

Article

Visual Analysis of the Translation Research on Ouyang Xiu's Works Based on CiteSpace

Mingyuan Liu ^{1,*} and Xin Gao ¹

¹ School of Foreign Languages, Jinggangshan University, Ji'an, Jiangxi, 343009, China

* Correspondence: Mingyuan Liu, School of Foreign Languages, Jinggangshan University, Ji'an, Jiangxi, 343009, China

Abstract: Since the 1990s, scholars have increasingly paid attention to the translation of Ouyang Xiu's works. Using CiteSpace for visual bibliometric analysis, this study examines literature on the translation of Ouyang Xiu's works collected from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). A visual mapping is generated by analyzing publication trends, time distribution, authors, institutions, keywords, and related information. The findings indicate that domestic research on Ouyang Xiu's translations has been growing, yet it remains fragmented, forming research hotspots such as translation strategies, dissemination, and reception of translations. However, existing studies also exhibit certain limitations, particularly a lack of diversified research perspectives. This study aims to clarify the current status, key research areas, and frontiers in this field, providing a reference for future research, promoting further development, and facilitating the international dissemination of Ouyang Xiu's works in cultural exchanges.

Keywords: Ouyang Xiu; translation; visual analysis; CiteSpace

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of multiculturalism and China's cultural "going global" initiative, cultural diversity has become a central focus of the international community. Within this context, the value of Eastern culture in cross-cultural studies has gained increasing prominence, and the dissemination and translation of ancient Chinese classics have attracted growing scholarly attention. In the history of Chinese literature, Ouyang Xiu stands as one of the Eight Great Prose Masters of the Tang and Song dynasties. He was not only a renowned writer but also a politician, thinker, economist, and historian, whose scholarly contributions were remarkable. Qian Mu praised him as "Tong Ren" (person of wide knowledge and sound scholarship).

Ouyang Xiu's influence has extended beyond China's borders since the mid-12th century, when his poetic works were introduced to Japan and became the subject of widespread reading, study, imitation, and commentary among intellectuals. By the late 19th century, his works had been translated and introduced to Western readers, playing a significant role in global cultural exchange. Academic interest in Ouyang Xiu has remained steady, gradually expanding from a primary focus on literature to other fields, and from research within China to international scholarship.

This study employs CiteSpace to conduct a visual bibliometric analysis of research on the translation of Ouyang Xiu's works. The objectives are to trace the development of this field, identify core research forces and key themes, and reveal potential research directions [1]. These findings are expected to help integrate existing research resources, provide guidance for future studies, and promote a more systematic and in-depth development of research on Ouyang Xiu's translations.

Published: 04 September 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

2. Data Sources and Research Methods

2.1. Data Sources

All data for this study were sourced from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. A full-text search was conducted using the following keywords related to Ouyang Xiu and his works: “Ouyang Xiu,” “Zui Weng Ting Ji” (An Account of the Old Toper’s Pavilion), “Qiu Sheng Fu” (The Autumn Sound), “Feng Le Ting Ji” (Pavilion of Good Harvest and Joy), “Liu Yi Shi Hua” (Liuyi Poetry-talk) along with terms associated with translation, such as “translation”, “English translation”, “foreign translation”, “comparative study”, “Sinology” and “corpus”. After multiple rounds of searching, manual screening, and the removal of irrelevant or low-relevance literature, 67 valid studies were ultimately included. The time span of the collected literature ranges from 1995 to 2024 [2].

2.2. Research Tools

CiteSpace is a scientific bibliometric analysis tool, through the mining of literature data, to visualize the knowledge structure, research hotspots and cutting-edge trends of a research field in the form of a visual map, to reveal the knowledge units or knowledge clusters such as the network, interactions, crossover, evolution, and the relationship between them, thus helping researchers to grasp the dynamic evolution of a research field and the new trend of development [1]. The software version used in this study is CiteSpace 6.3.1, utilizing the software’s functions of author co-occurrence, annual publication volume, institutional co-occurrence, keyword emergence, keyword time zone, keyword time line, keyword clustering, etc.

Firstly, the title information of the selected valid literature is exported in the format of Refworks, and then, in conjunction with the purpose of the study, the literature is imported with the aid of the software and the corresponding data type conversion operation is performed, and at the same time, the data type conversion operation is also carried out. After that, we imported the literature information with the help of the software in accordance with the research purpose, and carried out the corresponding data type conversion operation, set the threshold value at the same time, and finally ran the CiteSpace software so as to obtain the atlas [3].

3. The General Trend of Ouyang Xiu’s Translation Research

3.1. Changes in the Number of Published Literature

The temporal distribution of publications reflects the scale of academic output within a given period and serves as an important indicator of research activity in a particular field. Figure 1 illustrates the annual publication trend of studies on the translation of Ouyang Xiu’s works from 1995 to 2024 [4]. Overall, the research trajectory can be divided into three stages: the initial stage (1995-2012), the fluctuating growth stage (2013-2021), and the relatively stable stage (2021-present).

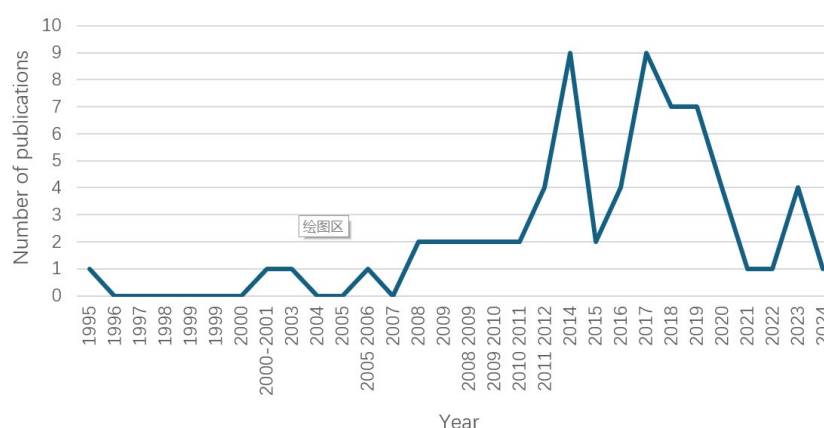


Figure 1. Statistics on the Number of Published Literature on Translation Studies of Ouyang Xiu's Works, 1995-2024.

Initial Stage (1995-2012): During this period, research on Ouyang Xiu's translations was in its infancy. The annual number of publications ranged from 0 to 2, with a total of 14 papers, indicating minimal and relatively stable academic attention.

Fluctuating Growth Stage (2013-2021): Starting in 2013, the number of studies increased significantly, rising from 2 to 9 publications [5]. This growth suggests heightened scholarly interest, likely influenced by the broader trend of promoting cultural exchange, the growing emphasis on translating and disseminating classical Chinese literature, and the revival of Sinology abroad, which in turn inspired domestic scholars to explore Ouyang Xiu's works more actively. However, after 2015, the trend fluctuated, with a decline in 2015–2016, a rebound in 2017–2019, and another drop in 2020.

Relatively Stable Stage (2021-present): From 2021 onward, the annual publication volume has shown a slow upward trend, reflecting a gradual recovery after earlier fluctuations.

Viewed over the long term, the overall trend is one of steady growth, indicating that research on Ouyang Xiu's translations has gained sustained academic attention and possesses considerable potential for further development. This warrants greater scholarly engagement and deeper exploration in the future [6].

3.2. Sources of Papers

Investigating the publication carriers of the relevant research papers can provide an effective way to gain insight into the dimension of the research and the influence of the research object in the academic field. According to the statistics, there are 44 journals that publish papers on related topics, and the related master's and doctoral dissertations originate from seven different degree-granting institutions; the journals that publish one paper are mostly academic journals, and the academic journals of higher education institutions account for a larger proportion [7]. The statistics of dissertation sources in Table 1 shows the dissertation source journals whose journals have published more than 2 papers.

Table 1. Sources of Papers on Translation Studies of Ouyang Xiu's Works.

| Journal Name | Number/article |
|--|----------------|
| Overseas English | 7 |
| Masterpiece Appreciation | 4 |
| Journal of Chuzhou University | 3 |
| Youth Literator | 3 |
| Contemporary Foreign Language Studies | 2 |
| Anhui Literature | 2 |
| Journal of Qiqihar University(Philosophy & Social Science Edition) | 2 |

Among these, *Overseas English*, *Appreciation of Masterpieces*, *Journal of Chuzhou University*, and *Young Literator* serve as the primary outlets for studies on the translation of Ouyang Xiu's works. Overall, the research findings are predominantly published in multidisciplinary journals, including those in language studies (e.g., English language and foreign language research), literature (such as literary appreciation and creative writing), education (particularly foreign language teaching and teacher training), and social sciences (e.g., philosophy and social science journals). This distribution indicates that research in this area has a broad academic impact and considerable cross-disciplinary value, underscoring the significance of translation studies on Ouyang Xiu from multiple perspectives. Nevertheless, despite its academic importance, the field still lacks a substantial body of high-quality and influential research outcomes, suggesting room for deeper and more systematic investigation [8].

3.2.1. Key Contributing Scholars and Collaboration Patterns

Run CiteSpace to generate a chart of the authors of the articles, and the results of counting the top 3 major authors in terms of the number of articles are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. High Frequency Authors of Translation Studies on Ouyang Xiu's Works.

| Ranking | Authors | Number of articles/article |
|---------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Wu Xiaofang | 5 |
| 2 | Wei Li | 4 |
| 3 | Duan Yanyan | 2 |

Among the scholars engaged in this field, Wu Xiaofang ranks first with five publications, followed by Wei Li with four and Duan Yanyan with two. These three scholars represent the core contributors to research on the translation of Ouyang Xiu's works [9]. Both Wu Xiaofang and Wei Li are affiliated with Chuzhou University: Wu primarily analyzes the English translation of "Zui Weng Ting Ji" from a cognitive linguistics perspective, while Wei applies a corpus-based approach to the study of the same text. Duan Yanyan, by contrast, focuses on the English translation of Zhai Lisi's prose piece *Autumn Sound*.

Recent contributions by scholars such as Wang Mingliang, Zheng Yajing, and Feng Lu have continued to explore translations of "Zui Weng Ting Ji", signaling ongoing scholarly interest in this work.

Overall, most studies are authored independently, and while some stable collaborative relationships exist among individual researchers, a cohesive and extensive research network in this domain has yet to emerge [10].

3.2.2. Institutional Contribution and Regional Cultural Influence

Running CiteSpace to analyze the literature issuing institutions to get the chart, it can be seen that the research literature on the translation of Ouyang Xiu's works comes from a total of 58 issuing institutions, according to the number of articles issued in more than two issuing institutions to summarize the information, to get Table 3.

Table 3. Main Publishing Institutions of Ouyang Xiu's Works Translation Research.

| Institutions | Number of articles/article |
|--|----------------------------|
| School of Foreign Languages, Chuzhou University | 11 |
| School of Foreign Languages, East China University of Science and Technology | 2 |
| School of Foreign Languages, Shijiazhuang College | 2 |

Chuzhou University demonstrates the highest level of scholarly engagement and produces the most substantial research output in this field. This reflects the regional characteristics of translation studies on Ouyang Xiu's works and highlights the significant influence of local culture on academic research. As the cultural symbol of Chuzhou and the

inspiration for “Zui Weng Ting Ji”, the Old Toper’s Pavilion plays a pivotal role in shaping this research focus.

Academic inquiry into this topic has created mutual benefits for both scholars and the local community. For scholars, research is deeply rooted in regional culture, emphasizing the exploration of cultural connotations in the cross-cultural translation of “Zui Weng Ting Ji” and addressing the challenges and strategies involved in translating related works. For the local community, such research not only enhances understanding of Ouyang Xiu’s thought but also contributes to the preservation and transmission of regional cultural heritage, thereby strengthening cultural identity and promoting the soft power of Chuzhou culture [11].

4. Research Hot Spots

The functions of keyword co-occurrence, clustering, and timeline mapping can effectively identify the key issues of a research area, intuitively present and integrate the research objects, research methods and research focuses of the articles, and show the development trajectory of these hot topics in both synchronous and chronological dimensions.

4.1. Keyword Co-occurrence and Clustering

Keywords provide a concise representation of the core themes and content of scholarly literature. In a given research field, frequently recurring keywords typically indicate research hotspots or key areas of focus. In a co-occurrence network, the lines connecting keywords represent co-occurrence relationships, while line thickness reflects the strength of association. Keyword clustering, based on co-occurrence analysis, groups closely related keywords into thematic clusters and generates cluster labels, thereby revealing implicit associations and structural characteristics within the research domain. The keyword co-occurrence map and the clustering map (Figure 2) in this study were generated using CiteSpace.

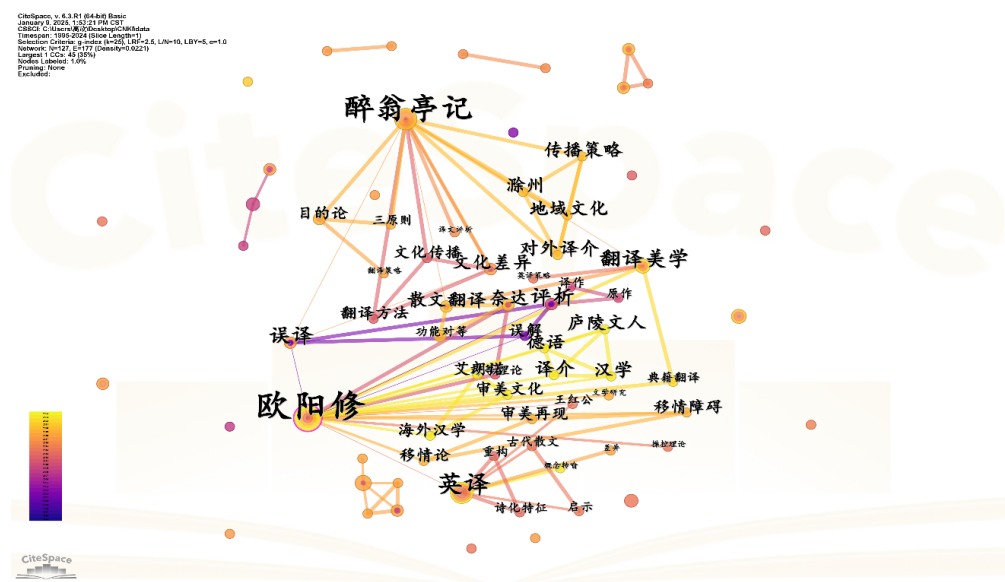


Figure 2. keyword co-occurrence on Translation Studies of Ouyang Xiu's Works, 1995-2024.

The six most frequent keywords include “Ouyang Xiu”, “Zui Weng Ting Ji”, “English translation,” “comparative analysis”, “translation criticism” and “translation aesthetics”. The strong linkage between “Ouyang Xiu” and “English translation” suggests that most studies focus on translation-related issues concerning this author. Similarly, the close association between “Zui Weng Ting Ji” and “Ouyang Xiu” underscores the central role of this text in translation research. The presence of terms such as “translation method” and

“translation quality” indicates a scholarly emphasis on practical strategies and evaluative criteria in translating Ouyang Xiu’s works.

Cultural elements also feature prominently in the keyword network. “Cultural communication” appears as an intermediary node, connecting keywords such as “translation method” and “cultural differences”. This suggests that cultural exchange and intercultural understanding play a pivotal role in studies of Ouyang Xiu’s translations. The emergence of terms like “cultural communication” and “cultural differences” reflects a research trend toward examining translation from a broader cultural perspective rather than purely linguistic or stylistic dimensions.

The clustering analysis groups co-occurring keywords into three major clusters: #0 ‘Ouyang Xiu’, #1 ‘Zui Weng Ting Ji’, and #2 ‘English Translation’. In CiteSpace, a lower cluster number indicates a larger cluster with higher keyword density. These clusters confirm that translation studies of Ouyang Xiu’s works revolve around three core themes: the author himself, his representative work “Zui Weng Ting Ji” and English translation practices. Collectively, the findings reveal that current scholarship integrates considerations of regional culture, cultural differences, and aesthetic principles, with English translation serving as a key medium for transmitting Chinese cultural heritage internationally (Figure 3).

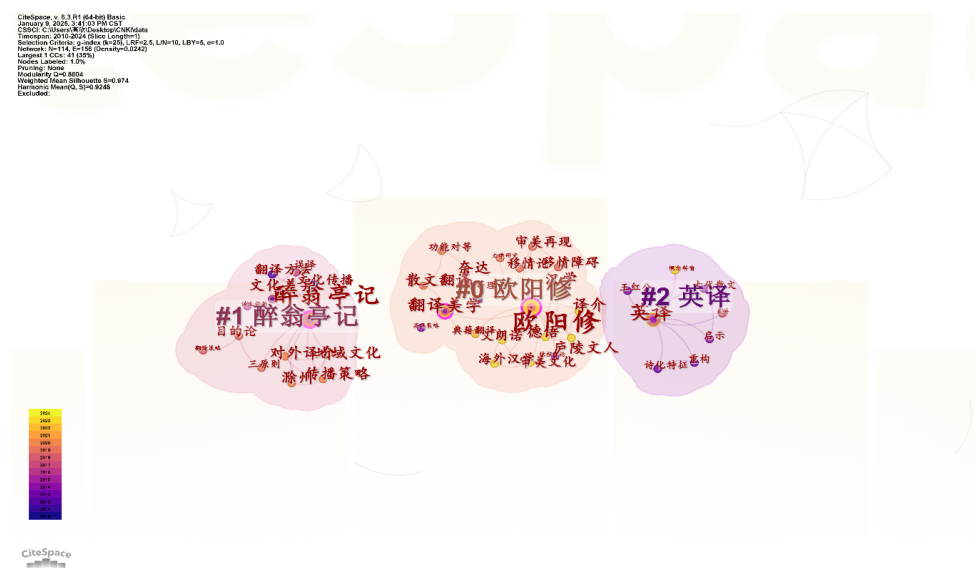


Figure 3. keyword clustering map on Translation Studies of Ouyang Xiu's Works, 1995-2024.

4.2. Keyword Timeline Analysis and Evolution of Research

The keyword timeline reveals the historical progression of research on Ouyang Xiu’s translations, highlighting emerging themes, enduring concerns, and shifting priorities. Based on CiteSpace visualization, the keywords “Ouyang Xiu”, “Zui Weng Ting Ji” and “English translation” appear most prominently, underscoring their central role throughout the research trajectory.

Over the past two decades, research in this area has experienced three distinct phases.

Initial Stage (1995-2012): During this period, studies primarily focused on applying specific translation theories to analyze strategies and methods for rendering Ouyang Xiu’s prose into English. Frequently applied frameworks included the theory of equivalence, manipulation theory, and the aesthetics of translation. Most works concentrated on “Zui Weng Ting Ji”, comparing different English versions and examining variations in the rendering of key terms or passages. Factors influencing translation strategies were explored from textual, linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and social dimensions.

Fluctuating Growth Stage (2013-2021): Subsequent research adopted more diverse theoretical frameworks, such as eco-translatology, conceptual metaphor theory, and Skopos theory. Scholars began emphasizing culturally loaded expressions and the aesthetic reproduction of original texts, signaling a shift from purely linguistic concerns to cultural and stylistic considerations.

Relatively Stable Stage (2021-present): In recent years, the scope of research has expanded significantly. Studies now incorporate perspectives from overseas Sinology and extend the regional cultural lens beyond Chuzhou to Luling. The focus has also broadened from “Zui Weng Ting Ji” to include works such as “Liu Yi Shi Hua”, exploring both prose and poetic expressions of Ouyang Xiu. This evolution reflects a conceptual shift from translation as linguistic transfer to translation as cultural exchange and value transmission, enriching and deepening the field’s intellectual content.

Summary and Future Directions: Research on Ouyang Xiu’s translations integrates insights from translation studies, linguistics, intercultural communication, and Sinology. While current scholarship primarily concentrates on ancient prose and English translation strategies, resulting in a somewhat narrow linguistic and textual focus, the theoretical frameworks employed have become increasingly varied and sophisticated. Future studies should incorporate empirical methodologies, strengthen interdisciplinary approaches, and build on robust theoretical foundations to generate more impactful findings.

5. Research Findings and Discussion

The visual analysis conducted with CiteSpace identifies both the characteristics and the evolving trends of domestic scholarship on the translation of Ouyang Xiu’s works. The overall profile can be summarised as follows.

(1) Although research in this field began relatively early, its output remains limited: high-impact publications are scarce, and the community of active scholars is small.

(2) Most researchers have worked in isolation; a dense and influential collaborative network has yet to emerge.

(3) The majority of publishing institutions are located in Chuzhou, Anhui Province, a distribution that partially reflects Ouyang Xiu’s life trajectory and the geographical setting of his literary production.

(4) Owing to its outstanding literary merit, profound cultural connotations and distinctive artistic style, “Zui Weng Ting Ji” has become the focal text; other valuable genres poetry, prose and poetic treatises have received comparatively little attention.

(5) With regard to translation proper, cultural translation and reciprocal translation are the most frequently discussed strategies, indicating scholars’ concern with conveying the essence of Ouyang Xiu’s works across cultures. Research perspectives have gradually shifted from micro-level analyses of technique and strategy toward macro-level concerns such as cultural communication and reader reception, reflecting a continuous broadening and deepening of the field.

After years of accumulation, the study of translating Ouyang Xiu’s works has achieved notable results; nevertheless, several weaknesses still call for improvement. Future endeavours may focus on the following three directions.

(1) Foster sustained collaboration and academic exchange among individual researchers and institutions. By integrating Ouyang Xiu’s biography, local archival resources and innovative theoretical frameworks, the field can move toward richer, more diverse and higher-quality scholarship.

(2) Expand the corpus of texts under investigation. Beyond “Zui Weng Ting Ji”, more attention should be paid to Ouyang Xiu’s poetry, prose and literary criticism, as well as to multilingual translations and their global dissemination. Computer-assisted translation tools and corpus linguistics should be employed to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches, thereby extending both the breadth and the depth of research and helping classical Chinese literature reach a global audience.

(3) Given that most translations have been produced by European and American sinologists, in-depth comparative studies of their varying cultural and philosophical interpretations are needed. Such work would illuminate how the spiritual core of Ouyang Xiu's thought is reshaped in a global context and would provide empirical data for understanding the intellectual orientations of contemporary sinologists.

6. Conclusion

This study uses CiteSpace software to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth visual analysis of the translation research of Ouyang Xiu's works during the period from 1995 to 2024, analyzing the knowledge structure, current research status, hot trends, potential limitations, and future frontier directions of the field, so as to provide an all-around and multi-dimensional reference basis for promoting the continuous development of research in this field.

Funding: This paper is a research result of the youth project of Jiangxi Provincial Social Science Foundation, "Research on the Translation, Dissemination and Acceptance of Ouyang Xiu's Works in German-speaking Countries" (Project No. 23YY18); and the project of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program for Undergraduates of Jinggangshan University, "Visual Analysis of Translation Research of Ouyang Xiu's Works" (Project No. JDX2024204).

References

1. C. M. Chen, "CiteSpace II: Detecting and visualizing emerging trends and transient patterns in scientific literature," *J. Am. Soc. Inf. Sci. Technol.*, no. 3, pp. 359–377, 2006, doi: 10.1002/asi.20317.
2. Y. Chen, C. M. Chen, Z. Y. Liu, Z. G. Hu, and X. W. Wang, "The methodology function of CiteSpace mapping knowledge domains," *Stud. Sci. Sci.*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 242–253, 2015.
3. Z. Wang, *Literary Communication in Song Dynasty*. London: Routledge, 2024, ISBN: 9781032712512.
4. J. Hou and Z. Hu, "Review on the application of CiteSpace at home and abroad," *J. Mod. Inf.*, no. 4, pp. 99–103, 2013.
5. Q. Mu, *Eighty Memories of Parents-Miscellaneous. Memories of Teachers and Friends* [M]. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing, 2010.
6. C. S. Hawes, *Competing with Creative Transformation: The Poetry of Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of British Columbia, 1996.
7. M. A. Fuller, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72)*, 1987, doi: 10.2307/2719083.
8. D. B. Sun, "Ouyang Xiu's influence on Korean literature," *J. Beijing Inst. Technol. (Soc. Sci. Ed.)*, no. 1, pp. 117–121, 2010.
9. C. Hawes, "Mundane transcendence: Dealing with the everyday in Ouyang Xiu's poetry," *Chinese Lit. Essays Artic. Rev.*, vol. 21, pp. 99–129, 1999, doi: 10.2307/495248.
10. S. Shi, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*, vol. 2. Univ. of California Press, 2007, ISBN: 9780520224513.
11. X. Huang, *Stylistic Approaches to Literary Translation: With Particular Reference to English-Chinese and Chinese-English Translation*, Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Birmingham, 2011.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of SOAP and/or the editor(s). SOAP and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.