

A Study on How to Explain '乐' Pronounce as 'Yuè' in '成乐物生' from the Guo Yu - Zheng Yu (《国语·郑语》)

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KEYWORDS:

Cheng Yuè Wu Sheng
Yu Mu
Yuè (Music)
Feng (Wind)

CITATION:

Jiang, Z., & Li, H.. (2026). A Study on How to Explain '乐' Pronounce as 'Yuè' in '成乐物生' from the Guo Yu - Zheng Yu (《国语·郑语》). *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 11(8), e003634. <https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v11i8.3634>

ABSTRACT

This study aims to reassess the meaning of the phrase by clarifying whether 乐 should instead be read as yuè ("music"), and by restoring coherence between the text, musical terminology, and the historical role of Yu Mu. The analysis employs textual comparison across versions of Guo Yu, examines the musical usage of 成 in Pre-Qin literature, and draws from genealogical accounts, ritual-music passages, and related references in The Analects, Mencius, Xunzi, and Zuo Zhuan. Evidence indicates that 成 functioned as a technical musical term referring to the completion of musical sequences, and that Yu Mu belonged to a hereditary lineage of Music Officers capable of discerning 协风 (harmonious winds). The close conceptual link between music and wind in early China supports interpreting 乐 as yuè rather than lè. Earlier misreadings stem from hermeneutic reinterpretations rather than the original text. The phrase should be understood as describing Yu Mu's role in completing musical patterns that harmonize with natural winds. Further research should ground interpretation in Pre-Qin musical concepts and the Yu clan's ritual-musical heritage.

1. Introduction

In the *Guoyu*, it is recorded that those who achieve great deeds in the realms of Heaven and Earth often have descendants who also make significant contributions. This is exemplified by the four dynasties of Yu (虞), Xia (夏), Shang (商), and Zhou (周) (Wu et al., 2016). Yu Mu is able to harmonize with the winds, thereby completing the music that gives life to all living things.^[1] (Yu Mu neng ting xie Feng, yi Cheng 乐 wu sheng zhe ye.) Xia Yu (夏禹) was adept at controlling and balancing the land and waters, which allowed

^[1] 虞幕能听协风，以成乐物生者也。

for the flourishing of all species. Shang Qi (商契) was responsible for promoting the Five Teachings (The five ethical doctrines), thereby ensuring the well-being of the people. Zhou Qi (周弃) was skilled at cultivating and planting various grains and vegetables, which enabled the population to be well-feeding and clothing (Hanguang & Yin, 2019; Tang et al., 2022).^[2]

The passage enumerates four ancestors who have achieved notable feats, the merits of which are transmitted to their descendants. As result, Yu Shun is included among the 'water-controller (单平水土)' - Xia Yu, the 'promoter of the Five Teachings (合和五教)' - Shang Qi, and the 'planter of various grains and vegetables (播植百谷蔬)' - Zhou Qi, all of whom are regarded as 'those who achieved great accomplishments within Heaven and Earth (成天地之大工者)' (Esposito, 2004).

This paper will not discuss the entire passage, but will focus on the phrase, which is 'Yu Mu neng ting xie Feng, yi Cheng 乐 wu sheng zhe ye'. During the Three Kingdoms period, the scholar Wei Zhao proffered an alternative interpretation of this phrase (Xu, 2002). He explained that Yu Mu, Shun hou Yu Si ye. Xie, he ye. Yan neng ting zhi he Feng, yin shi shun qi, yi Cheng yu wan wu, shi zhi 乐 sheng zhe ye.^[3] (Xu, 2002). In accordance with Wei Zhao's rationale, the character '乐' should be interpreted as Lè, signifying 'to be content with' or 'to delight in' (Xu, 2002). However, this interpretation may be more accurately represented as 'to facilitate the joyful growth of all things'. A variety of interpretative frameworks have yielded disparate interpretations of this phrase, which will now be enumerated and discussed in turn.

a. Cheng Lè Wu Sheng: This version appears in the Mingdao Edition (明道本), Dixiou Edition (遞修本), Zhengtong Edition (正统本), Nanjian Edition (南监本), Hongzhi Edition (弘治本), Xu Zonglu Edition (许宗鲁本), Ye Bangrong Edition (叶邦荣本), Zhang Yikun Edition (张一鲲本), Mu Wenxi Compilation (穆文熙编纂本), Min Qiji Edition (闵齐汲本), and Volume Six of *Kun Xue Ji Wen* (《困学纪闻》卷六).

b. Cheng Lè Sheng Wu: This version is cited by Li Shan (李善) in his commentary on *Selected Works* (《文选》) in the poem 'At the Banquet of the Crown Prince at Xuanpu Xuanyou Hall' by Lu Shiheng (陆士衡), as well as by Liu Zongyuan (柳宗元) in his *Against Guoyu* (《非国语》).

c. Cheng Wu Lè Sheng: Duan Yucai asserts that, based on Wei Zhao's interpretation, this should read 'Cheng Wu Lè Sheng' (Huang Peilie, 1800). This interpretation is also

^[2] 夫成天地之大功者，其子孙未尝不章，虞夏商周是也。虞幕能听协风，以成乐物生者也；夏禹能单平水土，以品处庶类者也；商契能合和五教，以保于百姓者也；周弃能播殖百谷蔬，以衣食民人者也。Fu Cheng tiandi zhi da gong zhe, qi zisun wei chang bu zhang, Yu Xia Shang Zhou shi ye. Yu Mu neng ting xie Feng, yi Cheng Yue wu sheng zhe ye; Xia Yu neng dan ping shui tu, yi pin chu shu lei zhe ye; Shang Xie neng he he wu jiao, yi bao yu bai xing zhe ye; Zhou Qi neng bo zhi bai gu shu, yi yi shi min ren zhe ye.

^[3] 虞幕，舜后虞思也。协，和也。言能听知和风，因时顺气，以成育万物，使之乐生者也。The term 'Yu Mu' pertains to the offspring. The term 'harmony' denotes a state of concord or agreement. This indicates the capacity to discern and comprehend harmonious winds, to adhere to the rhythms of seasonal cycles and atmospheric conditions, thereby fostering the flourishing of all things and enabling them to thrive.

supported by Wang Zhong (汪中), Guan Xiuling (关修龄), and Huqi Yunming (户崎允明), Li Ke family's Edition (李刻家本), and Japanese Qin Ding Edition (日本秦鼎本).

1.1 Research Objectives

Based on the evolution of the above versions, it is observed that the mainstream version still uses '成乐' (Cheng Lè). Since the Qianjia period, scholars like Duan Yucai have treated Wei Zhao's commentary as the 'Prior Interpretation' when addressing variant texts and different readings. Consequently, they have adjusted the word order of this phrase, allowing it to be segmented into two phrases that align with the annotations, '成物' (Cheng Wu) and '乐生' (Lè Sheng).

In summary, Wei Zhao reads '乐' (Lè), but there exists a subtle discrepancy between his interpretation and the text. This has led to a confusion of multiple versions. Since the Qianjia period, scholars have employed Textual Criticism to revise the original text in order to preserve the essence of the annotations. However, this is actually a problem brought about by Hermeneutics; the inconsistency among versions is a result rather than a cause. To resolve this issue, a detailed interpretation of the phrase 'Cheng 乐 Wu Sheng' itself is necessary.

2. An Analysis of the Connotations and Implications of 'Cheng 乐 Wu Sheng'

Through the analysis of previous interpretations above, it is clear that the phrase 'Cheng 乐 Wu Sheng' still warrants further exploration. The following section introduces a new perspective to address issues found in earlier explanations.

This article argues that '乐' should be pronounced as Yuè, carrying the meaning of 'music'. Firstly, a clue to interpreting it as music is the preceding character '成'. In the Pre-Qin era, '成' was a term associated with '乐' (music), with '成乐' referring to the completion of a full musical performance (Bagley, 2005). The term '一成' signified one cycle of performance, while multiple cycles were referred to as '数成'. In *The Analects* (《论语》), it is stated that 'Le qi ke zhi ye: shi zuo, xi ru ye; cong zhi, chun ru ye, jiao ru ye, yi ru ye, yi Cheng (成).' [4] Here, Confucius provides a detailed explanation of 'Cheng', referring to the entire process of a musical performance, from the beginning through the climax to the conclusion (Barton, 2007). Mencius once used the term 'Cheng' as a metaphor for Confucius's comprehensive inheritance and development of the spirit of ritual and music, or 'achieving greatness'. He said that 'Confucius, sheng zhi shi zhe ye. Confucius zhi wei ji da Cheng. Ji da Cheng ye zhe, jin sheng er yu zhen zhi ye. Jin sheng ye zhe, shi tiao li ye; yu zhen zhi ye zhe, zhong tiao li ye. Shi tiao li zhe, zhi zhi shi ye; zhong tiao li zhe, sheng zhi shi ye' (Legge, 1960). [5] Additionally, historical records indicate that

[4] 乐其可知也：始作，翕如也；从之，纯如也，皦如也，绎如也，以成。The way of music can be understood when at the beginning, it is harmonious and unified when as it continues, it becomes pure, bright, and finally complete.

[5] 孔子，圣之时者也。孔子之谓集大成。集大成也者，金声而玉振之也。金声也者，始条理也；玉振之也者，终条理也。始条理者，智之事也；终条理者，圣之事也。Confucius may be said to have assembled all the virtues of the virtuous men mentioned above. The assembling maybe likened to

ancient ceremonial music often used the term 'Cheng'. For instance, *Da Wu* (《大武》) is noted to have six Cheng, and in the *Shang Shu, Yi Ji* (《尚书·益稷》) passage, it is written by 'Xiao shao jiu Cheng, Feng huang lai yi.'^[6] This reveals the kind of knowledge structure present among the scholarly class during the time Guoyu was compiled. *Xunzi* (《荀子》) also mentions, 'He er bu fa, Bu Cheng Yue'.^[7] This indicates that 'Cheng Yue' (成乐) was a commonly used term at the time (Liu, 2024).

Secondly, the agent of action in 'Cheng Yue Wu Sheng' is Yu Mu, who is able to 'Ting Xie Feng' (听协风), or harmonize with the winds. Wang Zhong(汪中), in the Supplement to *Shu Xue* (《述学》), particularly in the chapter On the 'Gu Sou Shuo' (《瞽瞍说》), provides a detailed discussion on the cultural duties passed down through generations within the Yu clan (虞氏家族) (Wang Zhong, n.d.).

In the *Canon of Yao* (《尧典》), Shun's (舜) father is referred to simply as 'Gu' (瞽). In texts such as the *Zuo Zhuan* (《左氏传》), Mencius (《孟子》), *Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* (《吕氏春秋》), and *Han Feizi* (《韩非子》), he is referred to as 'Gu Sou' (瞽瞍). This is not his personal name but rather his official title (Pines, 2024). In the Book of Rites, *Offices of Spring* (《周礼·春官》), the term 'Gu Meng' (瞽蒙) is classified into 'Shang Gu' (上瞽), 'Zhong Gu' (中瞽), and 'Xia Gu' (下瞽), indicating various ranks. In the *Zhou Hymns* (《周颂》), he is called 'Gu Sou', and in the *Zhou Yu (Discourses of Zhou)* from the *Guo Yu*, it is said, 'Gu gao you xie Feng zhi'^[8]. The *Zuo Zhuan* also records a statement from the blind musician Shi Kuang (师旷) that 'Wu zhou ge 'bei Feng' you ge 'nan Feng'.^[9] Regarding with the *Zheng Yu*, 'Yu Mu neng ting xie Feng, yi Cheng 乐 wu sheng zhe ye.'^[10] The *Zuo Zhuan* further mentions that 'Zi mu zhi yu gu sou wu wei ming.'^[11] The *Spring and Autumn of Lü Buwei: The Old Tunes* (《吕氏春秋·古乐篇》) records: 'When Yao came into power, he ordered the musician Zhito compose music for him. Zhi wrapped the fou (a musical instrument made of clay) in raw deerskin and beat it to mimic the wind blowing in mountain forests and the reverberation of rivers flowing through valleys (Kroll, 2002). He then beat a stone to mimic the jade music-stone of God, and as a result, all the animals danced together to the music. Gu Sou, a blind musician, then improved the five-stringed se and made a fifteen-stringed one to accompany it. This tune was named "Da Zhang" and was played during ceremonies held in worship of God (Antoshko, 2020; Yang et al., 2009). After Shun came into power, he ordered Yan to

the linking up of the golden sound of a metallic bell to the silvery sound of a musical jade stone. The metallic bell begins the rhythmic order and the musical jade stone winds it up. The beginning of the rhythmic order means wisdom, and its winding-up saintliness.

[6] 箫韶九成，凤凰来仪。When the Xiaoshao music reaches its most perfect stage, the phoenix gracefully appears, symbolizing auspiciousness.

[7] 和而不发，不成乐。To judge carefully due measure but not to be harmonious is not to perfect ritual principles.

[8] 瞽告有协风至。The Gu announces the arrival of harmonious winds.

[9] 吾骤歌《北风》又歌《南风》。I have sung the Northern Winds (《北风》) and again the Southern Winds (《南风》).

[10] 虞幕能听协风，以成乐物生者也。Yu Mu (虞幕) is able to harmonize with the winds, thereby completing the music that gives life to all living things.

[11] 自幕至於瞽瞍无违命。From Mu down to Gu Sou, none disobeyed the mandate.

renovate the se made by Gu Sou and add another eight strings to it. Thus, a twenty-three-stringed se came into being.'^[12] (Yang, 2006) This illustrates that in the time of Tang and Yu, there were three official positions identified only by title, the Four Peaks (四岳), the Gong Gong (共工), and the Gu (瞽). Sima Qian (司马迁) mistakenly referred to Shun's father as 'The Blind One's Son' in the Records of the *Grand Historian* (《史记》). (Wang Zhong, n.d.).

Based on Wang Zhong's discussion, this can be elaborated on from the following three perspectives:

- a. The figure Yu Mu, who is able to 'Ting Xie Feng',^[13] holds the official position of 'Gu Sou'. This point can be substantiated by various texts, including the *Book of Rites: Spring Offices*, *Zuo Zhuan*, *Odes of Zhou*, and *Guo Yu: Zhou Yu*.
- b. This official position is a hereditary duty of the Yu clan, where both the founding ancestor Yu Mu and Shun's father, Gu Sou, remained loyal to their responsibilities. *The Zuo Zhuan: Year 8 of Duke Zhao* (《左传·昭公八年》) states that 'Zi mu zhi yu Gu Sou wu wei ming', which illustrates this point. Therefore, Wang Zhong concludes that 'Ran ze Gu zhi zhang yue, Gu shi guan er su qi ye. Ruo yu xia zhi hou kui yi, bu bi qi fu zi zu sun jie you fei ji ye'.^[14]
- c. During the Tang and Yu eras, it was customary to refer to individuals by their official titles, as seen with names like 'Four Mountains' (四岳), 'Gong Gong' (共工), and 'Gu' (瞽).

According to Chen's (2000) compilation in *The Legends of Yao and Shun* (《尧舜传说》), the genealogy of the Yu clan can be roughly divided into three categories based on different texts:

- a. Zhuanxu... (颛顼) → Mu... (幕) → Gu Sou (瞽瞍) → Shun (舜) → Shang Jun... (商均) → Yu Si... (虞思) → Ji Bo (箕伯), Zhi Bing (直柄), Yu Sui (虞遂), Bo Xi... (伯戏) → Yu Yan Fu (虞阍父) → Hu Gong Man (胡公满) (according to *Zuo Zhuan*, *Guo Yu*, *Records of the Historian: Chen She* (《史记·陈杞世家》), etc.)
- b. Yellow Emperor (黄帝) → Chang Yi (昌意) → Gao Yang (高阳) (Zhuanxu 颛顼) → Qiong Chan (穷蝉) → Jing Kang (敬康) → Gu Mang (句芒) (Wang) → Qiao Niu (桥牛) → Gu Sou (瞽瞍) → Shun (according to *The Great Dai Li* (《大戴礼记·五帝德·帝系》), *Records of the Historian: Wudibenji* (《史记·五帝本纪》), etc.)

[12] 帝尧立，乃命质为乐。质乃效山林溪谷之音以歌（注：质当为夔）乃以麋革置缶而鼓。之乃拊石击石，以象上帝玉磬之音以致舞百兽。瞽瞍乃拌五弦之瑟，作为十五弦之瑟，命之曰《大章》，以祭上帝。舜立，仰延乃拌瞽瞍之所为瑟，益之八弦，以为二十三弦之瑟。Di yao li, nai ming zhi wei yue. Zhi nai xiao shan lin xi gu zhi yin yi ge (Zhu: zhi dang wei kui) nai yi mi ge zhi fu er gu. Zhi nai fu shi ji shi, yi xiang shang di yu qing zhi yin yi zhi wu bai shou. Gu sou nai ban wu xian zhi se, zuo wei shi wu xian zhi se, ming zhi yue "da zhang", yi ji shang di. Shun li, yang yan nai ban gu sou zhi suo wei se, yi zhi ba xian, yi wei er shi san xian zhi se.

[13] Harmonize with the winds.

[14] 然则瞽之掌乐，固世官而宿其业。若虞夏之后夔矣，不必其父子祖孙皆有废疾也。The role of Gu Sou in music management is indeed a hereditary official position that has been continued through many generations. Although Kui also held a musical position after Yu and Xia, it does not mean that his descendants must share the same physical disabilities.

c. Zhuanxu (颛顼) → Mu (幕) → Qiong Chan (穷蝉) → Jing Kang (敬康) → Qiao Niu (乔牛) → Gu Sou (瞽瞍) → Shun (Liu Dan's *Lü Liang Stele* (刘耽 《吕梁碑》).(Chen Yongchao, 2000)

In the genealogies a. and c., the position of Yu Mu is clearly visible. However, in genealogy b., the absence of documentary materials may have led to the exclusion of Yu Mu. Furthermore, Wei Zhao evidently lacks a clear understanding of Yu Mu's position, as he casually places Yu Mu after Yu Si of the Xia dynasty (Yu Mu is positioned before Yu Si in the lineage of Shun^[15]). Because Wei Zhao did not recognize that there existed a Unique Musical Lineage from Yu Mu to Shun, he interpreted the term 'Yuè' in '成乐物生' (Cheng Yuè Wu Sheng) simply as 'music', without giving it the attention it deserves (Marks, 1932).

In summary, while considering traditional interpretations, the phrase 'Cheng Yuè Wu Sheng' (成乐物生) can be understood as follows: music performance is viewed as a process composed of individual segments, with its progression resembling the growth or unfolding of a paragraph (Bagley, 2005). Thus, music is seen as living, and the growth of all things accompanies the unfolding of music, this type of music is also a form of joy.

3. The Deep Connection Between 'Yuè' (music) and 'Feng' (wind)

Yu Mu served as the Music Officer and had the ability to 'Ting Xie Feng.'^[16] Here, we can attempt to explore the theoretical background connecting Yuè (music) and Feng (wind).

In The *Guoyu, Zhouyu, Part I*, it is recorded that when Guo Wengong (號文公) advised King Xuan of Zhou, he spoke about the role of the Music Officer in distinguishing seasonal cycles and assisting in the management of time:

In ancient times, the Grand Historian (太史) would observe the earth's pulse according to seasonal rhythms. When Yang energy surged and filled the air, the earth's energies would resonate, marking the first signs of agricultural activity at dawn. As the sun set, rituals were performed in the ancestral temples, and the land's pulse began to stir (Gao, 2024). Nine days in advance, the Grand Historian would inform the Agricultural Officer (稷官), saying, 'From now until the start of the new month, Yang energy will intensify, and the essence of the earth will become active. If no tremors or changes occur, the earth's pulse may be filled with calamities, and crops will fail to grow' (Su et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2024). The Agricultural Officer would then relay this message to the King, saying, 'The Grand Historian and the Yang officials (阳官) have conveyed to me the following command: 'Nine days from now, the land will be fully activated. The King should perform the purification rites, oversee the agricultural preparations, and ensure smooth progress.' The King would then instruct the Minister of Works (司徒) to inform the nobles, all government officials, and the common people, and to have the Minister of Labor (司空) prepare the altars near the fields (Nylan & Constantino, 2023). The King also directed the agricultural officials to inform all farmers to prepare their tools and resources.^[17]

[15] 虞幕，舜后虞思也。Yu mu, shun hou yu si ye.

[16] Harmonize with the wind.

[17] 古者，太史顺时脉土，阳瘳愤盈，土气震发，农祥晨正，日月底于天庙，土乃脉发。先时九日，太史告稷曰：“自今至于初吉，阳气俱蒸，土膏其动。弗震弗渝，脉其满眚，穀乃不殖。”稷以

Five days before this omen occurred, the Blind Official (瞽官) announced the arrival of the 'harmonious winds' (协风). As a result, the King went to the purification palace (斋宫), and all officials ceased their daily affairs to observe three days of fasting. The King personally bathed and changed his clothes, enjoying sweet wines. On the scheduled day, the fragrance official (郁官) presented spices, and the sacrificial official (牺牲官) offered sweet wine (醴酒). The King then presented the spices in sacrifice and enjoyed the sweet wine, with all officials and common people participating together (Li, 2021). After the ritual concluded, the agricultural officials (后稷官) monitored the progress of farming activities, while the food preparers and agricultural supervisors arranged the ritual ceremonies. The Grand Historian (太史) assisted the King, who respectfully completed the sacrificial rites.^[18]

The King plowed a furrow in the sacrificial field (祭田), distributing three portions of it, while the common people completed the farming of a thousand acres. Afterwards, the Agricultural Officials inspected the harvest, the Grand Historian monitored the progress, the Minister of Education (司徒) checked on the people's situation, and the Grand Tutor (太师) also supervised from the side (Jia, 2021). After the ceremony concluded, the Minister of Rites (宰官) arranged a banquet, with the food supervisor (膳宰官) overseeing the proceedings. The food preparers (膳夫) assisted the King, who enjoyed the great sacrificial offerings (大牢祭品), sharing part of it with the crowd for their enjoyment (Jia, 2021). On that same day, the officials responsible for music and divination acted according to the seasonal patterns and local customs, storing grain in the southeastern corner and distributing it regularly for agricultural use. The agricultural officials widely communicated this message to the people, informing them: 'The distribution of yin and yang is appropriate, and the thunder has removed the accumulation.' The common people were encouraged and devoted themselves to farming, diligently tending to the borders of their fields. They worked hard every day, following the seasons and farming without interruption. As a result, wealth was abundant, and the people lived in harmony and peace.^[19]

告王曰：“史帅阳官以命我司事曰：“距今九日，土其俱动，王其祗祓，监农不易。”王乃使司徒咸戒公卿、百吏、庶民，司空除坛于籍，命农大夫咸戒农用。Gu Zhe, Tai Shi Shun Shi Mai Tu, Yang Dan Fen Ying, Tu Qi Zhen Fa, Nong Xiang Chen Zheng, Ri Yue Di Yu Tian Miao, Tu Nai Mai Fa. Xian Shi Jiu Ri, Tai Shi Gao Ji Yue: 'Zi Jin Zhi Yu Chu Ji, Yang Qi Ju Zheng, Tu Gao Qi Dong. Fu Zhen Fu Yu, Mai Qi Man Sheng, Gu Nai Bu Zhi.' Ji Yi Gao Wang Yue: 'Shi Shuai Yang Guan Yi Ming Wo Si Shi Yue: “Ju Jin Jiu Ri, Tu Qi Ju Dong, Wang Qi Zi Fu, Jian Nong Bu Yi.” Wang Nai Shi Si Tu Xian Jie Gong Qing, Bai Li, Shu Min, Si Kong Chu Tan Yu Ji, Ming Nong Da Fu Xian Jie Nong Yong.

^[18] 先时五日，瞽告有协风至，王即斋宫，百官御事，各即其斋三日。王乃淳濯飧醴，及期，郁人荐鬯，牺人荐醴，王裸鬯，飧醴乃行，百吏、庶民毕从。及籍，后稷监之，膳夫、农正陈籍礼，太史赞王，王敬从之。Xian Shi Wu Ri, Gu Gao You Xie Feng Zhi, Wang Ji Zhai Gong, Bai Guan Yu Shi, Ge Ji Qi Zhai San Ri. Wang Nai Chun Zhuo Xiang Li, Ji Qi, Yu Ren Jian Chang, Xi Ren Jian Li, Wang Guan Chang, Xiang Li Nai Xing, Bai Li, Shu Min Bi Cong. Ji Ji, Hou Ji Jian Zhi, Shan Fu, Nong Zheng Chen Ji Li, Tai Shi Zan Wang, Wang Jing Cong Zhi.

^[19] 王耕一垆，班三之，庶民终于千亩。其後稷省功，太史监之；司徒省民，太师监之，毕，宰夫陈飧，膳宰监之。膳夫赞王，王歆大牢，班尝之，庶人终食。是日也，瞽帅、音官以风土。廩于籍东南，锺而藏之，而时布之于农。稷则遍诫百姓，纪农协功，曰：“阴阳分布，震雷出滞。”……民用莫不震动，恪恭于农，修其疆畔，日服其耨，不解于时，财用不乏，民用和同。Wang Geng Yi Pi, Ban San Zhi, Shu Min Zhong Yu Qian Mu. Qi Hou Ji Sheng Gong, Tai Shi Jian Zhi; Si Tu Sheng Min, Tai Shi Jian Zhi, Bi, Zai Fu Chen Xiang, Shan Zai Jian Zhi. Shan Fu Zan Wang, Wang Xin Da Lao, Ban Chang Zhi, Shu Ren Zhong Shi. Shi Ri Ye, Gu Shuai, Yin Guan Yi Feng Tu. Lin Yu Ji Dong Nan, Zhong Er Cang Zhi, Er Shi Bu Zhi Yu Nong. Ji Ze Bian Jie Bai Xing, Ji Nong Xie Gong, Yue:

This passage, while discussing the significance of Guo Wengong's admonition to King Xuan of Zhou regarding the ritual of land registration, still reveals insights into the operation of agricultural policies during the Zhou Dynasty.

- a. Before the ceremony, all participants in the sacrificial rites, from the King to all officials, must observe three days of fasting.
- b. Key officials involved in the ceremony include the Grand Historian, who comes from an astronomical tradition, the Agricultural Officer, closely related to farming, and the blind diviner and music officials, who possess special perceptual abilities and play a crucial role in the ceremony by using music to understand the land's characteristics and assist in 'Xie Feng'.
- c. The sacrificial rites are scheduled for the early spring (Mengchun) and must align with the natural rhythms of the harmonious winds, earth energies, mountains, rivers, and thunder. This sacred ceremony marks the awakening of the earth and requires coordination with the secular authority of the human world.

First, let's discuss 'Discerning Time' (Bian Shi). Wind is the invisible flow of energy in nature, reflecting the changes in seasonal phenomena. In ancient times, wind served as a fundamental element in music creation, acting as a variable factor of time and an objective condition for observing nature (Hepach et al., 2024). In different seasons and under specific conditions, particular musical instruments produce different sounds. In antiquity, there was a specialized technique for examining the characteristics of the land through musical tones, known as 'the method of observing atmospheric conditions' (Hou Qi Fa) (Wang & Schoenberger, 2019). Feng Shi noted in his work *Hou Qi Fa Diao Chen (A Study of the Method of Observing Atmospheric Conditions)* that 'the method of observing atmospheric conditions through musical pipes is an ancient practice used by our ancestors... However, it had been little known at least before the Southern and Northern Dynasties' (Feng, 2017). Based on this context, we will specifically examine the matter of Yu Mu and the blind officials discerning 'Harmonious Winds' (协风). The textual analysis of the four directional winds can be traced back to the oracle bone period, and since Hu Houxuan's *Jiaguwen Sifang Feng Ziming Kao (A Study of the Characters for the Four Winds in Oracle Bone Script)*, there has been considerable discussion on the topic (Feng, 2017). A basic consensus (Table 1) has been reached regarding the 'Xie Feng' from the east (Chen, 1959; Chen, 2004; Hu, 2002; Yan, 1991; Yang, 2006; Yu, 2010).

Table 1: Interpretations of the East Wind (东风) by Different Scholars

	Hu Houxuan (1945)	Yang Shuda (1954)	Chen Mengjia (1956)	Yan Yiping (1957)	Chen Banghuai (1959)	Yu Shengwu (1979)
East Wind (东风)	翏	翏	翏	翏	翏	翏

Thus, it can be further inferred that the duties of the Yu clan (有虞氏) may have even earlier origins. In the Jiahu site in Wuyan, Henan (河南), a bone flute made from the leg bone of a red-crowned crane dating back to the Neolithic period was unearthed (Zhang et al., 1999). Feng stated, 'In terms of the bone flutes unearthed at the Jiahu site, their relationship with the ancient method of observing atmospheric conditions is evidently

'Yin Yang Fen Bu, Zhen Lei Chu Zhi.' ... Min Yong Mo Bu Zhen Dong, Ke Gong Yu Nong, Xiu Qi Jiang Pan, Ri Fu Qi Bo, Bu Jie Yu Shi, Cai Yong Bu Fa, Min Yong He Tong.

closer than their role as musical instruments' (Feng, 2017). Therefore, it is indeed possible that the Yu clan in the late Neolithic period mastered this technology closely related to 'agricultural timing' (农时), leading to their ancestor being regarded as someone of great merit.

Secondly, we discuss the 'Harmonious Winds and Music' (Xie Feng Zuo Yue 协风作乐) that serve the function of 'Assisting Time' (Zhu Shi 助时), which is one of the mechanisms for the formation of early music. This is summarized in *Guoyu, Zhouyu, Part II*:

'Sounds are harmonious with music, and rhythms are in balanced tones (Lin, 2017). Metals and stones are used to create movement; strings and bamboo are used to carry it out; poetry conveys it; songs recite it; gourds announce it; tiles support it; and leather and wood maintain its rhythm. When things are as they should be, it is called 'the height of music' (乐极); the collection of heights is called 'sound' (声); sounds that support one another are called 'harmony' (和); and when details and grandeur do not exceed their bounds, it is called 'balance' (平). Thus, by casting metal, grinding stone, binding string to wood, crossing bamboo, and maintaining rhythm with drums, the eight winds (八风) are achieved (Wang & Schoenberger, 2019). As a result, there is neither stagnation of yin (滞阴) nor dispersal of yang (散阳); yin and yang are in proper order, winds and rains arrive as scheduled, giving rise to abundant blessings (嘉生繁祉). The people live in harmony and prosperity; all things are prepared, and joy is achieved. Therefore, it is said to be 'musically correct' (乐正).'

This passage emphasizes the importance of music in society and nature, illustrating how 'harmonious winds and music' facilitate the alignment with natural rhythms through harmonious melodies, balanced rhythms, and the coordination of various instruments, thereby promoting societal harmony and prosperity.

In *Guoyu: Jin Yu Eight* (The Discourses of the State of Jin, Volume 8), it is recorded that Shi Kuan discussed the connection between 'Yuè' (Music 乐) and 'Feng' (Wind 风): 'Music opens the winds of mountains and rivers, illuminating virtue in the vastness (Zou, 2024). The virtues of the winds expand; the winds carry the mountains and rivers to distant places; the winds allow for listening to the phenomena; poetry is refined to be recited; and rituals are refined to be regulated.'

^[20] 声以和乐，律以平声。金石以动之，丝竹以行之，诗以道之，歌以咏之，匏以宣之，瓦以赞之，草木以节之。物得其常曰乐极，极之所集曰声，声应相保曰和，细大不逾曰平。如是，而铸之金，磨之石，系之丝木，越之匏竹，节之鼓而行之，以遂八风。于是乎气无滞阴，亦无散阳，阴阳序次，风雨时至，嘉生繁祉，人民和利，物备而乐成，上下不罢，故曰乐正。Sheng Yi He Yue, Lü Yi Ping Sheng. Jin Shi Yi Dong Zhi, Si Zhu Yi Xing Zhi, Shi Yi Dao Zhi, Ge Yi Yong Zhi, Pao Yi Xuan Zhi, Wa Yi Zan Zhi, Ge Mu Yi Jie Zhi. Wu De Qi Chang Yue Yue Ji, Ji Zhi Suo Ji Yue Sheng, Sheng Ying Xiang Bao Yue He, Xi Da Bu Yu Yue Ping. Ru Shi, Er Zhu Zhi Jin, Mo Zhi Shi, Xi Zhi Si Mu, Yue Zhi Pao Zhu, Jie Zhi Gu Er Xing Zhi, Yi Sui Ba Feng. Yu Shi Hu Qi Wu Zhi Yin, Yi Wu San Yang, Yin Yang Xu Ci, Feng Yu Shi Zhi, Jia Sheng Fan Zhi, Ren Min He Li, Wu Bei Er Yue Cheng, Shang Xia Bu Ba, Gu Yue Yue Zheng.

^[21] 夫乐以开山川之风也，以耀德于广远也。风德以广之，风山川以远之，风物以听之，修诗以咏之，修礼以节之。Fu Yue Yi Kai Shan Chuan Zhi Feng Ye, Yi Yao De Yu Guang Yuan Ye. Feng De Yi Guang Zhi, Feng Shan Chuan Yi Yuan Zhi, Feng Wu Yi Ting Zhi, Xiu Shi Yi Yong Zhi, Xiu Li Yi Jie Zhi.

the Eight Sounds (八音), musical tones resonate with the Eight Winds (八风), aligning with the rhythms of heaven and earth (Lin, 2017). Conversely, music can also be used to adjust and regulate yin and yang, ensuring that the timing and order of heaven and earth are orderly.

4. Conclusion

The confusion surrounding '成乐物生' in various versions is a textual issue stemming from Hermeneutics. According to Wei Zhao, '乐' (Lè) should be understood as 'to be happy' or 'to be satisfied with.' Based on Wei Zhao's annotations, Duan Yucai revised '成乐物生' to '成物乐生'. Subsequently, Duan Yucai's version became the foundation for later scholars' studies. However, adhering to this interpretation undermines the rigorous textual context of the Pre-Qin period. In this paper, the term '乐' in the phrase '成乐物生' should be interpreted as 'music' or 'musical harmony.' This is because, during the Pre-Qin period, '成' (Cheng) functioned as a technical term within the realm of musical theory, typically used as a verb to denote the act of linking or completing musical elements. Wei Zhao also failed to recognize that the lineage from Yu Mu to Shun represented a special musical family, and the close connection between 'Yuè' (music 乐) and 'Feng' (wind 风) is also one of the primary social concepts of early China.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

Funding

Example: No funding.

Conflict of Interests

Example: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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