

193 十月

194 豐年禾黍登，農心稍逸樂。/195 小兒漸長大，終歲荷鋤鑿。/196 目不識一字，每念心作惡。東/197 鄰方迎師，收拾令入學。後/198 月日南至，相賀因舊俗。為/199 女裁新衣，脩短巧量度。/200 龜手事塞向，庶禦北風虐。/201 人生真可歎，至老長力作。

202 十一月

203 冬至陽來復，草木潛滋萌。/204 君子重其然，吾道自此亨。/205 父母坐堂上，子孫列前榮。再/206 拜稱上壽，所願百福并。人生/207 屬明時，四海方太平。民無札/208 瘥者，厚澤敷羣情。衣食苟/209 給足，禮義自此生。願言興/210 學校，庶幾教化成。

211 十二月

212 忽忽歲將盡，人事可稍休。/213 寒（林日夕）風吹桑林，⁹日夕聲/214 颼颼。牆南地不凍，壅掘為/215 坑溝。斫桑埋其中，明年芽/216 早抽。是月浴蠶種，自古相/217 傳流。蠶出易脫殼，絲績亦/218 倍收。及時不努力，知有來/219 歲否。手凍不足惜，冀免號/220 寒憂。

COLOPHONS

Saying'a 薩迎阿 (1781-1857), dated January 1857

(9 columns in semi-cursive script)

Carefully watching this handscroll, [I found that] all starting, ending and turning radicals were created in a consistent style. This piece was created when [Zhao Mengfu] just changed his style from imitating Li Yong 李邕 (678-747) to modelling after Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) and his son Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-386). The running of his brush was humble but spiritual and ingenious, perfectly in accordance with the Wangs' art. Though not as inscrutably excellent as his later works, it is not an achievement that Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) and Houshan 後山¹⁰ of the previous Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and Wang Shihong 汪士鋐 (1658-1723) and He Chao 何焯 (1661-1722) of our [Qing] dynasty could obtain.

⁹ The three characters *lin ri xi* 林日夕 are marked with dots on the right side, which means they should be removed.

¹⁰ I could not identify Houshan mentioned here.

On the day of winter solstice of the sixth year of the Xianfeng reign, seventy-six *sui* old Xianglin records in the Hall of the Five Fortunes at the Military Commander's Office in Xi'an.

細觀此卷，起收轉摺，始終一律，乃是初脫北海，漸入二/王時之作。用筆虛靈，深合晉/法。雖尚未臻神化自然之境，/已非昭代之思翁、後山與/國朝之退谷、義門諸書家/所能及也。/

咸豐六年長至日七十六叟湘林識于長/安帥署五福堂中。

Liu Qiqing 劉其清 (d.1883), dated January 1878

(1 column in regular script)

In the twelfth lunar month of the *ding chou* year of the Guangxu reign (January 1878), Liu Qiqing of Pinghu watches in Shanghai.

光緒丁丑臘月平湖劉其清觀於上海。

COLOPHON WRITERS' SEALS

Saying'a

miaoni shenxian 妙擬/神僊, circular relief

Saying'a yin 薩迎/阿印, square intaglio

Xianglin 湘/林, square intaglio

Liu Qiqing

Yunshan cengguan 蘊山/曾觀, square relief

COLLECTORS' SEALS

Wang Hongxu 王鴻緒 (1645-1723)

Yanzhai zhenshang 儼齋/真賞, square relief (suspicious)

Wu Yun 吳雲 (1811-1883)

Wu Yun Pingzhai jiancang shuhua yin 吳雲平/齋鑒藏/書畫印, square relief
(suspicious)

Saying'a

Xianglin guoyan 湘林/過眼, square intaglio, repeated twice

Sa weng ceng guan 薩翁/曾觀, square intaglio, repeated twice

Zhu Pu (Xingzhai) 朱樸 (朱省齋, 1902-1970)

Zhu Xingzhai shuhua ji 朱省齋/書畫記, tall rectangle relief

Xingzhai 省齋, linked-square relief

Zhang Bihan 張碧寒 (1909-1995)

ceng cang Zhang shi Jingyin yuan 曾藏張氏/靜蔭園, tall rectangle relief

Unidentified

De □ siyin 德□/私印, square relief, repeated twice

bi mo yuan shen 筆墨/緣深, square intaglio

Kairong ceng guan 開榮/曾觀, square intaglio, repeated twice

Changhe jianshang 長穌/鑑賞, square intaglio, repeated three times

Yibai 夷白, gourd relief

NOTE

THIS handscroll is an early eighteenth-century imitation of Zhao Mengfu's semi-cursive calligraphy. The text is a set of twenty-four poems that Zhao composed and dedicated to Empress Dowager Targi (d. 1322) in 1318, describing monthly Chinese agricultural and sericultural activities.

The artist's signature is suspicious, as his and two collectors' seals are. The character *fu* 頹 in the signature obviously appears different from those highly stylized in his authentic pieces. In his semi-cursive writing, Zhao always transformed the four short radicals (two slashes and two dots) in the left portion of this character into two vertical lines separated by the legs (*er* 儿), while those in the current item remain clear and divided. The artist's seal was engraved in an unrecorded style. The seals attributed to collectors Wang Hongxu (1645-1723) and Wu Yun (1811-1883) have never been recorded.

The artist's colophon further divulges its fraudulence. According to the colophon, this handscroll was created and presented to a Zizhong, i.e. Xiao He 蕭和 who lived in Wuxing (today's Huzhou) as a native for his whole life.¹¹ The only possible date for this dedication to Xiao is between 1319, when Zhao Mengfu was back with his deceased wife to Wuxing from Beijing, and 1322, when he died.¹² In 1299, Zhao created a long handscroll bearing the *Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess* (*Luo shen fu* 洛神賦) for Xiao, who in turn presented to their new common friend Yuan Yi 袁易 (1262-1306) in 1301 when the latter visited Hangzhou. Lu Wengui 陸文圭 (1252-1336), another friend of theirs, witnessed the 1299 handscroll and confirmed its circulation in his 1321 colophon. Both Xiao and Yuan, Lu wrote, "died in their early ages so that neither could see Academician Zhao's more splendid calligraphic style he developed in his late

¹¹ Zhao Mengfu, "Song Wu Youqing nan huan xu" 送吳幼清南還序, in Zhao 1339, 6:10a. Very little is known about Xiao He's life but his good friendship with Zhao and artistic taste, as mentioned in the local gazetteers of Wuxing.

¹² McCausland 2011, 368–370.

years.”¹³ Thus Xiao had been dead for over ten years before Zhao’s return to Wuxing in 1319. The artist’s colophon was evidently fabricated.

Among Zhao’s followers, Yu He 俞和 (1307-1382) shares the courtesy name Zizhong with Xiao He. Yu He reportedly in his teenage learned calligraphic skills from Zhao in 1319-1322.¹⁴ Even though he could serve Zhao as an attendant, he was too young to get such a generous present.

The album that Zhao presented in 1318 in regular script to Empress Dowager Targi had remained conserved in court until 1745 when the first survey of calligraphy and paintings in the Forbidden City was completed. In his 1341 colophon to the 1318 piece, Yu Ji (1272-1348), once a colleague of Zhao’s, praised its aesthetic value and described how he rediscovered it in an imperial archive.¹⁵ This piece that should be genuine has disappeared from the academic vision since it was imperially catalogued for the first time in 1745. In addition to the Mactaggart version, three more have been located so far, two in the National Palace Museum in Taipei and one in the Rare Books and Special Collections of the UBC Library. The first Taipei version, a handscroll in regular script (Access #Gu-shu-000411-00000), features a layout different from that of the 1318 version. Instead of aforementioned Yu Ji’s colophon, the calligraphy is followed by a colophon attributed to scholar and collector Wu Kuan 吳寬 (1435-1504) and wrongly dated with a chronological error that Wu could not make at all. The second Taipei version consists of two albums, with the poems on tiling on silk (Access #Gu-shu-000613-00000)

¹³ For Lu Wengui’s colophon, see *Shigu tang shuhua huikao* 式古堂書畫彙考, in Lu Fusheng 1992, 6:381A; for their relationship, see 6:412B.

¹⁴ Xu Yikui 1894, 13:12b; Zhang Guangbin 1979, 89–112.

¹⁵ Zhang Zhao et al. 1745, 3:12b–14a.

and those on weaving on paper (Access #Gu-shu-000612-00000). In spite of their different materials, the two albums share an identical signature, particularly with the “simplified” radical *ye* 页, not the highly stylized traditional *ye* 頁, in the right part of the character *fu*. Zhao never used the “simplified” radical in semi-cursive script. Obviously the two Taibei albums were from the very same hands. The album of the poems on weaving, according to the colophon, was created and presented to Zhao’s close friend and colleague Buqumu (1255-1300), who died eighteen years before Zhao composed them for the Empress Dowager. The UBC version (Call # NK3634.C387 A4 1971) is a rubbing made from an inscription engraved after a handscroll in regular script. Its text is incomplete and the colophons and seals on the original handscroll are missing (or were intentionally removed), and it is hard to be dated and authenticated.

Forgeries of Zhao’s calligraphy of those poems appeared as early as in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. One copy recorded in this period is in semi-cursive script as the Mactaggart copy is, yet the average size (over 3 cm) of the characters in the former is bigger than that (about 2 cm) in the latter.¹⁶ In the early eighteenth century, another forgery was catalogued, though a couple of possibly authentic copies were recorded.¹⁷ One copy was presented in 1713 to the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661-1722) to celebrate his sixtieth *sui* birthday,¹⁸ and it could be one of the two forgeries in Taibei. As for the Mactaggart piece, a suspicious seal on it declares Wang Hongxu (1645-1723) as its

¹⁶ Zhan Jingfeng 詹景鳳, *Zhen Dongyuan xuan lan bian* 詹東園玄覽編, in Lu Fusheng 1992, 4:5A. Zhan thinks this piece “genuine but insipid.”

¹⁷ Gao Shiqi 高士奇, *Jiangcun shuhua lu* 江村書畫錄, see Lu Fusheng 1992, 7:1070A. For possibly authentic copies, see Gao Shiqi, *Jiangcun xiaoxia lu* 江村書畫錄, in Lu Fusheng 1992, 7/1015B; see also Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, “Zhao Ziang shier yue zhi tu shi” 趙子昂書十二月織圖後, in Zhu Yizun 1714, 53:3a.

¹⁸ Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 et al. 1715, 58:2b.

earliest owner. Thus the Mactaggart piece perhaps came to being in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when Wang was politically powerful and culturally influential. Saling'a (1781-1857) actually was its first identified owner. Its circulation in the second half of the nineteenth century remains unclear, but it was definitely kept in Shanghai before Zhu Xingzhai (1902-1970) or Zhang Bihan (1909-1995) brought it to Hong Kong and then to New York. In spite of his once ownership, Zhu did not authenticate or describe this piece in his catalogues as he did with other works by Zhao.¹⁹

In spite of its physical fraudulence, the twenty-four poems by Zhao reveal the cultural and economic adjustments that the Chinese Confucian society suggested to the Mongol court in the early fourteenth century. Targi in her regency and her son Ayurbarwada, the Renzong emperor (r. 1311-1320), were admirers of Confucianism and Chinese culture.²⁰ In 1317 or earlier, she initiated an artistic project to express her concern with agriculture and sericulture of her Chinese subjects, following a Chinese tradition of didactic arts on agriculture and sericulture that formed as early as the third century.²¹ With her patronage, painter Yang Shuqian 楊叔謙 (n.d.) created an album of twenty-four paintings *Nong sang tu* 農桑圖 (Pictures of Agriculture and Sericulture), and at her request Zhao composed twenty-four poems as a verbal translation of Yang's work. On May 21, 1318, Zhao presented to Targi his poems in a separate album, and on May 27 those paintings with his poems on were presented to Ayurbarwada, who then asked Zhao to compose a prologue to the album.²² In his poems and prologue, Zhao describes

¹⁹ Zhu Xingzhai 1952.

²⁰ Xu Zhenghong 2011; Franke 1994, 513–527.

²¹ Watabe Takeshi 1986 provides a survey of this artistic tradition.

²² Zhao Mengfu, “Nong sang tu xu” 農桑圖敘, in Zhao 1339, waiji:2a–3a.

laboriousness and happiness in Chinese rural life, emphasizes the importance of agricultural and sericultural production for the empire, and suggests modeling the Mongol rulers after the ancient sages in the Confucian Classics to promote Confucian physiocracy rather than a nomadic economy.²³ Zhao experienced the dramatic changes that Mongol rule brought to the sedentary Chinese economy and society in which he was born and lived. In his creation, he carried on the Confucian concept of socio-economic order and tried to fit the alien rule into it.

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²³ For a reading of Zhao's poems in agricultural history of Yuan China, see Hammers 2011, 146–153.

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(Lianbin Dai; updated 25 July 25, 2016)