩, 始见其工"; 也就是说, 曹 丕之所以高曹操一等,乃是因为他的诗已经具有"美"、 "工"的特色。到了曹植、则是把曹操的质朴与曹丕的美 工集于一身,达到了"骨气奇高,词彩华茂,情兼雅怨, 体被文质"的境界,因此"卓尔不群"。钟嵘身处梁朝, 正是"文贵形似"(《文心雕龙·物色》)的时代,因而他 的评判难免有所谓形式主义之嫌,后代不少论者尤其对其 将曹操列为下品颇感不平。但是,由曹操经曹丕至曹植, 中国诗歌由古朴至雅丽的发展演变轨迹的确清晰可见。曹 操诗歌现存二十余首,皆为乐府歌辞。曹丕诗歌现存约 四十首, 其中除了乐府歌辞之外, 已经有不少像《芙蓉池 作》、《清河作》等完全以个人经历为题材的作品。在曹 植的现存八十余首诗中,用于描写个人经历,如欢宴、离 别、赠答等的作品更是比比皆是。随着题材的个性化, 诗 歌的语言也随之被赋予了诗人的特色,逐渐脱离乐府歌辞, 呈现出追求形式工整、修辞浏亮的倾向。例如曹操的《气 出唱》、曹不的《折杨柳行》以及曹植的《五游咏》都是乐 府诗,它们所描写的也都是游仙这一汉乐府中的常见主题, 但它们的表现形式和语言特征却非常不同。下面分别征引 这三首诗的前几行,以做说明:



曹操《气出唱》

驾六龙,乘风而行,行四海外,路下之八邦。 历登高山,临溪谷,乘云而行,行四海外,东到泰山。 仙人玉女,下来遨游。

曹丕《折杨柳行》

西山一何高,高高殊无极。上有两仙僮,不饮亦不食。与我一丸药,光耀有五色。服药四五日,身体生羽翼。

曹植《五游》

九州不足步,愿得凌云翔。逍遥八纮外,游目历遐荒。 披我丹霞衣,袭我素霓裳。华盖芬晻蔼,六龙仰天骧。

曹操的诗为杂言体,全用口语。曹丕的诗已经成为工整的五言体,但仍带有较强的口语特征。曹植的诗则除了采用五言体之外,语言风格要比其父兄都更加精炼与优雅,实为后代文人五言诗的先声。明于此,我们也许便不会对钟嵘以己度人,求全责备,因为从文体进化与演变的角度来看,他对三曹诗歌的排列毕竟是言之有据。

早在二十世纪五十年代,余冠英先生便编选了《三曹诗选》(北京:人民文学出版社,1956)。我们编译这本《三曹诗选英译》,便是以这一选本为底本,并做了适当增减。除此之外,我们还参考了安徽亳县《曹操集》译注小组的《曹操集译注》(北京:中华书局,1979),夏传才、唐绍忠的《曹丕集校注》(郑州:中州古籍出版社,1992),赵幼文的

《曹植集校注》(北京:人民文学出版社,1984),以及刘跃进、王莉编著的《三曹》(北京:中华书局,2010),殷义祥译注的《三曹诗选译》(南京:凤凰出版社,2011),张强、田金霞解评的《三曹诗集》(太原:三晋出版社,2011)。《三曹诗选英译》共收入曹操诗十四首,曹丕诗二十三首,曹植诗四十八首,比例也与上述几个选本大同小异,反映了三曹诗歌的基本风貌。

在英语世界中,三曹诗歌的翻译只是散见于各种中国文学、诗歌的选集中,而且数量不多。我们的这个译本,可算是开拓之作。至于我们对诗歌翻译的理念与方法,已经在此前出版的《曹植诗歌英译》(北京:商务印书馆,2013)的前言中做过说明,兹不赘述。

在此,我们要感谢商务印书馆的许晓娟编辑,是她的建议和努力促成了此书的问世。能够继《曹植诗歌英译》后继续为商务印书馆这样在中国乃至世界上都享有盛誉的出版社翻译中国古典诗歌,我们为此感到荣幸与欣慰,并期待将来有更多机会合作。

吴伏生 Graham Hartill 2014年2月



Introduction

The "Three Caos" refer to Cao Cao (155-220) and his two

sons Cao Pi (187-226) and Cao Zhi (192-232). Cao Cao was the ruler in northern China during the Three Kingdoms era when the country was divided into three states. After his death, his son Cao Pi established the Wei Dynasty. He gave his father the posthumous title Emperor Wu of the Wei, and after his own death he was named Emperor Wen of the Wei. Cao Zhi, even when still young, was a brilliantly gifted poet. At one time Cao Cao intended to name him, instead of his older brother Cao Pi, the Heir Apparent; he had to give up this plan due to Cao Zhi's undisciplined life style, eventually letting Cao Pi succeed him. Cao Pi never forgave Cao Zhi for this. When he came to the throne, he repeatedly persecuted his younger brother. Once he ordered Cao Zhi to write a poem in seven steps or else face execution. Cao Zhi dashed out his famous "Seven-step Poem," which made Cao Pi rather ashamed. These anecdotes, via various

forms of representation throughout Chinese history, have become

familiar tales to people in different walks of society.



The Three Caos are renowned poets. In the history of Chinese literature, their poetic activities have also become legendary. As early as the sixth century critics have begun to name them together. Liu Xie (?-520), in his *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, remarks:

Emperor Wu of the Wei, who was then a prince and prime minister, had a deep love for poetry; Emperor Wen, who was then the heir apparent, was himself versed in poetry; the Prince of Chensi (Cao Zhi), wielded a brush whose style was brilliant as the sonorous jade.¹

Liu Xie further attributed the flourishing poetic production of the time to the Three Caos. Thanks to their passion and patronage, talented scholars came to join their cause like "gathering clouds." Another critic of the time, Zhong Rong (ca. 468-518), claims that the Three Caos, together with those poets under their patronage, revived lyric poetry, which had suffered neglect and decline during the previous Han Dynasty.

In the aforementioned work, Liu Xie also gives a classic characterization of the poetry of the time:



¹ Translated by Vincent Yu-chung Shih, in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1983), p. 463, with slight modification.

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An examination of their writings reveals that most of them are full of feeling. This is because they lived in a world marked by disorder and separation, and at a time when morals declined and the people were resentful. They felt all this deeply in their hearts, and this feeling was expressed in a moving style. For this reason their works are full of feeling and life.

In our current critical terminology, we may thus rephrase Liu Xie's comment: the poetry of the time was deeply rooted in its socio-political context, giving it a solid realistic footing and significance; since it originated from the poets' heartfelt engagement, it is suffused with a profound subjectivity. As such, the poetry of the Three Caos not only revived the ancient lyric tradition established in the *Book of Poetry* and *the Chu Songs*, but also paved the way for future development of Chinese poetry. Throughout the past two millennia Chinese criticism of the Three Caos' poetry has seldom gone beyond the perimeters set here by these ancient critics.

Although the time span covering the Three Caos is quite brief, we can nevertheless witness in their poetry an important stage in the evolution of Chinese poetry, namely the move from irregular folk meter to polished literati pentasyllabic poetry. In

¹ Translated by Vincent Yu-chung Shih, in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1983), p. 463, with slight modification.

his Ranking of Poetry, Zhong Rong put Cao Cao, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi in the third, second, and first ranks respectively. He offered no explicit explanations for this ranking, but his commentaries on their poetry might shed some light on this. In speaking about Cao Cao's poetry, he merely characterizes it as being "ancient, straightforward, and full of melancholy and sorrow." He makes no mention of its artistic feature, which seems to account for his decision to put Cao Cao's poetry in the lowest grade. Cao Pi's poetry, on the other hand, has begun to show some "beauty" and "refinement"; thus, although it is still colloquial in style, it marks an improvement upon Cao Cao's, hence deserving to be in the second grade. When we come to Cao Zhi's poetry, we witness a combination of "outstanding spirit and brilliant diction." Zhong Rong's was a time when artistic refinement was highly valued, so his judgment might have been biased. We can, however, discern a trend toward stylistic refinement in the poetry of Cao Cao and his two sons. Cao Cao has about 20 extant poems, all are old style music bureau lyrics. Cao Pi has about 40 extant pieces, which, in addition to music bureau poems, also include a few written at personal and social occasions. As for Cao Zhi, among the 80 or so poems that still survive, those that deal with personal and social occasions have greatly increased in number. As poetry became more personal, it required a more individualized medium and style. As a result, Chinese poetry during this period began to move away from the simple, formulaic, and folksy music bureau convention to



become more attuned to personal expression and artistic refinement. To demonstrate this we may take a look at the following excerpts from three poems on roaming immortals, which is a recurrent motif in music bureau poetry:

曹操《气出唱》

"A Song of Breathing" by Cao Cao

驾六龙,

乘风而行,

行四海外,

路下之八邦。

历登高山,

临溪谷,

乘云而行,

行四海外,

东到泰山。

仙人玉女,

下来遨游。

I drive six dragons

and ride the wind

beyond the Four Seas,

descending to the Eight States.

I would climb tall mountains everywhere,

and gaze at the streams in valleys.

I journey on clouds

beyond the Four Seas

eastward to Mount Tai,

where the immortals

and the jade girls gather to roam.

曹丕《折杨柳行》

"Song: Breaking a Willow Branch" by Cao Pi

西山一何高,

高高殊无极。

上有两仙僮,

How high is the Western Mountain!

Rising, rising, without termination.

At the summit live two immortal boys,

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