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“Filling out the Lost Odes” by Shu Xi:  
Ritual and Intertextuality in Early Medieval China

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The six poems titled “Filling out the Lost Odes” 補亡詩 by Shu Xi 束皙 (ca. 264-ca. 303 CE) have received little attention from most readers of medieval Chinese poetry, despite having pride of place in the *Wenxuan*, appearing at the beginning of the anthology’s *shi* (lyric poetry) section. When read carefully, these poems reveal much about the writing of poetry in early medieval China and the continuity between *shi* (lyric poetry) and *Shi* (the *Book of Odes*). In this paper, I will examine Shu Xi’s attempts to recreate the “lost Odes,” those *Shijing* titles with prefaces but no lyrics. After providing some historical context, I will carefully examine the intertextual practices of Shu Xi’s poems and note the ways in which they adhere to and depart from the canonical *Odes*. Then I will look at how the case of Shu Xi fits into the theoretical models provided by Western theories of intertextuality and demonstrate that these theories fail to adequately explain the textual and performative dynamics of “Filling out the Lost Odes” in certain crucial ways. I will conclude by suggesting that a close reading of Shu Xi’s poems can fill out a gap in our theories of intertextuality and offer new insights into the ritual, political, and aesthetic functions of literary allusion and quotation.