

Representations of History in the Poetry of Zheng Jing:

Writing About Identity in the Southern Ming

Introduction

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Zheng Jing 鄭經 (1642-1681) became the first classically-trained Chinese language poet to write about the landscape of the island of Taiwan. In his writings, not only are scenes from the Jinmen and Penghu islands recorded, but also Taiwan itself; furthermore, he provides the earliest poetic accounts of the customs and culture of the inhabitants. For this he is justifiably famous within the history of Taiwanese literature. Studies of Zheng Jing's poetry have approached his work from a number of different angles. Some scholars have focused on his significance as the first poet to incorporate Taiwanese images in his writings, specifically through poems which describe landscape—this forms the single largest topic within the corpus of Zheng Jing's poetry, thus serving to demonstrate his interest in the subject.¹ There have also been a small number of studies which focus on the use of particular images in the poetry of Zheng Jing; most notably Ruan Xiaoqi's 阮筱琪 analysis of his self-representation as a lonely, isolated figure.² However, the vast majority of readings of Zheng Jing's poetry concentrate on its relationship with his life; the verse is read in a strongly autobiographical mode, being assigned to specific dates and stages of development—often on very arbitrary grounds—in addition to which considerable efforts have been made to draft him into modern arguments concerning the relationship between China

¹ See for example Gong Xianzong 2002; and Huang Tengde 2013.

² Ruan Xiaoqi 2009.

and Taiwan.³ By contrast, this paper takes as its subject Zheng Jing's writings on history, on ethnic and cultural identity, and his patriotic engagement with the Southern Ming dynasty, in his role as one of the chief military leaders of the ongoing resistance to the Manchu Qing. These works will here be read as deliberate literary self-representations, rather than as statements of fact.

This paper will consider three specific themes found in the poetry of Zheng Jing. First, he wrote a small group of historical poems, in which he considers the achievements of the founders of earlier imperial dynasties. Secondly, he produced a number of poems about contemporary events, in particular the ongoing conflict between the remnants of the Southern Ming dynasty that he supported on Taiwan and the Qing government on the mainland, and his own experiences as a military commander caught up in this war. Finally, he wrote about the Manchu imperial house, criticizing their alien customs and culture which he believed made them unsuitable to rule in China. However, rather than reading these poems as straightforwardly autobiographical, they are here interpreted as works of literature, carefully constructed to send specific messages to a contemporary readership. Zheng Jing was keenly aware of his position, and understood the value of his poetry as a means for communicating his opinions to others, be they friends or enemies. Therefore Zheng Jing's poetry will be analyzed here to as a reflection of how he wished to be seen, not how he was.

The Zheng Family: Political Identities in the Southern Ming

³ Wu Yuqi 2012 gives an interesting political reading of Zheng Jing's poetry as a reflection of his status as the second King of Yanping which manages to avoid any mention of modern conflicts over the status of Taiwan. However, other studies show significantly less restraint; see for example Zhu Shuangyi 2005; and Liu Jianming 2014.

The identity—and recorded self-identification—of the various individual members of the Zheng family was clearly highly fluid throughout the period when they were historically and politically significant: the Ming-Qing transition era.⁴ The simplest way to show the hybrid and multi-valent way in which they constructed their identity is through a consideration of the social and geographical mobility they showed and the wide variety of names that they used at different stages of their lives. This process of constructing a complex and multi-layered personal identity is recorded from the time of Zheng Jing's grandfather, usually known by his Chinese name, Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍 (1604-1661). A native of Tong'an 同安 in Fujian Province, as a young man he travelled to Macau where he learned Portuguese, converted to Catholicism, and adopted a new name: Nicholas Iquan (Yiguan 一官) Gaspard.⁵ Subsequently Zheng Zhilong moved to Hirado in Japan, where he worked for some years, before returning to his home province of Fujian, which he used as a base for what became an increasingly extensive—but largely illegal—international trading network.⁶ In 1628, he achieved an accommodation with the Ming government that allowed him to legitimize his

⁴ The most detailed study of this period in English from the Ming loyalist perspective is Struve 1984. This concludes with the death of Zheng Chenggong in 1662, during the final retreat of the Zheng forces to Taiwan. For an exhaustive history of the Qing conquest; see Wakeman 1985.

⁵ This was the beginning of a long-term engagement between the Zheng family and various different European powers—the Zheng family also retained close links with the Catholic Church for several generations; see Mateo 2002; Zhang Xianqing and Wang Hui 2015; and Chen Zhongchun 2010.

⁶ It is now thought by some scholars that the famous Selden Map, depicting trading routes linking Fujian with Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan, and the Philippines was produced for Zheng Zhilong, and this indicates something of the extent of his activities; see for example Lin Meicun 2013. Another option put forward by some scholars is that the map was originally produced for Li Dan 李旦 (d. 1625), Zheng Zhilong's employer in Hirado; see Batchelor 2013:56-57.

activities and obtain official rank within the regime. After the collapse of the Ming central government following the fall of Beijing in 1644, Zheng Zhilong became associated with the court of the first Southern Ming regime, and accepted an earldom (Nan'an bo 南安伯) from Zhu Yousong 朱由崧 (1607-1646), formerly the King of Fu 福王 (r. 1642-1644), who ruled as the Hongguang Emperor 弘光帝 (r. 1644-1645). When the Hongguang Emperor's capital city, Nanjing, was captured by Qing forces in 1645, putting an end to his reign, Zhu Yujian 朱聿鍵 (1602-1646), the King of Tang 唐王 (r. 1632-1636, 1645), established himself as the Longwu Emperor 隆武帝 (r. 1645-1646) in Fuzhou; seeking local support, he promoted Zheng Zhilong first to the rank of marquis, with the title Pinglu hou 平虜侯 (Marquis of Pacifying the Caitiffs), and then to the rank of duke, with the title Pingguo gong 平國公 (Duke of Pacifying the State).⁷ In 1646, Zheng Zhilong made the strategic decision to defect to the Qing, as a result of which he was granted membership of the Plain Yellow Banner as a Martial Han, and given the Manchu title of Jingqini hafan 精奇尼哈番 (equivalent to viscount in the Chinese nobility) of the third rank; in 1654, he was again raised to the rank of marquis with the title Tong'an hou 同安侯, referencing his place of birth. However, two years later, in the face of continuing hostilities involving his son, Zheng Zhilong was stripped of all his titles and honours, and spent the rest of his life in prison, before being finally executed in 1661.⁸ During the course of his life, Zheng Zhilong experienced an extraordinary rise in wealth and rank,

⁷ The granting of this first title is recorded by contemporary observers such as Qian Bingdeng 錢秉鐙 (1612-1693); see *Suo zhi lu*, 230. The second title was the highest rank which Zheng Zhilong achieved; see *Longwu jiliu*, 73; and Struve 1984:184. For a study of the interactions of the Longwu Emperor and the Zheng family; see Xu Xiaowang 2002.

⁸ The ranks held by Zheng Zhilong at various stages in his life are recorded in detail in the *Qingshi gao*, 224:9158-9162. Other sources report slightly different titles and honours, but it seems that the *Qingshi gao* is correct; see Luo Guilin 2003:38-39.

with a career that encompassed a number of different regimes, and involved interaction with a wide variety of different ethnic groups.⁹ At each stage of change, he either chose to adopt a new name, or was granted a new title to reflect this development in his personal identity. Attempting to peel apart these layers, and decide who Zheng Zhilong “really” was, would be a negation of his success in being himself.

A similar complexity can be seen in the identity of Zheng Zhilong’s oldest son, Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624-1662). Again, although he is usually designated in modern scholarship by this name, it is not the form of nomenclature that he preferred to use in life, and his other identities should be recognized. During his childhood in Nagasaki under the care of his mother, a member of the Tagawa 田川 family, Zheng Chenggong was known by the personal name of Fukumatsu 福松. Subsequently, when he joined his father in Fujian, he was renamed Zheng Sen 鄭森. In 1645, he was again renamed Chenggong by the Longwu Emperor, who bestowed the imperial surname upon him—hence his alternative designation of Guoxingye 國姓爺 (Koxinga or Coxinga in English transliteration) or “Lord of the Imperial Surname”—and granted him an earldom (Zhongxiao bo 忠孝伯). Although the connection with the Longwu Emperor was quickly severed, Zheng Chenggong continued to use the Zhu surname for the rest of his life, because of the great prestige that it held.¹⁰ During their brief association, major stresses were inflicted by the existence of a further Southern

⁹ The complex identity of Zheng Zhilong is considered in detail in Blussé 1990.

¹⁰ Thus throughout many early histories of the Southern Ming, Zheng Chenggong is consistently referred to as Zhu Chenggong; see for example *Yongli shilu*, 1:15. On the other hand, pro-Qing sources always preferred to use the name Zheng Chenggong, with a view to denigrating his position; see Pan Jian 2014:39.

Ming regime based at Shaoxing in Zhejiang province. The presence of this rival state, headed by Zhu Yihai 朱以海 (1618-1662), King of Lu 魯王 (r. 1645-1655), caused great dissention among Southern Ming loyalists, however, Zheng Chenggong was eventually able to persuade this monarch to give up any claim to authority, a decision which took effect in 1653. By this time, however, Zheng Chenggong was supporting Zhu Youlang 朱由榔 (1623-1662), King of Gui 桂王 (r. 1646), now installed as the Yongli Emperor 永曆帝 (r. 1646-1662), who awarded him the title of King of Yanping 延平王.¹¹ In 1659, Zheng Chenggong launched a major attack upon Jiangnan with more than one hundred thousand of his own troops, however, this military force was quickly routed—furthermore, in spite of every effort to gain local support, there was little evidence that anyone was prepared to fight against the Qing government.¹² Subsequently, in 1661, he seized control of Dutch Formosa—thus establishing the base on Taiwan that would subsequently be held by his son, Zheng Jing.¹³ Zheng Chenggong's death occurred in 1662, only shortly after he had heard of the death of the Yongli Emperor, but Zheng Jing would continue the close connection with the Southern Ming dynasty by supporting Zhu Shugui 朱術桂, the King of Ningjing 寧靜王 (1617-1683; r. 1648-1683), as well as a number of other Ming princes, including Zhu Honghuan 朱弘桓 (1662-?), son of the last King of Lu. By this stage the Zhu and Zheng families were closely related, since Zheng Jing's younger sister was Zhu Honghuan's wife.

¹¹ This appointment is mentioned in the *Qingshi gao*, 224:9160; see also *Suozi lu*, 284.

¹² This particular campaign resulted in the Qing government ordering coastal clearances, a decision which would eventually prove crucial for bringing an end to the Zheng regime on Taiwan; see Xie Guozhen 1957; Nan Bingwen 1992; and Gu Cheng 1983. The economic impact of this policy on the Zheng family is considered in Feng Lijun 2000.

¹³ A vast scholarship on these events exists in Chinese; see also Andrade 2013; and Crozier 1977.

In contrast to his father and grandfather, Zheng Jing seems to have used a comparatively simple nomenclature to describe himself.¹⁴ At the age of twenty, on the death of his father, he became the second King of Yanping, and he would retain this title until the end of his life—though offered various honours by the Qing government in return for accepting their rule, he never agreed. Furthermore, Zheng Jing wrote a great deal about his self-identification as a Han Chinese person and as a loyal subject of the Ming, attempting to elide the more controversial aspects of his family’s heritage, and minimize any perception of the Zheng family as persons of dubious morality, complex identities, and conflicting loyalties. The poems relating to his position as a devoted defender of the Southern Ming cause will be considered in detail below, in the section of this paper concerned with his writings about the conflict with the Manchu Qing. However, any suggestion that Zheng Jing was simply a loyal subject of the Ming is undoubtedly rendered complicated by the fact that the Zheng family had been engaged in piracy for many decades.¹⁵ Although small-scale piracy is criminal activity born of desperation, the massive illegal trading empire built up by the Zheng family represents an entirely different kind of endeavour.¹⁶ For the Zheng family, the ultimate aim of their

¹⁴ Although usually known as Zheng Jing, the *Qingshi gao*, 224:9164, refers to him as Jin 錦, and this seems to be an alternative personal name.

¹⁵ For studies of the Zheng family’s long term piratical enterprises; see for example Cheng 2013; Ho 2011; and Carioti 1996.

¹⁶ Understanding of the nature of large-scale piracy as a mechanism for effecting economic development (and political change) has been greatly influenced by the work of Fernand Braudel, in particular his *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*. The Zheng family presided over a peak period in the organization of piracy in South China Sea, however, this represents part of a continuum of piratical activity in the region, where other eras also saw a similar concentration of command; see Anthony 2010.

piratical activities was twofold: they wished to reach an accommodation with the government that would see their enterprises legalized, and whereby they would be allowed to keep a significant measure of the profits and status which had accrued. Furthermore, this was a concern not merely for the Zheng family, but for all the senior members of the organization, who wished not merely to enjoy short-term financial gains, but also hoped to guarantee their position in the long-term through a deal with the authorities. Zheng Zhilong for one never lost sight of these aims; they underpin his decision to make a deal with the Ming government in 1628, and then with the Qing government in 1646.¹⁷ The Zheng regime on Taiwan was eventually doomed by the fact that neither Zheng Chenggong nor Zheng Jing was able to reach an acceptable relationship with the Qing government—on the other hand Shi Lang 施琅 (1621-1696), who served under both Zheng Zhilong and Zheng Chenggong, did achieve this.¹⁸ Having submitted to the authority of the Qing government in 1646, he was rewarded with membership of the Bordered Yellow Banner as a Martial Han, and granted the title of marquis (Zhenhai hou 鎮海侯): Shi Lang's descendants would hold this title until the end of the Qing dynasty.¹⁹ It is not clear why the Zhengs lost sight of the importance of consolidating their family's position by reaching a deal with the government, but having failed to do so, they became vulnerable to other senior individuals within their ranks making their own accommodations. Thus, within two years of Zheng Jing's demise, the Zheng regime on Taiwan also collapsed, as Shi Lang's forces led a successful campaign of conquest.

¹⁷ Xu Xiaowang 2007; and Sun Fuxi and Ding Haiyan 2001.

¹⁸ The failure of Zheng Chenggong in particular to achieve an accommodation with the Qing government has been much discussed by modern scholars, with various different motivations being suggested; see Wong 1981-1983:133; Wu Zhenglóng 2000:182; and Andrade 2009:210-211.

¹⁹ Shi Lang's biography is given in *Qingshi gao*, 260:9864-9868.

Writing and Publishing in the Zheng Regime

Zheng Jing's poetry has been preserved to the present day in two collections of verse: the *Dongbilou ji* 東壁樓集 (Collected Writings from the Eastern Wall Asterism Building) and the *Yanping erwang yiji* 延平二王遺集 (Collected Writings Posthumously Compiled of the Two Kings of Yanping).²⁰ The edition of the *Dongbilou ji* used for this paper is that given in the Taiwan xianxian shiwen ji huikan 臺灣先賢詩文集彙刊 (A Compilation of Collected Poetry and Prose by Taiwanese Masters), published in Taipei by the Longwen chubanshe 龍文出版社 in 2011. This edition is a photolithographic reprint of the 1674 woodblock print of the text, in eight *juan*, with a preface handwritten by Zheng Jing himself.²¹ This collection of poetry is organized not by date or subject, but by style of verse. *Juan* one (eighty-eight poems) consists of five character-per-line “ancient-style” verse; *juan* two (sixty poems) contains seven character-per-line “ancient-style” poetry; *juan* three (one hundred and three poems) is five character-per-line regulated verse; *juan* four (eighty-seven poems) is seven character-per-line regulated verse; *juan* five (forty-one poems) is five character-per-line *pailü* verse; *juan* six (twenty-one poems) is seven character-per-line *pailü* verse; *juan* seven (twenty-four poems) consists of five character-per-line *jueju*; and *juan* eight (forty-seven

²⁰ See Zheng Jing 鄭經, *Dongbilou ji* 東壁樓集 (Taipei: Longwen chubanshe, 2011); and Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功, Zheng Jing 鄭經, *Yanping erwang yiji* 延平二王遺集 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1957) respectively. All subsequent references to the writings of Zheng Jing will be taken from these two editions, unless otherwise specified.

²¹ It is not known where the book was published, but it is thought that the most likely candidate is Quanzhou; see Ruan Xiaoqi 2012:34.

poems) contains seven character-per-line *jueju* poems. It is not known who compiled this collection, or punctuated and annotated the text, but this edition was clearly very closely associated with Zheng Jing, since it was produced during his lifetime and authorized by his preface.²² Not surprisingly given the nature of its authorship and contents, this book was extremely rare and difficult to obtain throughout the Qing dynasty; indeed, there is only one known reference to it—in a passing mention in the works of Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642-1718, *jinsbi* 1670)—before the end of the regime.²³ In recent years, however, this compilation has been reprinted many times, giving it a visibility within the history of Taiwanese literature that the *Dongbilou ji* has lacked for many centuries.

The second major collection of verse in which the poetry of Zheng Jing appears is the *Yanping erwang yiji*. Again, it is not known exactly who produced this compilation: the edition used for this paper is that edited by Yang Jialuo 楊家駱 (1912-1999). This reproduces a handwritten copy of the text thought to derive from the collection of Zhang Jinwu 張金吾 (1787-1829), a distinguished late Qing bibliophile—this manuscript copy was purchased by the National Central Library 國立中央圖書館 in Shanghai during the late 1930s or early 1940s. This appears to be the sole surviving copy of the text. This collection claims to contain writings by both Zheng Chenggong and his son, Zheng Jing, but the authorship of the poems included is not made clear in many

²² The authenticity of the *Dongbilou ji* as the work of Zheng Jing himself is stressed in Zhu Honglin 1994. The argument that this collection was deliberately constructed as a personal manifesto by Zheng Jing is advanced in Gong Xianzong 2002B:362-363.

²³ *Rongcun xinyu lu*, 673. As noted by Di Yong 2015:53-54, Li Guangdi, as a major scholar and Hanlin academician native to Quanzhou, would have been in an unusually good position to be aware of literary works associated with the Zheng regime on Taiwan.

recensions of the text.²⁴ Furthermore, this collection consists of completely different material from the *Dongbilou ji*, and given the uncertainties concerning the date of compilation and the processes by which the poems were obtained, their authenticity is open to some question.²⁵ Again, this compilation was essentially unobtainable during the whole of the Qing dynasty, though it has been reprinted in modern times in both Taiwan and on the Mainland—again the works found in this collection have a visibility today which was impossible in earlier periods.

One aspect of the writings of Zheng Jing that has not received nearly enough attention is the question of the intended audience and reception of his poetry. Given his status and contemporary significance, quite apart from any other consideration, there are three groups of people who are likely to have been particularly interested in reading his works. The first would be senior people within the Zheng regime on Taiwan, who could be expected to be familiar with his poetry, and who would read it out of interest in the thinking of their commander-in-chief. Secondly, there would be potential allies, seeking to understand the way in which Zheng Jing was proposing to proceed. Many of his works are clearly intended to appeal to these two audiences, as he expresses commitment to the Southern Ming cause, a determination to continue the fight against the Manchus, and a welcome to military leaders who were prepared to throw their lot in with his. These poems are likely to have been extremely carefully crafted to convey the desired message to these two different (but related)

²⁴ The Taiwan wenxian congkan 臺灣文獻叢刊 edition of the text attributes the first five poems in this collection to Zheng Chenggong, and the remainder to Zheng Jing.

²⁵ Xia Yong 2011 places the production of this compilation in the context of a more general trend in the Qing dynasty of compiling collections of literature based around clan or family groupings. This serves to preserve much information that would otherwise be lost about the social significance of literature produced together by related individuals.

groups. However, there was also a third audience who would have been very interested in Zheng Jing's writings and that is the government of the Manchu Qing. Throughout his tenure as King of Yanping, Zheng Jing received a stream of ambassadors from the Qing government, and there was always the hope that he would eventually succeed in coming to some kind of agreement with the authorities in power. There is no reason to suppose that the Qing leadership was in ignorance of Zheng Jing's works; indeed, they are likely to have sought them out in the hope of gaining some understanding of his attitude. It is highly likely that Zheng Jing wrote for this audience as well when he composed his poetry, and the intransigence he displayed in his writings towards the Qing government was intended as a message to them.

Finding One's Place in History

A number of Zheng Jing's poems deal with issues of identity, and here, in spite of his complex family background, he was always extremely straightforward, expressing a strong identification as a Han Chinese person. However, he did not describe himself as might an ordinary Han Chinese person, for he always emphasized in his writings that he occupied a position of exceptional status and authority. This is clearly stated in many of his works: for example, in one of his poems entitled "Ti Dongbilou jing zixu" 題東壁樓景自叙 (A Personal Reflection Recording the Landscape around Dongbilou), he directly addresses the issue of his identity, claiming that he had "once been a Han vassal of the previous dynasty" (*Xiri xianchao yi Hanchen* 昔日先朝一漢臣).²⁶ In another poem, entitled "Ti Dongning shengjing" 題東寧勝境 (Recording the Lovely Scenery of

²⁶ *Dongbilou ji*, 8:283.

Dongning), he wrote of the way in which he preserved traditional Han Chinese ways within his domain.²⁷

I have established a court, and settled a capital, east of the great sea,	定鼎寧都大海東
A myriad mountains and a plethora of valleys are in the distance, crossing the sky.	千山百壑遠橫空
Scented forests rise high up into the clouds,	<u>芳林迥出青雲外</u>
Green waters flow along to gather in emerald pools.	<u>綠水長流碧澗中</u>
On both banks fires are lit to welcome the rising sun,	<u>兩岸人烟迎曉日</u>
Across the river the oars of the fishermen dip against the dawn breeze. ²⁸	<u>滿江漁棹承朝風</u>
In the past I studied the words of the sage about dealing with trouble,	曾聞先聖爲難語
The caps and gowns of Han states have remained the same since antiquity. ²⁹	漢國衣冠萬古同

²⁷ Dongning refers to the kingdom of this name, ruled on Taiwan by the Zheng family from 1661-1683.

²⁸ In the transcription of this poem, and those given elsewhere in this paper, I have retained the original punctuation of this text, including underlining to represent the use of marks of emphasis. For a detailed study of the marks of emphasis in the original text; see Huang Tengde 2013:49-54.

²⁹ *Dongbilou ji*, 4:167. Throughout this paper, I have included the comments appended to each poem which represent an appraisal validated by appearing in the earliest printed editions of the *Dongbilou ji*, which is likely to have been produced under Zheng Jing's personal supervision, if not actually written by himself. These comments are marked with brackets

【】. In the case of this particular poem, the comment reads: "These words are pure and beautiful" 【語清而麗】.

As can be seen from the concluding lines of this poem, Zheng Jing was very proud of the idea that “Han” culture was being preserved on Taiwan thanks to his efforts. Indeed, in his use of literary allusions, Zheng Jing returns again and again to events and people of the Han dynasty; a historical era with which he had clearly studied carefully, and which seems to have had a strong resonance for him. From his surviving literary works, it seems that he very rarely wrote poetry about historical individuals. One of the rare exceptions to this rule is the poem “Zan Han Gaodi” 贊漢高帝 (In Praise of Emperor Gao of the Han Dynasty).³⁰ This particular piece provides an interesting contrast to Zheng Jing’s poems about the contemporary military situation, which will be considered below. The theme of brave men rushing to join the army in a situation of national emergency is one with which he could undoubtedly identify: there are many writings about fighting for the Southern Ming cause which describe his own commitment in very similar ways, not to mention those poems which focus on the experiences of the men who served under his command. However, what is different in the poem about Emperor Gaozu 漢高祖 (r. 202-195 BCE) is the emphasis on the power and charisma of the founder of the Han dynasty; in his writings about contemporary events, Zheng Jing presents himself as a conscientious and hard-working commander-in-chief, but he consistently bewails the lack of true leadership within the Ming imperial house, and the corruption

³⁰ This is one of only two poems known to have been written by Zheng Jing about an individual historical personage.

The other also concerns a Han dynasty person: Wang Zhaojun 王昭君 (fl. 36-31 BCE): “This unlucky beauty goes beyond the borders and travels far away,/ Summoned from the Lateral Courts to be a wife to the Xiongnu [khan]./ Although her heart is given over to feelings of sadness and resentment,/ Alone in this sandstorm, she looks back at the Han court” (薄命佳人出塞遙, 掖庭明詔配天驕. 却將心緒寄愁弄, 漠漠風沙望漢朝); see *Dongbilou ji*, 8:294-295.

The coda here says: “The concluding words have limitless meaning” 【末語意景無限】.

and incompetence of their ministers. In this poem, we have a powerful representation of how he imagines a great general and founder of a long-lasting dynasty should appear:

A host of heroes rose up to chase the deer,³¹

群英起逐鹿

A group of brave men came to join the army.

壯志出從戎

His hand grasped the Serpent-Cutting Sword,³²

手執斷蛇劍

His legs straddled a Lightning-Chasing Steed.³³

身跨追電驄

Auspicious clouds appeared above the Mang Marshes,

瑞雲芒澤上

³¹ The *locus classicus* of this allusion is *Shiji*, 92:2629, where it states: “Qin lost their deer, and the world chased after it” (*Qin shi qi lu, Tianxia gong zhu zhi* 秦失其鹿, 天下共逐之).

³² Zheng Jing here makes reference to a very famous story concerning the early life of Liu Bang, describing how one day when he was passing through a marsh he encountered a snake and killed it with his sword. Afterwards, an old woman appeared beside the dead snake, weeping, and proclaiming it a “son of the White Emperor” (*Baidi zi* 白帝子) killed by the “son of the Red Emperor” (*Chidi zi* 赤帝子): that is Liu Bang himself; see *Shiji*, 8:347; and *Hanshu*, 1A:7. There are also a number of texts which contain stories about the miraculous origins of the sword used on this occasion; see for example *Sanfu huangtu*, 6:345-346.

³³ According to some early medieval texts, the First Emperor of China possessed seven famous horses, of which the fourth was named Zhuidian 追電 (Lightning-Chaser); see *Zhonghua gujin zhu*, C:32. This is based upon the Jin dynasty compilation, *Gujin zhu* 古今注 (Commentary on Matters Old and New), but this text does not survive. The Tang dynasty recompilation of this text includes a list of the First Emperor’s horses, but does not give the name Zhuidian; see *Gujin zhu*, B:12.

Purple mists concentrated around Mount Dang.³⁴

紫霧陽山中

Having destroyed Chu, he returned to Feng [Village] in Pei,

破楚還豐沛

He sang loudly of his heroic ambitions.³⁵

狂歌生氣雄

【A noble and archaic tone】.³⁶

【音節雄古】

Although Zheng Jing wrote comparatively little poetry on historical themes, his work is marked by a strong sense of the importance of these topics for marking his own place in history.³⁷ Given the circumstances into which he was born—as Zheng Chenglong’s oldest son, whose position required him to take up the mantle of preserving the last remnants of the Southern Ming regime—it is not surprising that Zheng Jing was convinced from a very early age that a place was waiting for him in the history books. Writing about other ruling dynasties in the history of China had a very special and unique meaning for Zheng Jing, whose family had been on an astonishing trajectory of upward mobility for a couple of generations; hence the focus on dynastic founders that can also be seen in elsewhere in his writings. In the piece entitled “Yongshi” 詠史 (A Poem on History), he imagines himself surrounded by historical writings—these texts are filled with lessons

³⁴ According to *Shiji*, 8:348, Liu Bang’s followers were always able to find him when he was in hiding because of the clouds and other auspicious emanations that gathered above him. The importance of this sign of future greatness is discussed in Loewe 1994:195.

³⁵ According to *Shiji*, 8:389, on his return to Pei in the winter of the year 196 BCE, the first emperor of the Han dynasty performed a song of his own composing, describing his own success and his concerns for the future.

³⁶ *Dongbilou ji*, 3:116.

³⁷ This point is stressed in Ruan Xiaoqi 2012:56.

and the personal application which he derives from the examples of good and evil rulers of antiquity is very striking; this aspect of Zheng Jing's poem makes his work closer to similar writings on history found in the works of Qing emperors like Qianlong, who wrote of learning from the "warnings contained within the mirror of ancient history" (*jie zhi zai jian gu* 戒之在鑑古).³⁸ Furthermore, the belief that the experiences of dynastic founders had a message for him personally distances Zheng Jing's writings from those of other officials and ministers who wrote on this kind of theme, but where they stress the importance of loyal service and hard work within the government, such as Wen Tianxiang's 文天祥 (1236-1283) "Zhengqi ge" 正氣歌 (Song of the Spirit of Righteousness).³⁹ Zheng Jing's poem reads:

Arrayed to left and right are maps and historical works,⁴⁰

屏列左右皆圖史

Here the good and evil of past and present are all preserved.

俱備古今臧與否

From the Spring and Autumn period, there is Confucius from Lu, with his upright brush,⁴¹

³⁸ This line is the conclusion of the poem "Guanwa gong" 館娃宮 (Lodging Beauties Palace) written by the Qianlong Emperor in 1793; see *Nanxun shengdian*, 555.

³⁹ *Wen Wenshan quanji*, 375-376.

⁴⁰ According to the biography of Yang Wan 楊綰 (d. 770) as recorded by the *Xin Tangshu*, 142:4664, maps should be placed on the left, historical texts on the right.

⁴¹ The term "upright brush" (*zhibi* 直筆) was conventionally used to praise the historian Dong Hu 董狐, who in 607 BCE insisted on recording in the official history of the state of Jin that Zhao Dun 趙盾 was responsible for the murder of Lord Ling 晉靈公 (r. 620-607 BCE); see *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 662-663 [Xuan 2]. This text does include an admiring comment attributed to Confucius.

	春秋直筆魯仲尼
Everything begins with the Three August Ones and the Five Emperors.	百事三皇五帝起
The Sage-king Shun executes Gun at Mount Yu,	大舜殛鯀於羽山
Yu of the Xia dynasty successfully conceals his father's fault.	夏禹勳成藏父鄙
Jie callously creates his forest of meat and fills a lake with wine,	桀虐肉林酒爲池
Tang releases him but executes Mo Xi. ⁴²	成湯放桀誅妹喜
King Zhou of the Yin first begins roasting people on a rack,	殷受始作炮烙刑
King Wu of Zhou convenes his armies to kill Dan Ji. ⁴³	周武會師殺妲己
Gaozu of the Han dynasty raises a righteous army at Pei in Feng,	漢高豐沛興義師
A host of heroes rise up like hornets to chase the deer. ⁴⁴	羣英蜂起逐鹿麋
The Three Kingdoms contend and yet stand firm, ⁴⁵	三國分爭鼎足成
The Sima family usurp the throne, and snatch the jade imperial seal.	司馬篡位奪玉璽

⁴² This description of the debauchery of the last king of the Xia dynasty is derived from the account of the misdeeds of the last king of the Shang dynasty given in the *Shiji*, 4:105, however, this text states that he was killed by Tang.

⁴³ King Zhou's invention of this extremely unpleasant form of torture instrument is mentioned in *Shiji*, 3:106. As with Mo Xi, Dan Ji is blamed in many ancient Chinese texts for the destruction of her husband's dynasty.

⁴⁴ The *locus classicus* of the phrase "heroes rose up like hornets" (*haojie fengqi* 豪傑蜂起), as it appears in its original wording, is *Shiji*, 7:338.

⁴⁵ The image that the division of the Han empire into the Three Kingdoms saw them balanced and standing firm like the feet of a *ding*-vessel is found repeatedly in the official history of this era; see *Sanguo zhi*, 35:915; 43:1047; and 52:1268.

The princes and royal grandsons of the Jin court,	晉朝諸子孫
Are all like dogs or pigs. ⁴⁶	皆可爲犬豕
At the end of the Jin, the five barbarian tribes bring trouble to the Central Plains,	晉末五胡亂中原
Yet [Tang] Taizong emerges, to risk his life against swords and arrows.	太宗始出冒鋒矢
After the Tang, the Five Dynasties are marked by usurpations and regicides,	唐後五代多篡弑
Rulers are as the morning dew.	人君猶如朝露水
Song [Tai]zu at Chenqiao finds himself enthroned, ⁴⁷	宋祖陳橋袍加身
He rests his troops with a cup of wine, saying no more about it. ⁴⁸	息兵杯酒不多齒
Gaozong crosses the river to the south, his generals as numerous as [trees in] a forest,	高宗南渡將如林

⁴⁶ This is a reference to the notorious conflict known as the War of the Eight Kings (*Bawang zhi zhan* 八王之戰), which took place from approximately 300-311, when the various senior members of the Jin imperial house fought among themselves for supremacy. See *Jinshu*, 59:1589-1630; and Dreyer 2009.

⁴⁷ Chenqiao is the place where in 960, a revolt by the army placed Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (r. 960-976) on the throne as the founding emperor of the Song dynasty; see *Songshi*, 1:3-4.

⁴⁸ This line alludes to the first emperor of the Song's policy of peacefully disarming senior generals by granting them civilian titles and honours: this was known as "using a cup of wine to remove military power" (*beijin shi bingquan* 杯酒釋兵權), an expression coined by Wang Zeng 王曾 (977-1038).

He accepts the position of vassal [to the Jin] and offers tribute, feeling no shame.⁴⁹ 甘心臣貢而不恥

Wicked ministers ruin the country, destroying the loyal and good, 奸臣誤國害忠良

If you believe their lies and never come to your senses, you will trust them until you die.

信讒不悟信到死

Since the dawn of time, the rise and fall of states has always been like this,

歷代興亡盡於茲

As a ruler, how can you not feel terror down to the marrow of your bones?

爲君可不寒骨髓

【The opening lines are straightforward and powerful. The conclusion is honest and correct】⁵⁰

【前叙得樸勁。後結得老實】

In his writings on history, Zheng Jing's self-identification with founding emperors was clearly very strong.⁵¹ It is unlikely that he felt the achievements of the Zheng family to be comparable to that of these great historical figures, who established lasting dynasties that ruled vast tracts of territory and millions of people, but it is possible that unlike other individuals caught up in the collapse of the Ming dynasty, that he felt himself to be at the beginning of something, rather

⁴⁹ Here, Zheng Jing makes reference to the enduring odium experienced by Emperor Gaozong of the Southern Song dynasty (r. 1127-1162) and Chancellor Qin Gui 秦檜 (1090-1155), over the decision to leave senior members of imperial house, including two former emperors, in captivity for the sake of ensuring the survival of the regime.

⁵⁰ *Dongbilou ji*, 2:82-84.

⁵¹ Interestingly, in his grandfather's own writings, there is a strong identification with loyal generals who saved dynasties in peril; this is discussed in Wills 2004:181-182. As will be seen below, this same identification is found in the work of Zheng Jing, when he is contemplating his own situation with respect to the Manchus.

than the end. For the emperors of the Southern Ming, as well as the kings and princes supported by Zheng Jing, they could look back on many centuries of rule by their direct ancestors, and it was only too clear that the power of the Zhu imperial house was but a shadow of its former substance: they had no choice but to view themselves as the feeble remnants of a once flourishing dynasty. For Zheng Jing, on the other hand, the situation was quite different. His own family's achievements were amazing—the Zheng family had moved from being minor members of the local gentry to being figures of national importance in the space of just a few decades. Even if the Southern Ming dynasty did not survive, until the very end there remained the possibility that Zheng Jing would follow his grandfather's example and make a deal with the Qing, allowing him to retain his wealth and power. It is not surprising, therefore, that in spite of his own position as the subject of a regime in its dying days, Zheng Jing believed that the future still held great opportunities.

Poems on the Qing Conquest

A small but significant group of poems in Zheng Jing's surviving corpus concern his response to the Manchu invasion of China. Born just two years before the collapse of the Ming dynasty, Zheng Jing's entire life was lived in a period of great violence and turmoil, as the Manchus first invaded and then consolidated their power. I will begin my analysis of this group of poems by considering three very closely related pieces: “Du bujian” 獨不見 (It Still Has Not Appeared); “Bumei” 不寐 (On Sleeplessness); and “Bei Zhongyuan wei fu” 悲中原未復 (On the Tragedy of Having Not Yet Recaptured the Central Plains). These poems move the reader through a series of set pieces: the foul and disgusting nature of the barbarians who have invaded China; the uselessness of the Ming government; the sufferings of the common people first thanks to the appalling abuses

inflicted by Ming officials and then under the horrific massacres perpetrated by the Manchus; before concluding with praise for the determination of righteous and honourable men (specifically Zheng Jing himself) to protect the people of China in this cataclysm. Given the way in which the *Dongbilou ji* collection is structured, it is not clear whether these poems were written at approximately the same time or years apart, however, “Du bujian” will be given first, since it can be distinguished from the other two poems by an unusual lack of historical or literary allusions:

A foul and rank stench fills the Central Plains,	腥羶滿中原
The trees in our forests provide nests for foreign birds. ⁵²	林木巢胡燕
The Son of Heaven has fled in a cloud of dust;	天子蒙塵出
Everyone complains of his ministers' crimes.	皆繇諸臣譴
【How right is this criticism!】	【責得是】
Strong knights cherish [dreams of] bravery and heroism,	壯士懷激烈
Their loyal hearts are fixed on a single goal.	忠心在一片
The banners of these righteous warriors can be seen across the land,	義旗照天地
In an endless parade, they cover the sun. ⁵³	驛絡蔽日暉

⁵² *Huyan* 胡燕 is indeed the name of a particular variety of swift: *Apus pacificus*. However, here it is likely that Zheng Jing was influenced in his choice of this bird to reference by presence of the character *hu* 胡 (barbarian) in its name.

⁵³ Zheng Jing's rhetoric here bears a startling similarity to that used by loyalist figures decades earlier, to try and persuade the Chongzhen Emperor 明崇禎 (r. 1628-1644) that vast numbers of righteous soldiers would flock to serve under his

Those who suffer in vain are the common folk,	徒苦諸群黎
For the plans that are made are indeed not the best.	作計良不善
One day, the barbarian horsemen arrive;	胡騎一朝至
Everyone betrays [the Ming] for their own personal benefit.	人人自爲變
I am today raising a royal army,	我今興王師
I will punish the guilty—justice will be done for the people.	討罪民是噲
I am training up ferocious soldiers,	組練熊羆卒
Building up their strength on this eastern island.	遵養在東洵
I have been hoping that the Green Phoenix will arrive; ⁵⁴	企望青鸞至
But even after all these years, it still has not appeared. ⁵⁵	年年獨不見

command, if he emerged to command them; see Wen 1947:229. Exactly the same rhetoric was also used by the Manchus during the invasion, to encourage people to serve under their rule, and fight against the bandits and criminals who had joined the Southern Ming; see *Da Qing Shizhu Zhang (Shunzhi) huangdi shilu*, 5:53.

⁵⁴ Here, Zheng Jing uses the term Green Phoenix as an allusion to the rightful emperor. There are a number of poems in which he bewails the lack of a charismatic leader from the Zhu family to act as a focus for the Southern Ming cause: for example in the final couplets of “Zitan” 自嘆 (Bewailing My Situation), he says: “The dragon lurks in the gulf and has not yet emerged/ The phoenix perches in the tree and refuses to fly./ I am waiting for the moment when I may see the red clouds rise/ For then I will exert myself to achieve great things here out in the eastern ocean” (龍伏紫淵猶未出，鳳棲碧樹且謾翀。待時若遇紅雲起，奮翼高騰大海東). See *Dongbilou ji*, 4:175.

⁵⁵ *Dongbilou ji*, 1:5.

The structure of this poem, in particular its uneven number of lines, results in emphasis being placed upon the concluding couplet. This serves to highlight the importance for Zheng Jing of being seen to support the rightful emperor, and shows a good measure of disillusionment with the people involved in the Southern Ming cause.⁵⁶ In the second half of this poem, Zheng Jing also provides an account of his own personal involvement in military matters; this preoccupation is also seen in the second poem in this group, “Bumei.” This piece is interesting for its strong focus on the persona of Zheng Jing himself. Although always keen to portray himself as a conscientious commander-in-chief, in this poem he uses a series of historical allusions to generals famous for their loyalty, including Su Wu 蘇武 (140-60 BCE) of the Han dynasty and Zu Ti 祖逖 (266-321) of the Jin dynasty, to stress the strength of his own personal commitment to restoring a Ming emperor to the throne.⁵⁷ The pleasing equation of these famous paragons with Zheng Jing himself was also no doubt quite intentional:

In my loneliness, I often find it difficult to fall asleep,

寂寞常不寐

In the middle of the night, I sigh to myself.

中夜獨常吁

⁵⁶ The Southern Ming cause brought together some very strange bedfellows, from loyalist gentry to common criminals hoping for opportunities to plunder, and many people were extremely unhappy about some of the people that they found themselves associated with; see *Ping Wu shilüe*, 114; and Miyazaki Ichisada 1954:27-28. Zheng Jing looked askance at some of them, but the feeling was no doubt mutual.

⁵⁷ The official biography of Su Wu appears in *Hanshu*, 54:2459-2469. Meanwhile the biography of Zu Ti is given in *Jinshu*, 62:1693-1699.

A foul stench has spread throughout the land,	腥氛滿天地
The Central Plains have entirely fallen under the sway of wolfish barbarians.	中原盡狼胡
Government commands are issued by a coterie of cronies,	政令出羣小
It is the innocent who are being butchered.	誅戮皆無辜
Ordinary people suffer the invaders' violence,	百姓遭狼毒
Who can resist their attack? ⁵⁸	誰能振臂呼
Listening to the wind, I practice military maneuvers, ⁵⁹	聞風常起舞
Facing the moon, I ask about Kunwu. ⁶⁰	對月問鋸鋸
When I hear the tides, I remember how the oar was struck, ⁶¹	聽潮思擊楫

⁵⁸ This line literally means: “Who can wave his arms and shout?” This is a reference to a line in “A Letter in Answer to Su Wu” (*Da Su Wu shu* 答蘇武書) attributed to the Han dynasty general Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 BCE), which reads: “However, I waved my arms and shouted, rising up even when sick and injured to grab my weapon and point it against the caitiffs” (*Ran Ling zhenbi yibu, chuangbing jie qi, zhi ren zhi lu* 然陵振臂一呼, 創病皆起, 執刃指虜); see *Wenxuan*, 41:565. Modern scholarship has served to demonstrate that this letter is a later forgery, but this was not known in Zheng Jing’s time; see Chung 1982:316-339.

⁵⁹ This is an allusion to the biography of Zu Ti, as recorded in *Jinsbu*, 62:1694. “Dancing” (*qimu* 起舞) refers specifically to the training of troops. This allusion also appears elsewhere in Zheng Jing’s poetry on contemporary events; see for example his poem entitled “Wenjiao” 聞角 (On Hearing the Battle-Horns Sound) in *Dongbilou ji*, 4:220-221.

⁶⁰ Kunwu is the name of a famous precious sword mentioned in *Liezi*, 189 [“Tangwen” 湯問].

⁶¹ This is a reference to how, when crossing the Yangtze River on a campaign against the northern invaders, Zu Ti slapped an oar against the water and swore that he would “cleanse the Central Plains” (*qing Zhongyuan* 清中原); see

On snowy nights, I recollect the campaign to pacify Wu.⁶²

夜雪憶平吳

I build up my strength waiting for the right moment to strike,

遵養待時動

Training up a force of one hundred thousand men.

組練十萬夫

【An old-fashioned style and somber mood】⁶³

【骨老氣沉】

The same resolute mood can also be seen in the poem “Bei Zhongyuan wei fu,” in which Zheng Jing stresses that he will continue his campaigns against the Manchus in the teeth of all obstacles. Again he compares his position with that of famous loyal generals of antiquity, but where they were successful in defending the dynasties that they served, Zheng Jing faces the possibility here that he will fail. Nevertheless, in spite of the inauspicious circumstances in which he fights, he emphasizes that no consideration will turn him from the goal that he has set himself:

The disgusting influences of the barbarian caitiffs have changed the Nine Regions, 胡虜腥塵變九州

Loyal vassals and righteous knights suffer tragedy and pain.

忠臣義士懷悲愁

Jinshu, 62:1695. This story seems to have been a particular favourite for Zheng Jing personally, since he frequently makes reference to this in his poetry; see Di 2015:50. Di further notes that this story is mentioned with unusual frequency in imperial era poetry from Taiwan and credits this to Zheng Jing’s influence.

⁶² This refers to the campaign by the first Jin emperor to conquer the Three Kingdoms era state of Wu, which took place in the year 280. This particular line is one that militates against a personal, autobiographical reading of Zheng Jing’s poetry, for snowy nights are not a feature of life in either Fujian or Taiwan, which are subtropical regions.

⁶³ *Dongbilou ji*, 1:38.

Although there is no Bolang, Zifang will still strike; ⁶⁴	既無博浪子房擊
Even if it must be released in mid-stream, Zu Ti will board his boat.	須放中流祖逖舟
The mountains and rivers of the former dynasty have all changed colour,	<u>故國山河盡變色</u>
The palaces and towers of the old capital have become ruins.	<u>舊京宮闕化成丘</u>
Who knows when this horror will be avenged and this humiliation wiped out?	復仇雪恥知何日
Until I have put Loulan to the sword, I swear I will not rest. ⁶⁵	不斬樓蘭誓不休

Elsewhere in his poetry about the Manchu invasion of China, Zheng Jing addressed not only his own experience as the commander-in-chief of one of the most important armies of resistance, but also the situation of ordinary soldiers, who left their families to fight. His poem, “Junxing bie” 軍行別 (On Saying Goodbye When the Army Sets Out), is an example of this kind of verse: an imaginative response to a common situation, which should not be considered in any way autobiographical. Here, while admitting the necessity of the action, Zheng Jing expresses sympathy for the plight of those separated from loved ones by war, focusing first on the situation of the

⁶⁴ Zifang refers to Zhang Liang 張良 (d. 186 BCE), one of the key figures in the collapse of the Qin dynasty and founding of the Han. Bolang or Bolangsha 博浪沙 was the site of his failed attempt upon the life of the First Emperor of China in 218 BCE; see *Shiji*, 55:2034.

⁶⁵ *Dongbilou ji*, 4:173-174. The final line is a reworking of the final line, “Until I have put Loulan to the sword, I swear I will not return” (*buzhan Loulan shi bu buan* 不斬樓蘭誓不還) from Wang Changling’s 王昌齡 (698-756) “Four Poems on Following the Army on Campaign” (從軍行四); see *Quan Tangshi*, 143:1444.

husband, and then concluding with the words of the wife in which she explains her feelings on parting, perhaps forever:

Barbarian caitiffs flourish, the Central Plains have changed.	胡虜熾, 中原移
Evils of all kinds are perpetrated, the proper way is in decline.	羣邪起, 正道衰
The country has suffered disaster, the Son of Heaven is in exile,	國家遭變, 天子流離
Knights are filled with anger, they come together to raise righteous armies.	士懷激烈, 共興義師
Setting out, he whips his horses; facing the wind, he feels great sadness.	君行策馬, 臨風感悲
She says goodbye to her husband, there by the riverbank.	妾與君別, 在水之坻
“The spring winds blow, parting brings painful feelings,	春風發發, 起我離思
The swallows fly, swooping back to back in pairs. ⁶⁶	燕燕于飛, 雙雙背翹
For the sake of this righteous cause, I do not dare complain,	君爲大義, 不敢怨咨
But my heart is deeply anguished, remembering all that had gone before.	寸心惻惻, 念茲在茲
Your journey begins here, speed your horses for ten thousand <i>li</i> ;	行矣此始, 萬里驅馳

⁶⁶ This line alludes to the song “Yanyan” 燕燕 (Swallows) in *Shijing*, 121-124. This song describes the tragic separation of a loving couple, and hence is particularly apposite in this context.

Look after yourself, to comfort my feelings.”⁶⁷

努力加餐, 慰我情思

【Sad, without being tragic】⁶⁸

【哀而不傷】

This poem addresses the highly emotional theme of a husband and wife being torn apart by his duty to defend the country against foreign invasion—words such as righteous (*yi* 義) and proper (*zheng* 正) are repeated to stress the moral value of the cause for which he fights, but this is not allowed to negate the importance of her distress and concern at the prospect of a long separation in extremely dangerous circumstances.⁶⁹ The experience of those left behind at home also addressed in another of Zheng Jing’s poems, “Saishang qiu” 塞上秋 (Autumn on the Borders), where they are described waiting helplessly on the city walls for news of the progress of battle. Again, this particular poem describes Zheng Jing’s concerns at the way in which the conflict was dragging on, with no end in sight. Although he does not here address the irony of the situation that as one of the principle defenders of the Southern Ming cause he was in some measure responsible for the suffering that he

⁶⁷ The terms in which this final line is expressed is an allusion to the terms in which the heir to the throne wrote to his chief advisor and tutor, Huan Rong 桓榮 (d. c. 59 CE), as recorded in *Hou Hanshu*, 37:1252. Here, the affectionate care mentioned in this letter has been adapted to express a wife’s concern for her husband.

⁶⁸ *Dongbilou ji*, 1:42-43. As noted by Zeng Yuhui 2008:118, Zheng Jing often wrote poetry focusing on the plight of women caught up in the warfare and social chaos of this era, and writing sympathetically in a woman’s voice is one of the hallmarks of his work. A similar engagement with the experiences and emotions of women is not found in the work of other Southern Ming poets.

⁶⁹ In fact, during the course of the Manchu invasion, one reason for many people to serve the Qing was the prospect of a speedy reunion with loved ones located behind Ming lines. This issue is discussed in Wakeman 1985:186-187.

describes, there is nevertheless a strong undercurrent of weariness at the prospect of apparently endless warfare:

The autumn wind suddenly blows throughout the frontier city,	金風乍發滿龍城
At the far-distant border generals begin their battle campaigns.	邊遠將軍始戰征
In the morning they set out, their banners furled like clouds,	朝出旌旗雲霧捲
In the evening they return, chariots and horses at peace in the land.	暮歸車馬山河平
On the city wall, hearing the battle drums, they cry bitterly,	樓頭鼓角悲怨淚
Beyond the borders, a flute is played, with the sound of a woman weeping.	塞外笙箏泣婦聲
When will this barbarian court be swept away?	何日胡庭竟掃靖
For then we can close the armouries and [put away] these old weapons.	盡封武庫舊戈兵

【Tragic and forceful】⁷⁰

【悲壯】

Throughout Zheng Jing's writings on his own position as one of the key military commanders of the anti-Manchu resistance movement, and his poems about ordinary people caught up in these events, he repeatedly stresses the righteousness of the cause for which he fought. The Ming government—for all its flaws—was legitimate: restoring a Ming emperor to power was just and proper. Furthermore, Zheng Jing frequently reiterates his belief that the Ming regime was

⁷⁰ *Dongbilou ji*, 4:172-173.

supported by the people, hence soldiers flocked to fight for them and their subjects continued to feel loyalty to them, while any victories won by the invading Manchu forces could be entirely ascribed to the appalling brutality of their tactics, massacring all who stood in their way. This allows him to maintain the fiction that the Ming government had not alienated whole swathes of the population by generations of mismanagement, and to ignore the fact that many people were happy to simply surrender and begin new lives as subjects of the Qing government, as soon as the Manchu armies arrived.

Writing in the Years of Hope: 1673-1674

Very few of Zheng Jing's poems express any optimism about the Southern Ming cause. At the same time, in spite of the fact that he was in negotiations concerning the possibility of a deal with the Qing government over the course of several decades, there is nothing in his writings which suggests that he thought an acceptable compromise could be reached. (This may be the result of the fact that the pieces preserved in the *Dongbilou ji* were intended for circulation, and hence Zheng Jing was being cautious about what was made publically available). There is, however, a small group of writings in which he does appear to contemplate a resolution to the conflict which would be in his favour—all of these pieces were produced in the early stages of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories (*Sanfan zhi luan* 三藩之亂), which took place in the years 1673-1681. Zheng Jing did commit significant forces to this uprising from 1674 onwards, though to no avail. In one of these pieces, entitled “Wen xifang fanzheng. Xiyong de chengzi” 聞西方反正喜詠得誠字 (I Heard that the Western Regions Have Returned to the Righteous Path. Happily I Composed a Poem, Using the

Rhyme-word *Cheng* [Sincerity]), thought to have been written in the winter of 1673-1674, Zheng Jing allows himself to look forward as far as the postwar reconstruction period:

A horde of barbarians have brought chaos to the world,	群胡亂宇宙
Yet the staunch at heart have preserved their sterling integrity.	百折守丹誠
On this island out in the ocean, I receive no intelligence,	海島無鸞信
I have been cut off from news of my hometown.	鄉關斷雞聲
Yet a righteous army has risen up from among the Bo grottoes, ⁷¹	義師興焚岫
Their energy and strength will alarm the invaders.	壯氣撼長鯨
Their banners and flags have appeared in Jing[zhou] and Xiang[yang],	旗旆荆襄出
Their weapons outshine the sun and the moon.	刀兵日月明
The moment I heard this I was deeply moved:	一聞因色動
Happy and yet amazed.	滿喜又心驚
I hope they will sweep away the rank and stinking tents [of the Manchus];	願掃腥膻幕
Restoring to all its former glory our great northern capital.	悉恢燕鎬京

⁷¹ Bo refers to an aboriginal people living in the mountainous region between Sichuan and Yunnan—here, the righteous army refers to the forces commanded by Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612-1678), the most important leader in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories.

Opening again the roads travelled by those going to court and paying tribute,

更開朝貢路

Building once more cities to house the surrendered.⁷²

再築受降城

【The loyalty and sincerity here is clear】.⁷³

【忠誠可掬】

At around the same time, probably early in 1674, Zheng Jing wrote another piece on a similar theme, entitled “He Kang Fu yingtian taolu dahai chushi” 和康甫應天討虜大海出師 (Matching Kang Fu’s [Poem] On Setting Out with the Army across the Ocean to Punish the Caitiffs According to Imperial Order).⁷⁴ Here again he expresses considerable optimism for the future, stating his belief that the restoration of the Ming imperial house was something which would be greeted with overwhelming relief by the populace as a whole—it is this mandate of approval which justifies his actions, and those of other leaders of the resistance to the Manchu government. Although in other writings Zheng Jing does admit the failures of the regime, and expresses concern that there is no charismatic and capable leader to act as a focus for resistance, there is no place for such concerns here:

Floating away to campaign in the west, riding on a battle-ship,

薄出西征駕戰舟

⁷² A *shoujiangcheng* 受降城 (city to house the surrendered) refers to the policy of both the Han and Tang dynasty governments to provide special accommodation for enemy combatants who had surrendered; see *Shiji*, 100:2915; *Hanshu*, 94A:3775; and *Xin Tangshu*, 111:4152.

⁷³ *Dongbilou ji*, 5:250.

⁷⁴ This dating follows that given in Gong Xianzong 2013:195.

I sing loudly when the oars strike as we cross the waters. ⁷⁵	長歌擊楫濟中流
The proper destiny of the country will be restored today,	國家元運今朝復
The evil influences of the barbarian catiffs will now be extirpated.	胡虜妖氛一旦收
The common people shout with joy at the restoration of the Han house,	萬姓歡呼恢漢室
Exiled ministers are delighted as they get to gaze upon this sacred land.	孤臣喜得見神州
After ten years of training and preparation, now is the time to act,	<u>十年遵養因時動</u>
How could a valiant knight refuse to cross the seas this autumn? ⁷⁶	<u>壯士何辭櫛沐秋</u>
【Grand and proud】 . ⁷⁷	【氣亦自雄】

As events transpired, Zheng Jing was over-optimistic about the prospects of a Ming restoration being greeted with overwhelming joy. Although resistance to the Qing government would continue, the failure of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories demonstrated that Manchu rule had successfully been established in vast areas of China, and that it would not be possible to force them back. Given the lack of any firm dating for the majority of Zheng Jing's writings on the contemporary political situation, it is not possible to situate his other poems about contemporary

⁷⁵ The wording of this line suggests an allusion, yet again, to the *Jinshu* 晉書 (History of the Jin dynasty) biography of Zu Ti. Zheng Jing is thus implicitly setting out on a journey to “cleanse the Central Plains” of barbarian influence.

⁷⁶ This line contains an allusion to the account of the Wo 倭 people in *Hou Hanshu*, 85:2821, which says that before setting out across the seas, one sailor would be selected as a *chishuai* 持衰 (presumably the transliteration of some foreign term), in which case he was not allowed to wash or comb his hair, eat meat, or have sex.

⁷⁷ *Dongbilou ji*, 4:221.

events in context of the slow and inexorable erosion of Southern Ming power in the decade before the Rebellion, or in the depression and decline that set in during the decade afterwards. What is clear, however, is that Zheng Jing's writings during this brief period of hope are quite different in tone from his other poems about resisting the Qing that are included in the *Dongbilou ji*.

“Bizarre and Disgusting Happenings:” Representing the Manchu Imperial House

In the earlier sections of this paper, I have concentrated exclusively on writings by Zheng Jing found in his collection, the *Dongbilou ji*. However, there is one important group of poems, entitled “Du Zhang Gong Huangyan Manzhou gong ci zu zheng qi zaruozhi shi. Li Yushi lai Dongdu you dao shu shi, nai xu zhi” 讀張公煌言滿洲宮詞足徵其雜揉之實，李御史來東都又道數事。乃續之 (I Read Lord Zhang Huangyan's (1620-1664) Poems Talking about the Manchu Palace which Proved the Truth of These Bizarre and Disgusting Happenings.⁷⁸ Censor Li Came to Dongdu and Also Spoke about Several of these Matters. Hence [I wrote these poems] to Continue on the Same Theme)—also known as “*Manzhou gong ci: Sisou*” 滿洲宮詞：四首 (Poems on the Manchu Palace: Four Verses)—that is of particular relevance to the theme of this paper.⁷⁹ These four poems were originally included within the *Yanping erwang yiji*, but although generally attributed

⁷⁸ Zhang Huangyan was one of Zheng Chenggong's key associates and military commanders from 1651 until he was captured and executed by the Qing government in 1664. His official biography is given in the *Qingshi gao*, 224:9153-9157; see also Quan Zuwang 1958. Although nearly four hundred poems by Zhang Huangyan survive, many with a strongly anti-Manchu content, none of them seem to correspond to what Zheng Jing describes.

⁷⁹ The alternative title is given in Gong Xianzong 2013:275.

to Zheng Jing, this has been disputed by some scholars. In particular, in his study of this compilation, Huang Tengde 黃騰德 accepts most of the collection as genuine, but argues that this particular poem was not produced by a member of the Zheng family.⁸⁰ Given the controversy, this is the only poem from the *Yanping erwang yiji* to be considered in this paper, but it is included for a number of reasons. First, it is a rare surviving example of Southern Ming poetry to frame resistance within the context of disgust at specific alien customs: the religious practices of the Manchu elite, and their tradition of levirate marriage. Very little writing survives from the Zheng and other Southern Ming affiliated regimes on this kind of subject, and the contents of this group of poems suggests a reason for the determination of the Qing government that such works of literature should not be preserved.⁸¹ Furthermore, this group of poems allows us to see the Zheng regime as one in which even the most garbled and misunderstood story which presented the Qing ruling house in a bad light was seized upon and promulgated; at the same time the “Chinese-ness” of the Zheng family—a very dubious proposition at the best of times—was constructed by emphasizing their non- “Manchu-ness,” and their resolute hostility to the presence of these “barbarians” on Chinese soil. The very forceful way in which Zheng Jing expresses his disgust suggests that this is an early

⁸⁰ Huang Tengde 2013:42-46. The authorship of this particular poem has also been debated by other scholars, with Zhu Honglin 1994, suggesting that it be attributed to either Zhu Yihai, the last King of Lu, or perhaps Zheng Chenggong or some other member of his inner circle. The attribution to Zhu Yihai is unsatisfactory on the basis of the source; assuming some measure of honesty on the part of the original compiler, the *Yanping erwang yiji* should contain only works ascribed to Zheng Chenggong and his son. Other scholars, however, do attribute this particular poem to Zheng Jing; see for example Gong Xianzong 2013:275.

⁸¹ For an overview of the entire surviving corpus of literature related to the Southern Ming dynasty as a whole, including material from the Zheng regime on Taiwan; see Pan Chengyu 2007.

poem; it is unlikely that such a furious piece could have been written after the events of the early 1670s proved how entrenched the Qing dynasty had really become:

The moonlight shines brightly on the myriad railings [of the palace],	十二闌干月色鮮
The brilliant colours of the massed flowers glow of their own accord.	百花爛熳自逞妍
In the Zhaoyang Hall, she has finished applying her makeup, ⁸²	昭陽殿裏粧初罷
Chatting happily, she mentions the king, expressing love and affection.	喜道名王著意憐

【When the barbarian chief [Huang Taiji 皇太極 (r. 1626-1643)] had just died, his wife [Borjigit Bumbutai] could not bear to sleep alone, so she had an affair with the chief's younger brother, the false Ninth Prince [Dorgon 多爾袞 (1612-1650)].⁸³ Every time she heard that the king had entered the palace, her pleasure and delight was redoubled. She frequently told all the palace maids and eunuchs about [their relationship], for the king loved her to a quite extraordinary degree】

⁸² The Zhaoyang Hall was one part of the Weiyang Palace 未央宮 complex during the Han dynasty, at which point it was the residence of one of the most senior imperial consorts; see *Hanshu*, 97B:3989. Hence here this alludes to the residence of the Manchu Empress Dowager, Borjigit Bumbutai 博爾濟吉特·布木布泰 (1613-1688), Empress Xiaozhuangwen 孝莊文皇后.

⁸³ The official biography of Empress Xiaozhuangwen appears in the *Qingshi gao*, 214:8901-8903; that of Dorgon is given in 218:9021-9033. In spite of centuries of gossip about the exact nature of the relationship between the empress and her brother-in-law, nothing is actually known on the subject. Although Dorgon is here referred to as the Ninth Prince, he was in fact the Fourteenth—it is not clear why Zheng Jing has made this mistake.

【胡酋初死妻不耐獨宿，私于酋弟，偽九王。每聞王入宮，欣悅倍。常遍告宮娥，阿監，王格外愛憐之意】

The ninth prince's long-standing affair has carried on for ages,	九王舊好漫相尋
The pepper chamber is quiet, but the moonlight still gets in. ⁸⁴	椒室沈沈月色侵
A palace eunuch suddenly sees his old master,	宮監忽聽見故主
On hearing this, anger and resentment becomes even deeper.	頻聞悲怨到更深

【When the prince and the false empress were involved in a secret affair, some of the eunuchs suddenly saw their former ruler [Huang Taiji] with an angry and tragic countenance, pacing back and forth around the court—at the same time they heard the sound of bitter sobbing. Word of this reached the imperial residence. The prince and empress were both furious and punished those who reported it】

【王與偽后綢繆之際，監等忽見故主慘淡之容，迴翔庭戶間，并聞悲泣聲。傳言入內。王后二人大怒，責告者】

On the first day of the year the empress and prince enter the temple gate,	元旦后王入廟門
Deep within the palace, surrounded by silence, they pray to heterodox gods.	深宮寂靜祀祆神

⁸⁴ In the Han dynasty, the Pepper Chamber (Jiaoshi 椒室) was the residence of the empress; see *Sanfu huangtu*, 163. By extension, it came to refer to the person of the empress herself; see for example *Hou Hanshu*, 56:1832; and 63:2075. In this line, Borjigit Bumbutai is understood as the person who should be hidden away in the women's quarters, and the moonlight alludes to Dorgon's presence within the palace.

Huge statues, disgusting and lascivious, stand in serried ranks,

狂淫大像巍然立

Having finished their worship, they climb onto the stage to display their naked bodies.

跪畢登監裸體陳

【It is the custom of these barbarians that at dawn on the first day of the year, the false emperor and empress enter the palace and pray to heterodox gods. In the palace, in places where people do not go, they have set up huge statues representing men and women having sex.⁸⁵ When the two people have finished their prayers they remove their clothes and stand up on a stage—in the fashion of animals—men to the left and women to the right. This was seen when eunuchs spied on them, and thus word spread outside [the palace]: hence for the first time we knew about this thing. Really this is a disgusting custom, [in which they behave] like beasts. Furthermore, when the [Manchu] chief died, his younger brother began an incestuous relationship with his sister-in-law: they have done this kind of thing for generations. Nevertheless [the emperor] calls [his uncle]: “Imperial Parent”】⁸⁶

【胡俗元旦黎明偽帝后入宮，祀祆神。宮，在人不到處所，供大像男女相抱構精而立。二人跪拜畢即裸體登盤，如牲牢之式；男左女右。爲監窺見，傳言于外，始知其事。真禽獸之惡習。且酋死，弟蒸嫂：代行此禮。堂然稱父皇也】

⁸⁵ This seems to be a reference to the sculptured bronze figures common in Tibetan Buddhism, associated with the Tantric esoteric tradition, in which a male deity, such as Vajradhāra or Vajrasattva, is shown in sexual union with a female deity, such as Vajradhātviśvarī; see Rawson 1992:132-139; and 179-186. In Chinese, these deities are known as *huanxi fo* 歡喜佛. However, such images are usually small; it is not at all clear why Zheng Jing or his informants should imagine them to be huge, except that this increases the shock value.

⁸⁶ Dorgon did indeed receive the title of Imperial Parent in 1649; see *Qingshi gao*, 218:9029.

So lovely, so gentle and charming, as pretty as a flower,

亭亭婉嫕蕙蘭花

In this yurt she received favour, none was greater than hers.

氈帳承恩莫漫誇

Though she respected the summons, a sudden announcement caused her bones to be broken.

嚴詔忽頒俾骨碎

Kneeling before the iron plaque he still felt the touch of the whip.

鐵牌前跪猶鞭撻

【When the false King of Yu [Dodo 多鐸 (1614-1649)] ravaged Jiangnan, he took two women captive.⁸⁷ The one surnamed Huang, he kept for himself and made his wife; the one [called] Song Huixiang, he presented to the Ninth Prince.⁸⁸ The prince favoured her. When the empress heard about this, she was furious. She cut off the hands and feet of this woman named Song, [gouged out] her eyes, cut off her ears and nose, and cut out her tongue. She put these [human remains] in a pot, and placed it in front of her seat, where everyone could see it. Then she ordered the false Chancellor to set up an iron plaque by the gate to the palace [reading]:

⁸⁷ The official biography of Dodo is given in *Qingshi gao*, 218:9033-9040.

⁸⁸ The woman surnamed Huang has proved impossible to identify. A woman named Song Huixiang, however, is recorded in Qing dynasty sources; she was a young palace woman captured by the Manchu army at the time of the fall of Nanjing. A number of poems attributed to her authorship are recorded in Qing dynasty texts; see for example *Mingyuan shivei chubian*, 1:12a-13a; and *Bencao mingyuan shichao*, 6:16b-17a. Writing poetry following Song Huixiang's rhymes was popular in the Ming-Qing transition era: significantly in view of Zheng Jing's writings, a poem by Zhang Huangyan entitled "Harmonizing with the Rhymes of the Female Martyr Song Huixiang of Qinhuai's [Poem] on the Wall of an Inn" (He Qinhuai nannü Song Huixiang lübi yun 和秦淮難女宋蕙湘旅壁韻) dated to 1662 survives; see *Zhang Cangshui ji*, 113. In Struve 1993:93-113, there is the translation of the biography of a woman surnamed Liu, who apparently did make a successful marriage to a member of the Manchu ruling elite.

“Women of Han Chinese origin cannot enter the palace.”⁸⁹ She shouted at the Ninth Prince to kneel down in front of this plaque and then had him whipped without showing the slightest sense of shame or decency. The king swore that he would never again have an affair with another woman, and then she began to slack off. However, by the time it was over he had already been beaten to a pulp, and was in terrible pain!】⁹⁰

【偽豫王寇江南掠得二婦;一黃姓自留爲妻,一宋蕙湘獻九王.王嬖之.后聞大怒.將宋婦截去手足眼耳鼻舌,置甕中,陳筵前縱觀.遂命偽相暨立“漢族婦女不得入宮”鐵牌于宮門.呼九王跪牌前,大肆鞭撻.王誓不再私婦女,始已;然已血肉狼藉,痛苦不堪矣】

In this series of four poems, the most senior members of the Qing imperial house are accused of a host of offenses, including incest, adherence to heterodox cults, participation in sexual orgies, the torture of defenseless and innocent people, and murder. Rather than attempting any concealment, they flaunt their vicious and immoral behaviour. The importance of these accusations for understanding Zheng Jing’s writings on the Qing conquest is twofold. First, in other works preserved in the *Dongbilou ji*, he frequently mentions his concern and distress about the introduction of alien customs by the Manchus: what these might be is nowhere else described. This group of four poems is therefore crucial for understanding what he thought “the disgusting influences of the barbarian caitiffs” (*hulu xingchen* 胡虜腥塵) and “evil influences of the barbarian caitiffs” (*hulu yaofen* 胡虜妖氛) were. The second issue with respect to these accusations, is that by condemning them,

⁸⁹ This statement of ethnic discrimination on the part of the empress dowager is unique to this text, and there is no evidence that such an imperial order was ever promulgated. However, it clearly suited the rhetoric of the Southern Ming dynasty leaders to claim that members of the Manchu imperial house were racist in this way.

⁹⁰ *Yanping erwang yiji*, unpaginated. It should be noted that the structure of this group of poems with concluding remarks is extremely unusual; no comparable writings of palace poetry in this format survive from earlier dynasties.

Zheng Jing places himself in a morally superior position. Although members of the Zheng family—including Zheng Jing himself, whose oldest son was born as a result of an incestuous relationship—were far from being paragons of virtue, by emphasizing the immorality in which others were engaged, and pointing out the heinous crimes committed by the Qing ruling elite, he can present himself as a staunch upholder of Confucian morality, and a bastion of Chinese social values.

Conclusion

In her study of literary representations of women of the Ming-Qing transition period as figures of heroic resistance risking all to demonstrate their loyalty to the dynasty, or committing suicide with a view to preserving their virtue, Wai-yee Li notes the salient characteristics of the writings of this era in Chinese history:

In the context of the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, literary works that romanticize real or imaginary geographical margins often combine three ingredients: fantasies of escape and utopia; valorization of the periphery as critique or corrective of the center; and the hopes of Ming *yimin* 遺民 (literally, “remnant persons,” i.e. those who refused to serve the new dynasty) that the loyalist cause, though suppressed and marginalized, may yet gather momentum, perhaps through foreign support.⁹¹

⁹¹ Li 1999:388.

All of these themes are undoubtedly found in the poetry of Zheng Jing, in the writings where he considers his own identity, or contemplates contemporary events. He was determined to present the kingdom of Dongning on Taiwan as the preserver of Han Chinese culture, for all that it was located far from any place traditionally associated with this civilization. By any criteria of discussion, Taiwan at this point in time has to be regarded as peripheral to the history of the Ming-Qing transition era, and yet in Zheng Jing's eyes, it was quite possible to use his marginalized standpoint to criticize the actions of even the most senior members of the Qing imperial house: individuals about whom he had no direct knowledge and very little access to accurate information. Finally, there is the issue of his association with the Southern Ming cause, to which as it transpired he was loyal to the very end. Although every effort to support this regime ended in defeat, Zheng Jing consistently portrays himself in his writings as either hopeful of a successful resolution, or as determined to continue to defend the last vestiges of the dynasty to the very end.

Zheng Jing was not an accomplished poet, and in his works, he returns again and again to the same images and the same allusions, often used in a quite pedestrian way. The interest in his writings comes from his historical position: he spent more than two decades defending the Southern Ming regime from his base on Taiwan. As a result of his historical importance, his poems have been read in a strongly autobiographical light, which does a disservice to the fact that these are works of literature. In this paper, therefore, Zheng Jing's writings are read as representations of his identity and reflections on his role, carefully crafted to present the image of a strong commander-in-chief, a resolute opponent of the Manchu Qing, and a loyal and devoted supporter of the Southern Ming. Though undoubtedly related to his real-life experiences, his poems are not and should not be read as direct reflections of his true thoughts. After all, had Zheng Jing lived just a couple more years, and

ended up in a situation where he had to surrender to the Qing in 1683, just like his grandfather had in 1646, would we not now be reading these writings as the cynical self-representations of a man determined, at all costs, to succeed?

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