

The Curious Case of Retripliation in the Poetry of Guanxiu (832-912)

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This presentation explores the strange occurrences of a single character being repeated three times in a row in the poetry of the Late Tang monk Guanxiu 貫休, a phenomenon given the neologism “retripliation.” First, a close reading of two Guanxiu poems, “Song of Bright Spring” Yangchun qu 陽春曲) and “Poems on Living in the Mountains #8” (Shanju shi, qi ba 山居詩其八), is provided. As the repetitive phrase functions differently in the two poems, this leads to a classification of the various uses of retripliation in Guanxiu’s poetry, a classification achieved by looking at all seven instances to be found therein. Next, a listing is given of all instances of retripliation in extant pre-Song poetry, which reveals that this phenomenon appears to be unique to late Tang religious poets. Finally, several possible explanations are given for the exceptional circumstances in which retripliation is to be found.