

Narratives of Decline and Fragmentation,
and the *Hanshu* 漢書 Bibliographic
Taxonomies of Technical Arts

MARK CSIKSZENTMIHALYI 齊思敏 AND ZHENG YIFAN 鄭伊凡

Bookstores the world over segregate fiction from nonfiction.¹ Despite the truism that “truth is stranger than fiction,” the ubiquity of similar distinctions in modern life reflects and inscribes a central belief that people can distinguish what is objective or real from what is subjective or pretend. Whether or not this belief is true (or whether or not we may *know* that it is true), the categories that a bookstore uses to arrange its books fuse ancient and modern taxonomies that preserve key distinctions arising from the history of ideas about how people gain knowledge, how that knowledge was written down, and how that writing was transmitted to the present.

The Eastern Han (25–220 CE) “*Yiwen zhi*” 藝文志 (Treatise on Classics and Writings) stands apart from bibliographical materials from the ancient world, insofar as it is complete, as far as we know, and so preserves its unique taxonomy of categories. It lists the titles of more than 596 works and divides those works into six sections and thirty-eight subsections. The titles and brief descriptions attached to those titles have been a tremendous resource for information on the early history of the **book** in East Asia. This chapter, however, concentrates less on the titles included in the “*Yiwen zhi*” than on its taxonomies, scrutinizing them for what they may reveal about Han views of knowledge, writing, and transmission—the very issues raised in connection with our observations about the way bookstores are organized. As it turns out, these views in *Hanshu* are closely tied to a set of

1 narratives about the decline and fragmentation of an earlier, more unified
2 body of knowledge.

3 Some might today examine a bibliography compiled more than two
4 thousand years ago because of a wish to retrieve information about the
5 distant past. The organization and structure of the “Yiwen zhi” reveals that
6 its creators were similarly enthralled by their relationship to their past. In
7 particular, the arrangement that Han bibliographers adopted meshed closely
8 with two stories that they told themselves about that past. The first narrative,
9 one of decline and fragmentation, explains the first two categories of both Liu
10 Xin’s 劉歆 catalog *Seven Summaries* (Qilüe 七略)² and the subsequent “Yiwen
11 zhi.” The narrative relates how the Classics, and the past practices that they
12 were intended to preserve, had degraded and divided into multiple textual
13 and interpretive transmissions, to become the so-called “hundred schools.”³
14 This tale of decline and fragmentation may be found across a number of
15 pre-imperial texts. Yet for many Western Han writers, both of these levels of
16 text—the Classics and the writings associated with these different modes of
17 expertise—and the entire range of cultural practices from the pristine ones
18 originating from the sages of antiquity to their corrupted forms, no longer
19 constituted the full set of writings and procedures relevant to administering
20 an empire. A second, concurrent narrative developed based on the view that
21 the ineffable Way (*dao* 道) was knowable through its constituent techniques
22 (*shu* 術), a view that meshed with the reality of the new empire’s absorp-
23 tion and standardization of diverse regional cultural practices. The famous
24 discussion of Sima Tan 司馬談 and Sima Qian 司馬遷 now known as the
25 “Essential Points of the Six Kinds of Expertise” (*Liuja zhi youzhi* 六家之
26 要旨) reflects this view, in that the sixth kind of expertise, actually named
27 *dao* or *daode* 道德, subsumes the other five. Han writers at times adapted
28 this view into narratives of decline by arguing that access to the pristine
29 Way through the technical arts had also become fragmented. This fragmen-
30 tation was a result of social decline, and the technical arts were dispersed
31 via specialization—divided among different archaic government offices—or
32 via geography, with the transmission and interpretation of the Classics in
33 particular associated with the states of the most celebrated exponents of
34 their associated practices, Zou 鄒 and Lu 魯.

35 The complex taxonomy of the “Yiwen zhi,” we argue, is consistent
36 with these two narratives. As mentioned above, the first two categories of
37 the “Yiwen zhi”—the Classics and the “Many Experts”—tell the story of
38 how classical practices degraded, a story repeated in other taxonomies that
39 likely date from the Western Han period, such as the final chapter of the
40

Zhuangzi 莊子, now titled “Tianxia” 天下. In addition, by comparing the “Yiwen zhi” to the taxonomy of techniques that aid governing described in the final chapter of the *Shiji* 史記, presented circa 82 BCE, some two centuries prior to the “Yiwen zhi,” we can see the relationship between the fragmentation narrative around the Classics and a similar one about different kinds of technical arts in the Han. Finally, turning to the details of the taxonomy, we demonstrate the connections between the other categories of the “Yiwen zhi” and parts of the literature of the different experts, showing how the historical origins of the different technical arts were seen as lesser, fragmentary perspectives on the ancient “techniques of the Way.” In this way, we hope to show how the categories of the “Yiwen zhi” can indeed tell us quite a bit about Han views of knowledge, writing, and transmission.

I. Lost in Transmission: A Diminishing Classical Legacy

The “Yiwen zhi” catalog is not simply a synthesis of prior typologies or records of lineages of textual transmissions. Its general preface contextualizes its structure through a narrative of the fragmentation of an authentic textual transmission, caused by the degradation of the classical legacy following the death of Kongzi (traditionally 551–479 BCE) and his disciples. Specifically, “the *Annals* classic fragmented into five, the *Odes* classic was fragmented into four, the *Changes* classic had multiple expert transmissions.”⁴ The nature or cause of this fragmentation is not specified, but the preface begins with an acknowledgement that Kongzi’s subtle teachings (*weiyen* 微言) were lost when he died, and his direct teachings degraded when his “seventy disciples died, so his complete understanding [of the *Classics*] was broken off.”⁵ The legacy of the Classics is not entirely broken off, because there remain the texts that were handed down, but the process of transmission had introduced divergent editions and interpretations.

The second part of the “Yiwen zhi” preface’s narrative continues the story of decline by describing two recent historical tendencies that affected transmission. First, the degradation of sources from antiquity was supposedly accelerated by the politically motivated destruction of texts by the Qin hegemony, carried out to “keep the masses ignorant.” When the Han dynasty replaced the Qin, it staged a “great collection of the fragmentary records, and re-opened the path to presenting manuscripts in tribute.” By way of extolling the current Han rulers, the “Yiwen zhi” continues by saying that during the reign of Emperor Wu 武 (r. 141–87 BCE), “writings had

1 missing sections and lost slips, rituals had decayed and music had declined.”⁶
 2 In response, the emperor declared himself troubled by the situation and
 3 set up institutional changes such as an edict to preserve texts, establishing
 4 offices in charge of copying manuscripts, and storing them, along with the
 5 Masters’ texts, in the Mifu 祕府 (Palace Archive).

6 Following the reign of Emperor Wu, Emperors Cheng and Ai continued
 7 to address the problem through a process that culminated in the creation
 8 of the “Yiwen zhi” itself. The prefatory remarks continue:

9
 10 When it came to the time of Emperor Cheng (r. 33–7 BCE),
 11 because of the loss of manuscripts, he sent Imperial Messenger
 12 Chen Nong to search for manuscripts among the people of the
 13 realm. He issued an edict directing Counsellor of the Palace Liu
 14 Xiang to collate the Classics and their affiliated works, the mas-
 15 ters, and the poetry and rhymeprose (fu 賦); Colonel of Infantry
 16 Ren Hong to collate the military texts; Director of Astronomy
 17 Yin Xian to collate “Computational arts and techniques”; and
 18 Physician in Attendance Li Zhuguo to collate the “Methods and
 19 skills.” As each text was finished, Liu Xiang would assemble a
 20 list of chapter numbers and titles, extracting their general intent,
 21 all of which he recorded and submitted. When Liu Xiang died,
 22 Emperor Ai sent Liu Xiang’s son, the Palace Attendant Com-
 23 mandant of Imperial Carriages Liu Xin, to complete his father’s
 24 work. Collecting the manuscripts together, Liu Xin submitted the
 25 *Seven Summaries*, comprising the “General Summary,” “Summary
 26 of the Six Attainments [i.e., Classics],” the “Summary of the
 27 Masters,” the “Summary of the Poetry and Rhymeprose,” the
 28 “Summary of the Military Texts,” the “Summary of Technical
 29 and Computational Arts,” and the “Summary of Methods and
 30 Skills.” In the following, we have extracted the essentials in order
 31 to lay out the records.⁷

32
 33 至成帝時，以書頗散亡，使謁者陳農求遺書於天下。詔光祿大夫
 34 劉向校經傳諸子詩賦，步兵校尉任宏校兵書，太史令尹咸校數術，
 35 侍醫李柱國校方技。每一書已，向輒條其篇目，撮其指意，錄而奏
 36 之。會向卒，哀帝復使向子侍中奉車都尉歆卒父業。歆於是總群
 37 書而奏其七略，故有輯略，有六藝略，有諸子略，有詩賦略，有兵
 38 書略，有術數略，有方技略。今刪其要，以備篇籍。
 39
 40

The organization of the *Seven Summaries*, then, in part purportedly derives from the divisions between different court bureaus. For the purposes of this discussion, the key distinction is between the Five Classics and masterworks under Liu Xiang's charge, and the three other categories connected to other kinds of texts. Liu Xiang's official brief as *Guanglu daifu* 光祿大夫 or Counsellor of the Palace placed him at the intersection of communication between the imperial clan and the Nine Ministers of State. Michael Loewe describes Liu's orientation to the legacy of the past by saying that he "deplored the loss of the ancient virtues, reiterated the need to take account of the lessons of the past and protested at extravagance."⁸ In the same way that Liu Xiang was a practitioner who employed the literature of the past in the composition of official communications, the other three summaries were assigned to military, astronomical, and medical practitioners. While this is the process that created the *Seven Summaries*, it is important to note that, almost a century after Liu Xiang's death, Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) rationalizes the categories of the "Yiwen zhi" rather differently.

After this general preface, the listings in the individual sections and subsections of the *Hanshu* "Yiwen zhi" are followed by brief summaries. The "Liuyi lue" 六藝略 summaries provide descriptions of the state of the transmission of the Classics in the Western Han, as well as three sections for the paraclassics *Lunyu* 論語, *Xiaojing* 孝經, and "Xiaoxue" 小學.⁹ These remarks note the division of the study of the Five Classics into different *xueguan* 學官—a phrase that may refer to an Academician in charge of, or the recognition of, an "official academy" (teaching an interpretative tradition of a classical text).¹⁰ Through the official recognition of particular transmissions and readings of the Classics, official bureaus of the first century BCE preserved fragments of the Five Classics (in somewhat the same way that the *Hanshu* would derive particular types of technical arts from particular offices in a distant, halcyon age, as below.) By Ban Gu's time, each of the Five Classics (omitting the sixth, the *Classic of Music* or *Yuejing* 樂經 entry, which does not discuss *xueguan*) had three or four official transmissions:

- *Changes*: There were four *xueguan* associated with Shi 施 (Shi Chou 讎), Meng 孟 (Meng Xi 喜), Liangqiu 梁丘 (Liangqiu He 賀), and Jing 京 (Jing Fang 房).
- *Documents*: There were three *xueguan* for Ouyang 歐陽 (Ouyang Gao 高), and Xiaohou the Elder and Younger 大小夏侯 (Xiahou Sheng 勝 and Jian 建).

- 1 • *Odes*: The *Shiji* distinguishes between the explanatory
2 glosses (*xungu* 訓故) of Shen Gong 申公 of Lu, from the
3 transmissions (*zhuan* 傳) of Yuan Gu 轅固 of Qi and Han
4 Sheng 韓生 (Han Ying 韓嬰) of Yan, all three of which
5 each had their own *xueguan*.
- 6 • *Record of Rites*: There were three *xueguan* associated with
7 Dai De 戴德, his nephew Dai Sheng 戴聖, and Qing Pu 慶
8 普.
- 9 • *Annals*: Four transmissions are identified, but only two
10 (those of the *Gongyang* 公羊, ascribed to Gongyang Gao 高
11 of Qi, and *Guliang* 穀梁) become *xueguan*. The teachings
12 of Zou 鄒 and Jia 夾 did not because Zou's transmission
13 lacked teachers and Jia's lacked a written record.¹¹
14

15
16 The Five Classics were taught in these court-recognized transmissions,
17 which do not exhaust the competing written and oral traditions associated
18 with the Five Classics. At once a de facto official recognition of the once
19 fragmented state of classical learning, this institutional recognition of the
20 particular editions and interpretations is arguably an attempt to reintegrate
21 the traditions of classical learning.

22 By the late Western Han, however, other texts besides the Classics were
23 subject to similar processes. The summary makes similar comments about
24 transmissions included in the “Many Masters” summary (*Zhuzi lue* 諸子
25 略), which is made up of the six kinds of expertise outlined by Sima Tan
26 and his son Qian in chapter 130 of the *Shiji*, as well as the “Zongheng”
27 縱橫 (Horizontal and vertical [alliances]), “Za” 雜 (Miscellaneous), “Nong”
28 農 (Agricultural), and “Xiaoshuo” 小說 (Minor Narratives). The summaries
29 to these subsections describe how people “struggled over the distinction
30 between authentic and false works associated with the Warring States Hori-
31 zontal and Vertical alliances,” while “the words of the many masters became
32 confused and disordered.”¹² The *Hanshu* “Yiwen zhi” bibliographic treatise
33 mentions specific ways that the classical traditions of learning have become
34 confused: not only are there divergent regional transmissions and multiple
35 interpretive traditions, but also imitations that are difficult to distinguish
36 from authentic texts. The process of fragmentation did not hold out much
37 hope for understanding the past, and this was offered by the compilers of
38 the treatise as the justification for the manuscript collection and remediation.

As described in the treatise itself, the underlying information loss occurs on two levels. On one level, manuscripts in their material aspect are literally degrading: “writings had missing sections and lost slips.” On a less material level, it is the ritual and musical forms described in the Five Classics that were also fading from memory, and with them the ability to make sense of the surviving writings, which had all sustained damage. Clearly, these two levels are connected. The consistent narrative of the fragmentation and decline relating to the first three “summaries” serves simultaneously as justification for the creation of the catalog and also for the need to gather and preserve a wide range of works. This is because the summaries cast these sections in a part/whole relationship with the entire classical legacy from the pre-Qin period. The practices they preserve were generally not, according to the Five Classics, ones in which the sages engaged in remote antiquity, but the practices themselves were efficacious because of their reliance on the same underlying regime of truth.

The *Hanshu* “Yiwen zhi” is hardly alone in embedding a taxonomy of texts and related practices in a justification based on degrading information. Two early taxonomic works deeply concerned with the transmission of practices are the final chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, “The World” (Tianxia 天下), composed as late as the third or second century BCE, and the “Essential Points of the Six Kinds of Expertise” included in the final chapter of the *Shiji* 史記 compiled at the end of the second century BCE.¹³ As much as or more than the *Hanshu*, these works are deeply concerned with situating new “technical arts” of governance in relation to the Dao 道, usually translated as “Way,” here indicating the substratum of truth that underlies equally the techniques of the past and those of the present. Both chapters integrate the traditions of the Five Classics into the broader universe of technical arts, anticipating several key tropes in the *Hanshu* “Yiwen zhi.”

II. The “Tianxia” 天下 and the Techniques of the Way

The start of the imperial period saw the wide circulation of technical genres based on the practices related to *fang* 方 (formulae), *shu* 術 (technical arts), *shu* 數 (computational arts), and *fa* 法 (patterns or methods) and codifying fields like divination, physiognomy, and hemerology. Their vital importance in some social contexts has been confirmed by their significant representation in excavated tombs across today’s China. While the origins

1 of these genres and the titles of individual works were sometimes linked to
 2 semi-divine figures from the past, including the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi
 3 黃帝), Great Unity (Taiyi 太一), and the Divine Farmer (Shen Nong 神
 4 農), today it remains unclear how these early imperial genres relate to the
 5 textual legacy of the Zhou period.

6 In this chapter, we use the phrase “technical arts” to refer strictly to
 7 practical techniques that were preserved in genres such as those defined above.
 8 The English-language phrase “technical arts” comes from *techne* (τέχνη),
 9 once associated with a wide range of skills or crafts or arts, and sometimes
 10 contrasted with *episteme* (ἐπιστήμη).¹⁴ Following on the distinction between
 11 *techne* and *episteme*, derivative terms like techniques, technical arts, and
 12 technology have been at the heart of a set of interwoven habits of distin-
 13 guishing abstract principles from concrete knowledge, of separating things
 14 made by people from things that were not, and of differentiating artistic
 15 productions from mechanistic ones. Applying the English phrase to these
 16 Chinese practices justifiably raises comparative questions about whether such
 17 traditions grow out of a culturally bound set of concerns or reflect more
 18 universal patterns that develop when complex societies mark off “techniques”
 19 and “technologies” from other aspects of culture. Here, however, applying
 20 the phrase should not be taken as an assertion of categorical universality, but
 21 rather as simply a recognition that similar kinds of practices were classed as
 22 *fāng* 方 or *shu* 術, at times in contrast with methods based on the Classics,
 23 in China; and as *techne*, at times in contrast with *episteme*, in Europe.

24 Many of the texts in China associated with the technical arts are
 25 additionally distinguished by their connection with ancient legendary rul-
 26 ers or mythical figures of yore, but they were not usually the same figures
 27 connected with the Classics. The propensity to identify and valorize texts
 28 by connecting them with the sage-rulers of the distant past is criticized in
 29 a passage from the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (compiled by 139 BCE): “ordinary
 30 people today often respect the ancient but look askance at the modern, and
 31 so those who aspire to the Way necessarily attribute their ideas to Shen
 32 Nong and Huangdi in order to have them enter the conversation.”¹⁵ While
 33 classical works were likely to be associated with Kongzi, the Duke of Zhou
 34 周公, or the sage-kings of antiquity, the practices of the technical arts texts
 35 were often associated with even earlier sages or culture heroes. Gu Jiegang’s
 36 顧頡剛 (1893–1980) essay “HuangLao zhi yan” 黃老之言 makes a similar
 37 point.¹⁶ Gu argues that this was an attempt by Han writers to attribute their
 38 HuangLao writings on good governance to even earlier figures before Yao,
 39 Shun, and Yu, and hence culture heroes even more venerable than these
 40

so-called “Confucian” sage-kings. Slightly modifying Gu Jiegang’s point, the fact that pre-Zhou period sages are associated with the invention or exemplary practice of such technical arts as agriculture, astronomy, medicine, or military methods rather than with the Five Classics, largely conceived of as the legacy of the Western Zhou period (1050–771 BCE), may also represent a projection of the Han social location of the works associated with the professions onto earlier, more “primitive” societies. The distinction between the “Classics” and “writings” in the title of the “Yiwenzhi” itself plays on the same binary distinction, and a related contrast is critical to the way that narratives of the decline and fragmentation of classical knowledge described the rise of technical arts.

The “In the Realm” (Tianxia) chapter of the *Zhuangzi* plainly distinguishes between the Five Classics as product of the sages before the Eastern Zhou, and other traditions associated usually with later pre-imperial masters. Setting aside for the moment the rich history of debate about the authenticity and role of the chapter within the *Zhuangzi* corpus,¹⁷ the chapter structurally falls into two parts. The first component consists of a short introduction plus a narrative describing the fragmentation of the unitary Way, as understood by the sages, which led to the rise of the discrete “masters,” each of whom taught one specific aspect of the Way, only to have their teachings further fragmented over time. A key formal feature of its taxonomy of masters is the repetition of the phrase “some of the ancient techniques of the Way are preserved in their teachings” (*gu zhi daoshu you zai yu shi zhe* 古之道術有在於是者) to open the presentation of five of the six early masters. The second component is composed of a set of lengthy descriptions of the methods and legacies specific to each of the major early masters.

This unique structure is just one obvious way the “Tianxia” differs from the rest of the *Zhuangzi*. Formally, the masters’ analyses have little in common with the speculative expositions and fantastic stories that make up the rest of the *Zhuangzi*. In terms of content, the mode of description and lists of evaluations, and the inclusion of one such evaluation for Master Zhuang himself, portrayed as yet another of the masters, are arguably also stylistically at odds with the rest of the *Zhuangzi*. Differences such as these led some Ming and Qing scholars to identify the chapter as a postface, or a relocated preface, to the entire *Zhuangzi*.¹⁸ This view might conceivably explain the perceived formal differences between the “Tianxia” chapter and the rest of the *Zhuangzi*, with the postface effectively taking a step back to explicate the entire work.

A critical approach to the descriptions given for the different masters in the “Tianxia” chapter reveals problems with this traditional view, however.

The structural feature in the chapter's second part, which links it to the preceding narrative introduction, is the identification of sets of masters (in twos and threes, except for Master Zhuang himself) as maintaining and transmitting particular aspects of "the ancient techniques of the Way" (*gu zhi daoshu* 古之道術). In total, five sets of names are marked off in this way:

1. Mo Di 墨翟 and Qin Guli 禽滑釐
2. Song Xing 宋鉞 and Yin Wen 尹文
3. Peng Meng 彭蒙, Tian Pian 田駢 and Shen Dao 慎到
4. Guan Yin 關尹 and Lao Dan 老聃
5. Zhuang Zhou 莊周

The above list of five sets of Masters leaves out a final section describing Hui Shi 惠施, who is *not* identified as continuing "the ancient techniques of the Way." Because the description for Hui Shi, in both form and content, differs from those given for the five sets of masters that precede it, the modern scholar Jiang Boqian 蔣伯潛 suggests that this paragraph was once an independent text, which was incorporated later into the *Zhuangzi*, perhaps because Hui Shi is partnered with the persona Zhuang Zhou elsewhere in the *Zhuangzi*.¹⁹ Whether the Hui Shi section was originally part of the one-chapter Huizi 惠子 (Master Hui) listed in the *Hanshu* "Yiwen zhi,"²⁰ Jiang's suggestion that the Hui Shi section was not part of the original taxonomy of the "Tianxia" chapter is based on sound formal analysis.

Beyond the problem of the final section on Hui Shi, others have argued that the assessments of individual masters are inconsistent with the rest of the *Zhuangzi*. Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢 notes that the "Tianxia" chapter shares direct parallels with a stratum of *Zhuangzi* chapters that does not disparage virtues like *ren* 仁 and *yi* 義.²¹ Liu notes several ways that this stratum is unique relative to the rest of the *Zhuangzi*:

In general, this kind of text is relatively positive toward Ru and Fa [here, "Confucian" and "Legalist"] and absorbs and accepts aspects of both, compared to the kinds of text in both the inner, and the outer/miscellaneous sections of the work. Further, this kind of text emphasizes the hierarchical relation between ruler and minister ... in clear contrast to the so-called Inner Chap-

ters [conventionally, the first seven chapters of the *Zhuangzi*].
 Lastly, this kind of essay clearly promotes a vision of the ruler
 following *wuwei* while the ministers act, which is rather unique
 in the *Zhuangzi*.²²

总的看来,这一类文章对儒法两家比较宽容,并有所吸收和肯定。
 这与内篇及外杂篇的其他两类文章也造成对照。再次,这类文章
 强调上下尊卑的君臣关系, ... 与内篇也是明显不同的。最后,这
 类文章明确提出了君无为而臣有为的观点,这在《庄子》书中,是
 比较特殊的。

Liu's analysis underscores Jiang's point that the "Tianxia" chapter differs from
 the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. As we argue below, Liu's description
 arguably fits not just the "Tianxia" but also the hybrid taxonomy offered
 by the *Shiji*, as we will see. Liu's view that the chapter shows explicit phil-
 osophical inconsistencies with all but a handful of other *Zhuangzi* chapters
 makes it even harder to accept the position that "Tianxia" chapter was
 intended as a postface to the entire *Zhuangzi*.

Such debates about the nature and place of the "Tianxia" 天下 chap-
 ter in the *Zhuangzi* as a whole have long constituted the prism through
 which the chapter's content traditionally has been refracted. Here, however,
 they distract from the story the chapter tells about the fragmentation of
 knowledge and the relationship between the sagely classics, the fragmentary
 techniques of the "Many Experts," and the debased knowledge of the pres-
 ent—a story told in slightly different ways in the "Tianxia" narrative, Sima
 Qian's "Essential Points," and Ban Gu's bibliographic treatise, the "Yiwen
 zhi." In this context, let us examine the contemporary scholar Fang Yong's
 方勇 assessment of Zhuangzi's "Tianxia" chapter as an early work providing a
 scholastic taxonomy, which should be read against other works of that genre:

These are doubtless continuations and developments of this form
 of academic classification based on a narrative style of tracing
 the historical origins of each to one of the ancient "techniques
 of the Way." When [the *Shiji*] "Essential Points of the Six Kinds
 of Expertise" and *Seven Summaries* are critiquing each "expertise,"
 they talk about both their advantages and their shortcomings, a
 feature that should be seen as their development of the unique
 critical spirit of this chapter.²³

这无疑是对本篇试行学派分类，并追溯各派的历史起源到古代的某一“道术”这一叙述方式的继续与发展。而《论六家要指》、《七略》在评述各家时，都既谈其优点，又谈其缺点，这应当视为是对本篇那种独特批判精神的发扬光大。

Fang Yong writes that the “Tianxia” account of the way in which the technical arts emerged from a fragmented Way became the template for critically important Han period taxonomies found in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*. While we are not as confident as Fang Yong is about the chronological order of the three works, we do feel that he is absolutely right about the core similarities.

The introductory section of “Tianxia” is perhaps the clearest and most elaborate attempt to link the Five Classics to other textual genres. As noted above, the last chapter of the *Zhuangzi* is unique in some senses, and it may even represent a point of view in the text that is “relatively positive toward Ru and Fa.” This is certainly true of the introduction, which foregrounds the value of the classical legacy, even while underscoring its location in a specific place and time. The “Tianxia” begins by contrasting the present with the past, laying out three stages of progressive fragmentation of the Way:

“There are many people in the realm who administer (*zhi*) methods and techniques, and all believe that none could improve on the efficacy of their own. But where are the ones that the ancients called the ‘techniques of the Way?’ ”

I say: “They are everywhere” [literally, there is no place where they are not].

If you ask, “From where do the spirits descend? From where does their percipience emanate?”

I say: “The Sages possess what gave birth to them, the Kings possess what matured them, and all of them originated from Unity.”²⁴

天下之治方術者多矣，皆以其有為不可加矣。古之所謂道術者，果惡乎在？曰：「無乎不在。」曰：「神何由降？明何由出？」「聖有所生，王有所成，皆原於一。」²⁵

This opening passage describes the current fragmentation of knowledge, one in which people mistakenly believe that their branch of knowledge is superior to all others. It ends with the claim that all branches of knowl-

edge, past and present, derive from a primal unity. The chapter does not explicitly recognize the potential to go back and tap into that unity, but its survey of the various methods and techniques in circulation implicitly holds out the hope that in learning these the unity may be glimpsed. While the unitary Way is the original source of knowledge, the exceptional sages and rulers of the past discovered and developed that knowledge, creating further techniques as they adapted to the challenges of their time.

Following this brief section comes a prose description of several different kinds of exceptional person. It describes five exemplary kinds: *tianren* 天人 (heavenly person), *shenren* 神人 (spirit person), *zhiren* 至人 (ultimate person), *shengren* 聖人 (sage), and *junzi* 君子 (gentleman). The first members of this list have a simpler relationship to pure forms of knowledge: “The heavenly person is not separate from his or her ancestral source (*zong* 宗),” while the latter members are credited with mastery of bodies of practical knowledge: “The gentleman takes benevolence as kindness, righteousness as principle, ritual propriety as action, music as harmony, warmly compassionate and humane, and is called a gentleman.”²⁶ Beyond the fact that the chapter presents these classical virtues and roles in a positive light, the first three exemplary kinds are not mentioned again, which relegates them to a perhaps irrecoverable past, connected more directly to a time when knowledge and understanding were one.

Instead, once that primal unity—cosmic and political—was no longer available, even the sages and rulers had to rely on multiple sources of partial knowledge. The cardinal example in the “Tianxia” introduction is the study of the Classics in the states of Zou and Lu, the homes of Mengzi and Kongzi. The study of the Classics is a means to master multiple kinds of knowledge through one of the Six Classics, each of which addresses a different aspect of positive behavior. The passage reads:

Many of the men in service and high-ranking officials from Zou and Lu could understand the *Odes*, *Documents* (Shangshu 尚書), *Rites*, and *Music* Classics. The *Odes* was used to guide their intentions, the *Documents*, to guide them in affairs, the *Rites*, to guide them in actions, the *Music*, to guide them in harmony, the *Changes*, to guide them in [the alternation of] *yin* and *yang*, and the *Annals*, to guide them to differentiate titles and status hierarchies. When their regular processes were dispersed among the people of the realm and established in the Central States, from time to time some of the scholarly traditions of myriad kinds of expertise commended and used them for guidance.²⁷

1 其在於《詩》、《書》、《禮》、《樂》者，鄒、魯之士、搢紳先
 2 生多能明之。《詩》以道志，《書》以道事，《禮》以道行，《樂》
 3 以道和，《易》以道陰陽，《春秋》以道名分。其數散於天下而設
 4 於中國者，百家之學時或稱而道之。²⁸

5
 6 Here the Classics and their contents are not valorized because they are
 7 connected with Kongzi directly, but rather the scholars of Zou and Lu
 8 included classicists determined to preserve the legacy of the past, pursuing
 9 its unitary knowledge through the multiple kinds of knowledge preserved
 10 in the Classics. Those in Zou and Lu used the Six Classics (at one point,
 11 four) to guide them in the different aspects of their lives.²⁹

12 Yet this was not the only stage of decline described in the quotation,
 13 because the methods of the Classics were “dispersed among the people of
 14 the realm and established in the Central States.” No longer restricted to Zou
 15 and Lu, the classicists’ expertise spread to other regions and was somehow
 16 incorporated in the contested perspectives of the “Hundred Schools.” Here
 17 it is important to note that all five sets of figures in the second part of
 18 the “Tianxia” *Zhuangzi* chapter belong to this stage of the process. How-
 19 ever, as in the introductory part of the chapter, the partial knowledge and
 20 understanding of these Masters underwent even further decline over time.
 21 For example, the *Zhuangzi* chapter describes the misunderstanding by the
 22 various followers of Mozi of key elements of his teachings: they “all chanted
 23 the Mohist canons, but each one’s interpretation diverged from the next,
 24 and each called the others ‘splinter’ Mohists.”³⁰ The fragmentation of the
 25 unitary Way into the traditions represented by the many Masters, it turns
 26 out, was repeated over and over again with the transmissions of the Master’s
 27 teachings to successive generations of disciples.

28 As described in the “Tianxia” narrative, the final stage of decline is
 29 one in which all attempts at comprehensive knowledge have failed, and (as
 30 foreshadowed in the chapter’s first line) no one anywhere remembers that
 31 there ever was more than partial knowledge. This is the state of affairs in
 32 the present day, according to the text:

33
 34 But the people of the world are greatly disordered, the worthies
 35 and sages are misunderstood, the way and its virtues are not
 36 unified. Most people of the world are proud of themselves for
 37 having attained but a single aspect of them. This may be com-
 38 pared with having one’s ears, eyes, nose, and mouth each sense
 39 something different without being able to communicate with
 40

one another. So too with the Many Experts' many skills, which each have their strength and a time when they are useful, but are neither comprehensive nor complete, making them scholastic "one-trick ponies."

天下大亂，賢聖不明，道德不一，天下多得一察焉以自好。譬如耳、目、鼻、口，皆有所明，不能相通。猶百家眾技也，皆有所長，時有所用。雖然，不該不遍，一曲之士也。³¹

The transition described here, also described in the case of the later Mohists, is a move from a differentiated scholastic and professional set of experts to contending individuals who no longer can communicate with one another in meaningful ways. The devolution of knowledge in the chapter now has four stages:

1. Unitary knowledge and understanding of the Way (*dao* 道)
2. Partial preservation of the Classics (*jing* 經) in Zou and Lu
3. Widespread masters' and experts' (*zhuzi baijia* 諸子百家) dilute applications
4. Individuals' mastery of skills (*ji* 技) derived from a debased understanding

The present is like the period of the "Hundred Schools," absent the "mind" and "will" that tries to connect the partial understandings of the world to the derivation of the skills. At present, each practice instead is taken by its practitioner to be true in itself, and the potential for the unified and comprehensive knowledge and understanding celebrated by the generalist (where the chapter began) is gone. The motif of fragmentation in the "Tianxia" narrative is echoed in a number of Western Han works.³² As Fang Yong notes, it shares quite a few features with the *Shiji*, a work that has had an outsized influence on the taxonomies later used as the basis of the "Yiwenzhi" bibliographical categories.

II. The Simas 司馬氏 and Expertise in the Way

The final chapter of *Shiji* (chapter 130) contains a number of different elements, some of which are autobiographical, and is often called the

1 “Personal Narrative of the Senior Director of Astronomy” (Taishigong
 2 zixu 太史公自序).³³ While not as descriptively detailed as the *Zhuangzi*
 3 “Tianxia” chapter concerning the different kinds of knowledge it discusses,
 4 this *Shiji* 史記 chapter (sometimes dubbed a postface) “Personal Narrative”
 5 more directly sets out to make sense of diverse textual genres and types
 6 of practice of which the Senior Director of Astronomy was aware, using a
 7 fragmentation narrative about the past. A central element of the chapter
 8 is the description of what is conventionally translated as the “Six Schools”
 9 (*liu jia* 六家)—more accurately, the “Six Kinds of Expertise”—of *yin* and
 10 *yang* 陰陽, Ru 儒, Mo 墨, Ming 名 (Names), Fa 法 (Law), and Dao 道
 11 德 (The Way and its Virtue).³⁴ The chapter begins with the clan history of
 12 the Simas, then turns to an essay by a Senior Director of the Archive (Sima
 13 Tan or Sima Qian, according to early sources), on the “Essential Points
 14 of the Six Kinds of Expertise.” The six branches fit with the third stage
 15 of the “Tianxia” narrative of fragmentation, in that each one is a partial
 16 set of texts and practices for “working on behalf of those who govern”
 17 (*ci wu wei zhi zhe ye* 此務為治者也). Of these six branches, the last one
 18 represents the culmination of the previous five, embodying more profound
 19 insights:

20
 21 Experts in the Way cause people to concentrate their essential
 22 *qi* and spirit, so their every move is in accord with the formless,
 23 and thus they sufficiently supply the myriad creatures. In making
 24 techniques, they rely on the great succession of *yin* and *yang*
 25 *qi*, select the good from Ru and Mo, assemble the essentials of
 26 Ming and Fa, shift in accord with what is timely, and transform
 27 in response to external things.³⁵

28
 29 道家使人精神專一，動合無形，瞻足萬物。其為術也，因陰陽之大
 30 順，采儒墨之善，撮名法之要，與時遷移，應物變化。

31
 32 While the experts in the Way are like the previous five kinds of experts, in
 33 having a specialization, paradoxically that “specialization” incorporates all
 34 the other more particular insights from the previous five groups, and their
 35 “making techniques” (*weishu* 為術) reflects a discriminating and deliberative
 36 process that adapts the various forms of expertise of the five other groups
 37 to each circumstance. The stress on adapting various kinds of expertise
 38 to changing situations is a hallmark of the sage in several chapters of the
 39 *Huainanzi* 淮南子, including the “Boundless Discourses” (Fan Lun 汎論),
 40

of which John Major and others write that the sage “must be prepared to
 abandon old policies when they become obsolete, innovate when faced with
 new challenges, and adopt diverse approaches as the circumstances warrant.”³⁶
 Elsewhere in the “Personal Narrative” we are told that Sima Tan “studied
 the *Changes* with Yang He” 受易於楊何 and “studied discussions of the Way
 with Master Huang” 習道論於黃子.³⁷ Yang He, Sima Tan, Sima Qian, and
 Liu An’s presentation of the *Huainanzi* all were in Chang’an during the
 130s BCE, when the taxonomy based on the “Six Kinds of Expertise” was
 being developed, and when the Way was being widely deployed as a concep-
 tual tool to describe how diverse practices work across times and cultures.
 Experts in the Way, like Master Huang and his student Sima Tan, held out
 the possibility that a certain type of person could draw from the partial
 forms of knowledge in such a way as to recapture the supreme adaptability
 of the sages of the past, whose mastery of their circumstances is recorded
 in the Classics. In contrast to the *Zhuangzi* “Tianxia” chapter, then, the
Shiji explicitly holds out the promise of moving from fragmentation back
 to a more comprehensive sort of knowledge and understanding on which
 practice can be built.³⁸

Where the *Shiji* and the “Tianxia” are very similar is in their discussions
 of the relationship between the techniques embodied in the Classics and
 the technical methods associated with the other kinds of expertise, such as
 the calendrical and astronomical methods associated with the experts in *yin*
 and *yang*. For the Ru, “the Six Classics are the template” for the practice,
 even if a complete understanding of the Six Classics is no longer possible:
 “For generations no person has been able to fully comprehend their objects
 of study, and in a single lifetime no person is able to fully research the
 rites.”³⁹ Recall that in the *Zhuangzi* “Tianxia” chapter, the Classics are linked
 to traditions of practice, and the mastery of each text (or body of practice)
 connected to a different aspect of good behavior. In the *Shiji* taxonomy, a
 very similar list appears:

For these reasons, the *Rites* are used to regulate people, the *Music*
 is used to facilitate harmony, the *Documents* is used to guide
 them in affairs, the *Odes* is used to develop one’s intentions,
 the *Changes* to guide transformations, and the *Annals* to guide
 them in righteousness.⁴⁰

是故禮以節人，樂以發和，〈書〉以道事，〈詩〉以達意，〈易〉以
 道化，〈春秋〉以道義。

1 This passage about the Six Classics has multiple points of similarity with
 2 the passage in the *Zhuangzi* “Tianxia” chapter examined above, establishing
 3 that the link between the two chapters is stronger than simply a formal
 4 resemblance. Certainly, both the *Zhuangzi* and *Shiji* texts see the techniques
 5 of the classics as ancient and therefore incompletely transmitted because
 6 of fragmentation and decline. However, the elevation of the expertise in
 7 the Way indicates that the techniques of the Classics are neither privileged
 8 nor sui generis in the context of the broader universe of the technical arts.
 9 The way the taxonomies found in the last chapters of the *Zhuangzi*
 10 and *Shiji* integrate classical learning and other technical arts into an over-
 11 arching framework serves as a precedent and shapes Ban Gu’s integration
 12 of the bibliographical project begun by Liu Xiang and Liu Xin into the
 13 *Hanshu*. The structure of the *Hanshu* “Yiwen zhi,” as we shall see, draws
 14 on earlier narratives of fragmentation and decline, but Ban Gu adds an
 15 abiding concern with how the machinery of the state is connected to the
 16 many kinds of expertise.

17 18 19 III. Technical Knowledge as the End Stage of 20 Classical Knowledge in the “Yiwen zhi” 21

22 The historical stages outlined above for the *Zhuangzi* and the *Shiji* form a
 23 backdrop and provide context for the rhetorical framework of the *Hanshu*
 24 bibliographic catalogue “Yiwen zhi.” The *Hanshu* chapter, as already noted,
 25 had its genesis in the survey commissioned by Emperor Cheng. While we
 26 do not have an explanation for why each particular official was chosen to
 27 undertake that official’s part of the survey, as opposed to another with a
 28 related expertise, the method of relying on experts in government offices
 29 fits neatly with a worldview fostered among members of the governing elite,
 30 where the specialization of knowledge is a given. More to the point, the
 31 rhetorical frame in which the lists of holdings are embedded—a brief sum-
 32 mary essay for each category—tells a story (possibly fictive) that elaborates
 33 on the familiar taxonomies in important ways.

34 The taxonomy used to organize the works listed in the *Hanshu* “Yiwen
 35 zhi” essentially begins from a binary in the title’s contrast between *yi* 藝
 36 (“Classics”) and *wen* 文 (“Writings”). Above, we have seen examples of
 37 authors who classified both the classical and technical arts under the epistemic
 38 authority of an overarching “Way.” This same assumption is reflected in the
 39 structure of the part of the catalog that follows the “Classics” section. Below,
 40

we look at how the summaries and organization of three other sections of the treatise—"Military writings" (*bingshu* 兵書), "Computational and Technical arts" (*shushu* 數術), and "Methods and skills" (*fangji* 方技)—are organized in a way that echoes the narratives of decline that link the "Classics" to the "Masters" sections. In addition, the rhetorical framing of these sections returns to the notion that particular ancient aspects of statecraft had become debased into contemporary skills used to promote personal welfare.

Recall that centuries before Ban Gu, some Western Han writings had already theorized the relationship between the Way and its constituent techniques as that of a whole to its parts. The *Xinshu* 新書, attributed to the statesman Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168 BCE), has a chapter dedicated to this relationship: "Daoshu" 道術 (The Way and its techniques). In it, Jia Yi responds to a question about what reality the word *dao* 道 refers to by saying:

The Way refers to what one follows to make contact with external things. Its beginning we call "the empty or undifferentiated," its secondary manifestations we call "techniques." The undifferentiated refers to its essential subtlety; it is easy and plain, before it has a particular application. Techniques refer to what one follows to regulate external things via alternations between movement and stillness. All of these are the Way.⁴¹

道者，所從接物也。其本者謂之虛，其末者謂之術。虛者，言其精微也，平素而無設施也。術也者，所從制物也，動靜之數也。凡此皆道也。

In the cosmogonic sequence, the Way is undifferentiated, but, as soon as it makes contact with external things, the Way expresses itself through well-defined techniques for regulating them.

An echo of this theoretical construct is seen in Ban Gu's description of the category of calendrical techniques in the "Calendrics and Registries" (Lipu 曆譜 subsection) of the "Computational and Technical Arts" section of the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, as below. Ban's description makes use of the narrative of decline we have seen, imputing an original account of the decentralization of knowledge. By this account, the basis of all later techniques of this kind were the innovations by the sage-kings, but once the unitary Way became fragmented, the broader administrative techniques of an official sphere were whittled down into individual techniques of only limited relevance to assorted individuals on their own. The early history is described first:

“Calendars and chronologies” order the positions of the four seasons, correctly align the nodes of the solstices and equinoxes, and correlate the asterisms of the sun, moon and five visible planets. For this reason, it was necessary for the sage-kings to align their calendars and chronologies in order to fix the regulations pertaining to proper colors of clothing under the Triple Concordance calendar, and also to thoroughly observe the conjunctions of the sun, moon and visible five planets. Techniques concerned with worries about bad fortune and adversity, or happiness due to good fortune and prosperity, all derive from these. These were the techniques the sages used to understand allotment. Were they not the most skilled among the people of the world, who else could have provided them?

曆譜者，序四時之位，正分至之節，會日月五星之辰，故聖王必正曆數，以定三統服色之制，又以探知五星日月之會。凶阨之患，吉隆之喜，其術皆出焉。此聖人知命之術也，非天下之至材，其孰與焉！⁴²

The ancients were responsible for developing the systems for the calendar, and the section begins by listing texts associated with the mythical culture heroes Yellow Emperor and Zhuan Xu 顓頊. The sages’ methods of understanding allotment later developed into much more general practices addressing contemporary “worries about bad fortune and adversity, or happiness due to good fortune and prosperity,” likely indicating hemerology and other widely used mantic procedures relying on astro-calendrical computations.

The “*Yin* and *yang*” subsection of the “Masters” section of the survey may have contained works associated with these techniques of the sage-kings, as the summary to that section explains the masters copied sages like Yao who used *yin* and *yang*: “to arrange and make images of the sun, moon, stars and asterisms.”⁴³ Nonetheless, the decline of the Way after the time of the sage-kings inevitably led to a transition from those antique techniques used by the early rulers for reorganizing the agricultural calendar to broader and more individual application. To address personal anxieties, the techniques of the sages were adapted to matters of narrower scope:

When the Way fell into chaos, troubles that arose from less perceptive persons who were compelled by their desires to understand the heavens, to diminish the great to make it the

smaller, and reduce the distant to make it nearer. This is the reason why “the Way and its techniques” were diminished and became difficult to know, and were used to examine the reality behind warm and cold, or life and death.”⁴⁴

道之亂也，患出於小人而強欲知天道者，壞大以為小，削遠以為近，是以道術破碎而難知也。以考寒暑殺生之實。

The psychological needs of people during the long stage of gradual distancing from the once unitary Way led to the “diminishing” of the techniques derived from the sage-kings. Troubles were addressed by techniques tethered to concerns about individual health and life span. Mapping the decline onto a model of two historical stages, the compiler is drawing a distinction between the *yin*- and *yang*-based techniques of statecraft used by the sage rulers of the past, during the time the Way prevailed, and the derivative techniques that later became popular when the Way fell into chaos.

Two other sets of technical texts derived from the *yin* and *yang* techniques of the past are found in the “Military *yin* and *yang*” (Bing *yinyang* 兵陰陽) subsection, in the “Military texts” section, and the “Five Phases” (*Wuxing* 五行) subsection in the “Computational and Technical Arts” section of the treatise. The former subsection is composed of eleven texts, and the military methods are contained in the last two, *Master Ding* (*Dingzi* 丁子) and *King Xiang* (*Xiang wang* 項王), whose compilation cannot predate the battles that marked the transition from Qin to Han.⁴⁵ The latter subsection begins with six titles that all contain the phrase *yinyang* 陰陽, starting with *Great Unity’s yin and yang* (*Taiyi yinyang* 泰一陰陽) and *Yellow Emperor’s yin and yang* (*Huangdi yinyang* 黃帝陰陽). Then it moves on to several texts devoted to uses of the five visible planets in military contexts, starting from the *Shen Nong and Da You wuxing* 神農大幽五行.⁴⁶ The taxonomy sorts by families of technical arts, and within those family categories arranges works chronologically, which reinforces the hierarchy between the reigns of the sage-kings and the present diminished age.

To describe these more recent, applied *yin* and *yang* techniques, Ban Gu adopts the term *xiaoshu* 小數 or “lesser computational arts.” In his discussion of the “Masters” section appearance of *yin* and *yang* techniques, Ban borrows the term when he contrasts their origin in the office of the sage-king Yao’s calendrical expert Xi He 羲和 with those of later times. Ban says, “When it came to the time that those with limitations used them, then they rigidly applied taboos and prohibitions, mired in lesser computational

1 arts, abandoning human affairs and relying on the demons and spirits.”⁴⁷ For
 2 the technical texts based on *yin* and *yang* in the “Five Phases” subsection of
 3 the “Computational and Technical Arts” section, the *Hanshu* characterizes a
 4 similar kind of change: “However, the experts in lesser computational arts
 5 applied them to good and bad fortune, and they became so popular in the
 6 ages, that each was steeped in more disorder than the last.”⁴⁸ In this telling
 7 of the relationship between the different *yin* and *yang* technical works, the
 8 domain of the techniques of the “Masters” section texts was social and
 9 concerned with human affairs, while that of the lesser “Computational
 10 and Technical Arts” texts was self-interested and preoccupied with seeking
 11 blessings from the spirits. The normative subtext of the *Hanshu* narrative
 12 of decline is familiar, but its attention to personal psychological needs such
 13 as allaying anxiety, as well as its projection of a binary between state and
 14 personal applications backward into mythic time, are both new relative to
 15 the two works previously examined.

16 Bearing out the complaint that the decline of the computational arts
 17 from the time of Xi He 羲和 was characterized by a move from “human
 18 affairs” to those of the “demons and spirits,” the rise of private specialists
 19 in methods of the spirit transcendence is central to the summary of the
 20 “Spirit Immortality” (Shenxian 神僊) subsection of the “Recipes and Arts”
 21 section of the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise. Ban’s discussion of it draws a
 22 similar picture of the relationship between recent works and their ancient
 23 counterparts. As Li Ling 李零 has pointed out, this textual category does
 24 not refer to “spirits” of the dead but rather cultivation via technical prac-
 25 tices for healing and longevity in order to become a “spirit” ideally in this
 26 life.⁴⁹ Ban Gu describes the way such techniques became debased over time:

27
 28 Spirit immortality is the means by which one protects one’s
 29 legitimate human nature and allotment, and wanders searching
 30 through what is external to them. One depends on level thoughts
 31 and an even mind, in a space where life and death are regarded
 32 as the same, with no agitation in one’s breast. However, some
 33 people took this as their vocation, so that strange, exaggerated,
 34 anomalous and overstated writings increased more and more.
 35 This is not why the sage kings taught [these practices]. Kongzi
 36 said: “Always reclusive and acting atypically, yet becoming a
 37 storied figure in later generations—this is not something I would
 38 choose to do.”⁵⁰

39
 40

神僊者，所以保性命之真，而游求於其外者也。聊以盪意平心，同
死生之域，而無怵惕於胸中。然而或者專以為務，則誕欺怪迂之
文彌以益多，非聖王之所以教也。孔子曰：「索隱行怪，後世有
述焉，吾不為之矣。」

Just as the techniques of *yin* and *yang* became debased because of their
application to address personal anxieties, so too the techniques of the Way
were debased to advantage specialists who exaggerated the worldly benefits
of the techniques of spirit immortality. Kongzi enters the discussion to
eschew performance of techniques for wealth and fame, providing for later
generations in the Han an implicit critique of the characters of those who
chose not to serve the state, but used the techniques developed for doing
so to different ends than those of the sage-kings.

The subsection of the “Masters” section with the closest affinities to the
“Spirit Immortality” subsection is that of “Dao.” Yet the difference in its level
of generality is clear from a comparison of the first three titles of the “Spirit
Immortality” subsection—*Way of Fu Xi and Various Masters* (*Fu Xi zazi dao*
宓戲雜子道), *Way of the Ancient Sages and Various Masters* (*Shangsheng zazi dao*
上聖雜子道), and *Essentials of the Way of Various Masters* (*Dao yao zazi* 道要
雜子)—with the very last text of the “Dao” in the “Masters” section: *Sayings*
of the Experts in the Way (*Daojia yan* 道家言). While the “Dao” subsection of
the “Masters” section, like the “Spirit Immortality” subsection, contains many
familiar names (e.g., the Yellow Emperor, Laozi, and Zhuangzi), the “Spirit
Immortality” subsection ties these legendary figures to particular techniques
for individual health and longevity, such as *Guiding and Pulling of Huangdi*
and Various Masters (*Huangzi zazi buyin* 黃帝雜子步引),⁵¹ *Massage of Huangdi*
and Qi Bo (*Huangzi zazi anmo* 黃帝岐伯按摩), *Zhi and Jun fungi of Huangdi*
and Various Masters (*Huangzi zazi zhijun* 黃帝雜子芝菌),⁵² and *Smelting of*
Gold of Taiyi and Various Masters (*Taiyi zazi huangye* 泰壹雜子黃冶).⁵³ The
particular techniques in the “Spirit Immortality” subsection of the “Dao”
section have in common the goal of longevity and immortality, whether
by rhythmic movement, mimetic dance, massage, ingesting mushrooms, or
medical or alchemical preparations. In this way, the “Dao” subsection (of the
“Masters” section) may have been conceived of as a theoretical grounding
for the “Spirit Immortality” subsection (of the “Recipes and Arts” section),
or perhaps something more along the lines of a root/branch metaphor. The
Song writer Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) described the different foci of
the texts in these two subsections in similar terms:

The general thrust of the writings of Laozi and Zhuangzi is a desire to equalize life and death and thereby lighten the burden of staying or departing. However, those who practice “spirit immortality” ingest cinnabar and cultivate refinement in order to seek lightness and rising up, refining plants and stones into gold and silver. As a result, the techniques they practiced [i.e., Laozi and Zhuangzi vs. the “spirit immortality” practitioners] were exactly the opposite of each other. This is why Liu Xin’s *Seven Summaries* records the “Experts in the Way” in the “Masters” section and places “Spirit Immortality” among the “Recipes and Arts.”⁵⁴

老莊之書，大指欲同死生，輕去就。而為神僊者服餌修鍊，以求輕舉，鍊草石為金銀，其為術正相反。是以劉歆《七略》敘述道家為諸子，神僊為方技。

Sima Guang was writing a full millennium after the bibliographic survey that led to the *Seven Summaries*, so his identification of the key distinctions between the two groups of texts does not necessarily re-create the rationale of the treatise’s Han compilers. Nonetheless, his observation points to a key structural feature of the *Seven Summaries* and *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise (“Yiwen zhi”).

The summaries of the sections of the *Hanshu* treatise rhetorically frame several subsections of the “Masters” sections as theoretical grounding for later sections that contain more specific or debased methods based on similar techniques. It is as if the *Hanshu* is taking the move from the “preservation of the Classics” to the “widespread masters’ and experts’ dilute applications”—stages outlined above in the discussion of the “Tianxia” chapter—as a template for the further move from those “masters’ and experts’ applications” to “individuals’ mastery of skills derived from a debased understanding.” The “Yiwen zhi,” in common with the previous examples, used multiple iterations of narratives of decline and fragmentations to create its taxonomy, even while it introduced a new description of the cause of this final iteration: a shift in the location of technical arts from officials with public goals to the private exploitation of personal anxieties.

IV. Bibliography and Administration

We have described above how narratives of decline and fragmentation provided a *rhetorical explanation* accounting for the organization and structure used in the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, but of course we are not asserting that a

“decline” in techniques from the time of the sage-kings actually happened. 1
 What was behind this rhetoric? A close reading of Ban Gu’s adaptation of 2
 the earlier bibliographic summaries reveals that this structuring principle was 3
 combined with one other, more distinctive rhetorical feature: the projection 4
 of the bibliographical taxonomy onto an idealized administrative framework. 5
 We have already seen how the *Seven Summaries* was said to derive from 6
 several bureaus in the court reliant on practices that no doubt influenced 7
 the final taxonomy, an administrative map influencing the drawing of a 8
 bibliographic one. Along with the narrative of decline and fragmentation, 9
 the summaries of the *Hanshu* treatise regularly trace the origins of sections, 10
 subsections, or individual texts back to a set of “royal offices” or “royal offi- 11
 cers” (*wang guan* 王官). Of the ten Masters sections, four of them (the Ru, 12
yin and *yang*, Ming, and Zongheng) were directly tied to these legendary 13
 or imagined ancient offices or officials. 14

This *Hanshu* construction of a notional link to the Western Zhou 15
 administration connects these masters to another text, the *Rites of Zhou* 16
 (*Zhouli* 周禮). For the treatise not only borrowed the names of these ancient 17
 offices mentioned in the *Rites of Zhou* (and less systematically in other 18
 Classics). It moreover ties the *Rites of Zhou* descriptions of the duties of 19
 these ancient offices to the textual traditions it catalogues. A representative 20
 entry, the summary of the “Ru” subsection of the “Masters” section, reads: 21

The current of the Ru experts originates from the office of 23
 Minister over the Masses (*Situ* 司徒), which assisted the ruler 24
 in following [alternations of] *yin* and *yang*, and promoting 25
 educational measures to transform the people.⁵⁵ 26

儒家者流，蓋出於司徒之官，助人君順陰陽明教化者也。 28

In the *Rites of Zhou*, the “Minister over the Masses” section is part of 30
 the section of “Offices of Earth” (*di guan* 地官), with duties described as 31
 “commanding subordinates to manage the teachings of the state, so that 32
 he could assist the king to secure and pacify the states and principalities.”⁵⁶ 33
 The primary duty of the ministerial office is “instruction,” then, in both the 34
Rites of Zhou and the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise. A similar connection 35
 is present between the *Rites of Zhou* and the *Hanshu* catalog’s subsection 36
 summaries for two Classics, the *Odes* and the *Annals*, when the author 37
 associates these texts with the work of ancient offices in charge of collecting 38
 poems (*cai shi zhi guan* 采詩之官), or in charge of keeping the archives, 39
 with their divinations and charts (*shi guan* 史官).⁵⁷ The connections between 40

1 ancient offices and the sections of the Classics, Masters, and Military texts
2 is summarized in the following chart:

3

4 Table 9.1. Masters and “Ancient Offices” in the “Yiwen zhi”

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

Section	Derivation	Source Text, apparent
Masters 諸子	Ancient royal offices (<i>wang guan</i> 王官)	Ancient royal offices (<i>wang guan</i> 王官) in the <i>Rites of Zhou</i> 周禮
Ru experts 儒家	Offices of Minister over the Masses (Situ zhi guan 司徒之官), “assisted the ruler in follow the <i>yin-yang</i> principles and promoting educational measures to transform the people.” 助人君順陰陽明教化者也。	Based on the <i>Rites of Zhou</i> , the Situ “commands subordinates to manage the teachings of the state, so that he could assist the king to secure and pacify the states and principalities” 使帥其屬而掌邦教，以佐王安擾邦國。 In the “Shun Dian” 舜典 chapter of the <i>Documents</i> , when Shun appointed Qi 契 as the Situ, his description of the duty of this office is “to extend the five teachings with respect and leniency.” 敬敷五教在寬.* The description highlights a continuity in the function of “transformation by teaching” (<i>jiao hua</i> 教化).
Experts in the Way 道家	Office of Scribes (Shi guan 史官)	The apparent connection of this post with the Daoist tradition originates from the anecdote that Laozi served as the archivist of Zhou, recorded in <i>Shiji</i> : “Laozi... was a scribe in the Zhou Archives [of documents.]” 老子者……周守藏室之史也.**
Experts in <i>yin</i> and <i>yang</i> 陰陽家	Office of the Astronomer (Xi He zhu guan 羲和之官).	The “Yao dian” 堯典 chapter of the <i>Documents</i> : “Yao commanded the Xi He to solemnly comply with August Heaven, to calculate and model the regular movements of the sun, moon, planets, and asterisms, and, to attentively impose them upon human seasons.” 乃命羲和，欽若昊天，歷象日月星辰，敬授人時。
Experts in Law 法家	Office of Justice (Li guan 理官)	

**Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義 3.44b.

***Shiji* 61. 2139.

Section	Derivation	Source Text, apparent	1
Experts in Names 名家	Office of Ritual (Li guan 禮官)	From the <i>Rites of Zhou</i> : the Zongbo 宗伯 “commanded subordinates to manage the rituals of the state and assist the ruler in bringing harmony to the states and principalities.” 使帥其屬而掌邦禮，以佐王和邦國。	2 3 4 5 6 7
Mohist Experts 墨家	Guardians of the Pure Ancestral Temple (Qingmiao zhi shou 清廟之守)	There is a set of hymns under the subtitle of “Ten Hymns of the Pure Ancestral Temple” 清廟之什 in the <i>Odes</i> . Kong Yingda 孔穎達 interprets it as the place where “the Spirit of King Wen dwells, thereupon where sacrifice should take place.” 此解文王神之所居稱為清廟之意.* The connection of this post with Mozi is presumably due to the Mozi’s positive attitude towards the ghosts and spirits.	8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
Zongheng experts 縱橫家	Offices of Diplomacy, Experts (Xingren zhi guan 行人之官)	According to the <i>Rites of Zhou</i> , the Major Diplomacy Experts “manage the ritual around major guests and major visitors as well as in order to treat the lords with affection” 掌大賓之禮及大客之儀，以親諸侯。The Minor Diplomatic Experts “manage the ritual rolls of the guests and visitors from the states and principalities in order to host the emissaries from other parts of the world.” 掌邦國賓客之禮籍，以待四方之使者。	18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
Miscellany of Experts 雜家	Offices in charge of debates (Yiguan 議官)		29 30
Experts in Agriculture 農家	Offices for Agricultural Activities (Nong Ji zhi guan 農稷之官)	The Zhou ancestor Qi 弃 was believed to be the earliest Chief Officer of Agriculture, per the <i>Shiji</i> , “Yao had heard this story, and appointed Qi as the Officer of Agriculture.” 帝堯舜聞之，舉弃為農師.**	31 32 33 34 35 36 37
Xiaoshuo Experts 小說家	Millet Office (Bai guan 稗官)		38 39 40

Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義19.706b.*Shiji* 4.111.

Just as the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise used the Classics and Masters texts as prototypes for the sections devoted to the technical arts in discrete professions, it also follows the same pattern in identifying technical arts texts as products of the same ancient administration at court. Relevant offices are seen in the following chart:

Table 9.2. Technical Arts sections and “Ancient Offices” in the “Yiwen zhi”

Section	Derivation	Probable Source Text
Section on Military Texts (Bingshu lüe 兵書略)	Ancient Post of the Colonel (Gu Sima zhi zhi) 古司馬之職	From the <i>Rites of Zhou</i> : “they commanded subordinates to lead the administration of the kingdom, in order to assist the ruler in settling the fiefs and principalities” 使帥其屬而掌邦政，以佐王平邦國。
Section on Computational and Technical Arts (Shushu lüe 數術略)	Posts associated with the Mingtang 明堂, Xi He 羲和, scribes 史, and diviners 卜之職	This section includes six sub-sections: “Heavenly Patterns” (Tianwen 天文), “Calendrics and Registries” (Lipu 曆譜, “Five Phases” (Wuxing 五行), “Tortoise and Milfoil [Divination]” (Shigui 蓍龜), “Miscellaneous Divinations” (Zazhan 雜占), “Five Phases” (Wuxing 五行), and “Methods based on Forms” (Xingfa 形法). Some of the posts are clearly connected to these sub-sections, for example, Xi He with “Calendrics and Registries,”* and diviners with “Tortoise and Milfoil [Divination]” and “Miscellaneous Divinations.”
Section on Methods and Skills (Fangji lüe 方技略)	From one department of the Royal Offices (wangguan zhi yishou 王官之一守)	

*The “Yao dian” 堯典 chapter of the *Shangshu*: “Yao commanded the Xi He to solemnly comply with Highest Heaven, to calculate and model the regular movements of the sun, moon, planets, and asterisms, and, to attentively impose them upon human seasons.” 乃命羲和，欽若昊天，歷象日月星辰，敬授人時。Kong Yingda’s 孔穎達 commentary reads: “Since Chong Li’s time, Xi and He were the officers of the four seasons of the heaven and earth.” 孔傳曰：“重黎之后，羲氏、和氏，世掌天地四時之官。”

Should there be a closing quotation mark at the end of this sentence?

These charts lay out the similar “origin stories” of individual sections in the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, a way in which the technical arts were integrated into the intellectual scheme that explained the origins of all authoritative writings. Scholars have long thought that Liu Xin himself fabricated the *Rites of Zhou* as a resource to support Wang Mang’s (r. 9–23 CE) reforms and political ambitions.⁵⁸ The way that both the *Seven Summaries* and the *Rites of Zhou* inform the prose of the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise supports the idea that the imaginary of the Western Zhou administrative structure was important to Liu Xin, Ban Gu, or both.⁵⁹

This practice of “tracing back” each section to the ancient royal offices supports the narratives of decline and fragmentation, as described above, because the glorified practices of the courts of the remote past eventually spawned over time writings that applied best to individuals and families, in service or not. The brief treatments constructed for many of the sections of the bibliographic treatise contrasted the administrative use of authoritative writings with their personal and domestic uses.⁶⁰ This rhetorical feature of the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise should also be placed within the context of the roles of Liu Xiang, Liu Xin, and Ban Gu as advocates for a system of institutionalized checks on the ruler’s powers and privileges, as well as for the role played by local officials in regulating private practitioners. While Han reconstructions of the archaic royal offices associated with certain branches of the technical arts were arguably not historically accurate, the insistence that each kind of technique derived from an individual office reflected the view of the summaries that technical practices were developed by the sages within the context of governance before being watered down by later private and “lesser” specialists. The iterative rhetorical construct of decline and fragmentation accounts for the layered aspect of the structure of the many categories in the present *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, and while the treatise does not explicitly address the possibility of a return to a unitary Way, its connection of technical arts to offices implied that the path to doing so was via the comprehensive governance and centralized control of past ages.

V. Conclusion

Unquestionably, in the eyes of the Eastern Han compilers of the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, the “Masters texts” were seen as the repository of “techniques of the Way,” which, in the distant past, had all applied to the domain of statecraft. By contrast, many of the works most concerned with

1 the specialized technical arts were presumed to be derived from those same
 2 texts, in a second devolution. We have shown this to be the case for three
 3 subsections in the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise: (1) the “*yin* and *yang*”
 4 subsection of the “Masters” section; (2) the “Military *yin* and *yang*” sub-
 5 section of the “Military” section; and (3) the “Five Phases” subsection of
 6 the “Computational and Technical Arts” section. It is equally the case with
 7 the “Dao” section within the “Masters” section and the “Spirit Immortality”
 8 subsection within the “Recipes and Arts” section.

9 Consistent with Han narratives of the decline from the Classics to
 10 the literature of the diverse period of the “Many Masters,” the second-stage
 11 decline from the Masters’ authoritative writings to more specialized texts
 12 concerned with narrower technical arts maps neatly onto the presumed
 13 shift posited from good governing techniques supporting the health of the
 14 entire body politic to lesser techniques designed to prove advantageous to
 15 the single body or family. Centuries after this taxonomic shift, the Tang
 16 historian Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643) would argue for the logic of his more
 17 general “Masters” (*zi* 子) category, which combined the *Hanshu* “Masters”
 18 category, with its “Computational and Technical Arts,” “Spirit Immortality,”
 19 and “Recipes and Arts” categories. His reasoning was that the “Masters”
 20 were the *teachings* of the sages, while things like “military” and the “med-
 21 ical recipes” were aspects of the *governing* of the sages. In Wei’s view, while
 22 all good things began with the sages of yore, each ended up in a different
 23 domain: “in each case to what they were applied was different” (*suo shi ge*
 24 *yi* 所施各異).⁶¹ Wei’s rationale points to the same iterative process that we
 25 argue was the theoretical basis for the expansion of the catalog to include
 26 technical arts texts.

27 To return to our initial observations about bookstores and the proclivity
 28 for taxonomies to reflect cultural priorities, it is clear that the importance of
 29 technical arts texts in both Western and Eastern Han, coupled with the need
 30 to integrate authoritative texts about them into classical rubrics, resulted in
 31 a great deal of cultural work being done to frame new taxonomies like the
 32 ones we have seen in the last chapters of the *Zhuangzi* and *Shiji* and most
 33 clearly, perhaps, in the *Seven Summaries* and *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise.
 34 This cultural work, preserved in the connective tissues of the bibliographic
 35 treatise that purport to explain the origin and long history of the authoritative
 36 techniques that are the subject in each section and subsection, prioritized
 37 public use over individual or domestic use while pitting the allegedly selfless
 38 practices of the Ancients against recent adaptations of those antique practices
 39 by specialists for their own benefit. While technical arts texts themselves had
 40

many readers, the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise arranged them according to hierarchies of value that assigned a higher value to the Classics and the Masters corpus, even as it normalized and integrated the technical arts texts into its narrative of the history of the “Way and its techniques.”

Notes

1. The authors appreciate the helpful comments of Michael Nylan on an earlier draft of this chapter and helpful discussions with Esther Klein and Sara Barrera-Rubio.

2. The preface of the “Yiwenzhi” specifies that “Qilüe” was its basis and that its editors extracted (*shan* 刪) its essentials to fill out the written record. There, the seven outlines are specified as “Six Classics” (*Linyi* 六藝), “Many Masters” (*Zhuzi* 諸子), “Poetry and Rhymeprose” (*Shifu* 詩賦), “Military Writings” (*Bingshu* 兵書), “Technical and Computational Arts” (*Shushu* 術數), and “Methods and Skills” (*fangji* 方技). *Hanshu* 30.1701.

3. While “schools” is still often used to translate *jia* in *zhuzi baijia* 諸子百家, Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan made the case for “experts” being a better translation, especially in the context of the discussion of the six kinds of expertise in *Shiji* 130, and so here we use that translation. See “Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions.”

4. *Hanshu* 30.1701: 春秋分為五, 詩分為四, 易有數家之傳. Here, and elsewhere, we reserve “Classic” to refer to the Six Classics in the Han, at times grouped with the *Lunyu* 論語 and/or *Xiaojing* 孝經.

5. Ibid. 七十子喪而大義乖. The use of *weiyao* as metalinguistic communication is seen in *Lüshi chungju* “Jingyu” 精論, but in the Han it is also applied to expressing oneself by choosing the appropriate ritual expression or lyric from the *Odes*.

6. Ibid. The three quoted phrases are 以愚黔首; 大收篇籍, 廣開獻書之路; and 書缺簡脫, 禮壞樂崩. The last phrase is basically the same as an edict of Emperor Wu that Liu Xin quotes after explaining the complexity of the Han transmissions of the *Odes*. See *Hanshu* 38.1969. The late Western and Eastern Han story about the Qin is problematic; see Nylan, “Han Views of the Qin Legacy.”

7. *Hanshu* 30.1701. For detailed discussions of this project from other perspectives, see Nylan, *Yang Xiong*; and Hunter, “The Yiwen zhi” 藝文志.”

8. Loewe, “Liu Xin, Creator and Critic,” esp. 300.

9. This category concerns authoritative guides to script, and therefore to the scribal professions. It included works such the *Shi Zhou* 史籀, described in the summary as “what the Scribal Bureaux used to instruct children to write script. The form [of the script] differed from the ancient text forms found in the walls of the Kong family dwelling” 周時史官教學童書也 與孔氏壁中古文異體, the composite *Cang*

1 *Jie* 倉頡 (also called the *Cang Jie pian* 倉頡篇), named after the putative inventor of
 2 the writing system in the following parts: (a) Fascicles 1–7, a *Cang Jie* 倉頡 compiled
 3 by Li Si 李斯 in the Qin; (b) Fascicles 8–13, a *Yuan Li* 爰歷 compiled by Zhao Gao
 4 趙高 in the Qin; (c) Fascicles 14–20, a *Wide Learning* 博學 compiled by Huwu Jing
 5 胡毋敬; a *Biography of Cang Jie* 倉頡傳; and two Han works on compiling different
 6 accounts of the meanings (*xunzuan* 訓纂) of the graphs in the *Cang Jie* by Yang
 7 Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) and the ancient-text *Documents* expert Du Lin 杜
 8 林 (d. 47 CE). See the hypothesis of Yao Zhenzong 姚振宗 that the last two were
 9 inserted by the compiler of the *Hanshu* (*Hanshu Yiwen zhi tiaoli*, 147).

10 10. The origins and connotations of the term *xueguan* are still somewhat
 11 unclear. Stuart V. Aque's somewhat ambiguous translation as “academy” may have
 12 overstated the institutional nature of the term (“Pi Xirui and *Jingxue lishi*,” 516n98).
 13 At the same time, Cai Liang's reaction in rendering it as “learned officials” perhaps
 14 goes too far in divorcing the term from any process of official recognition (*Witch-*
 15 *craft*, 47–53). In “Constructing,” Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan translate the term as
 16 “local academies in the commanderies and principalities,” or officials in charge of
 17 these academies (91). Its systematic usage in Western Han texts coincides with Sima
 18 Qian's criticism of the connection of mastery of the Classics with attainment of
 19 government office, and the *Hanshu*'s use of the term confirms that denial of certain
 20 transmissions such a status was at least as important as favoring others.

21 11. *Hanshu* 30.1704, 1706, 1708, 1710, and 1715: 立於學官，鄒氏無師，夾
 22 氏未有書。For the *Annals*, see Csikszentmihalyi 2015, 461–62.

23 12. *Hanshu* 30.1701: 戰國從衡，真偽分爭 and 諸子之言，紛然殽亂。

24 13. Other These were not the only possible comparisons, but as we will see,
 25 they are the most relevant to the *Hanshu* catalog. Other extant taxonomic works
 26 from Early China include the *Xunzi* 荀子 “Fei shi'er zi” 非十二子 and “Jiebi” 解蔽
 27 chapters, *Shizi* 尸子 “Guangze” 光澤 chapter, *Lüshi chungqiu* 呂氏春秋 “Bu'er” 不二
 28 chapter, and *Huainanzi* 淮南子 “Yao lue” 要略 chapter.

29 14. Richard D. Parry, in his entry “*Episteme* and *Techne*,” discusses the dif-
 30 ference between the modern view that theory and practice “seem irreconcilable,”
 31 and ancient Greek ideas in which the two generally overlap. For Aristotle, *techne* “is
 32 itself also *epistêmê* or knowledge because it is a practice grounded in an ‘account.’”
 33 <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/episteme-techne/> (accessed 8/10/2020). Similarly, as
 34 we shall see, there is ultimately no epistemic distinction between different spokes
 35 of the wheel of the *Dao*.

36 15. *Huainanzi*, “Xiuwu xun” 脩務訓: 世俗之人，多尊古而賤今，故為道者必
 37 托之于神農、黃帝而後能入說。

38 16. Gu, *Handai xueshu shilue* 漢代學術史略, 35–44.

39 17. A summary of some of these views is found in Wang Shumin's (d. 2004)
 40 treatment of the chapter. Wang cites Ma Su 馬驢 (1621–1673) saying that the
 chapter is an authorial preface (自序), and Qian Mu's 錢穆 quotation of the late
 Ming writer Lu Xixing 陸西星 (1520–1606), in his *Nanhua zhenjing fumo* 南華真

經副墨, who calls the chapter “Zhuangzi’s postface” 莊子後序 because it “lists and assesses the sources of ancient and modern ‘techniques of the Way’ and then continues [the list] with his own” 列敘古今道術淵源, 而以己承也。In the end, however, Wang rejects both views, concluding: “This chapter is *not* the work of Zhuangzi, and ought to be seen as neither his authorial preface nor postface, but rather as the statement of his academic school. Hence the section on the ‘techniques of the Way’ of Zhuang Zhou elevates Zhuangzi to the place of highest honor, something on which Zhuangzi certainly would not have signed off.” 此篇非莊子作, 怙恃, 不當視為莊子自序或後序, 蓋莊子學派所述, 故於莊周道術章, 推尊莊子至極。莊子固未嘗自是者也。See Wang, *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, 3 v., v. 3, 33.1293.

18. See previous note. Several commentators make an interesting connection between “Tianxia” and the *Mengzi*. Lu Xixing writes, “This has the same import as the last section of the *Mengzi*” 即孟子終篇之義, likely following Lin Xiyi 林希逸 (1193–1271) who, in *Nanhua zhenjing kouyi* 南華真經口義, compares “Tianxia” with the last section of the *Mengzi*, which lists inspirational sages and later worthies and sages who “see” and “hear” them, respectively. The *Mengzi* says the latter “listen to and thereby understand [prior sages]” 聞而知之, which is similar to the “Tianxia” portrayal of the masters’ ability to “listen to the influence [of prior practitioners] and take pleasure in it” 聞其風而說之。

19. Jiang, *Zhuazi tongkao*, 422–23, cf. *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 24.353. Among other arguments, Jiang maintains that the commentary attributed to the “Hui Shi” chapter of the *Zhuangzi* by Du Bi 杜弼 (491–559) shows that the final section of the chapter devoted to Hui Shi was not part of the Guo Xiang edition of the text but may have originally circulated as an independent text, separate from the *Zhuangzi*.

20. *Hanshu* 30.1736.

21. Liu, *Zhuangzi zhaxue ji qi yanbian*, 90–91. Liu notes the parallels between the final section of “Zai you” 在宥 and the chapters “Tianyun” 天運, “Tiandao” 天道, “Keyi” 刻意, “Shanxing” 繕行, and “Tianxia.”

22. Liu, *Zhuangzi zhaxue ji qi yanbian*, 90.

23. Fang, *Zhuangzi*, 567.

24. The binary of *shenming* 神明 has a wide range of meanings; here the verb “descend” seems to indicate they are being associated with “heaven and earth” (*tiandi* 天地).

25. Wang, *Zhuangzi jiaquan*, v. 3, 33.1294. Wang points out that the quotation “the Way is everywhere” is found in the “Zhi bei you” 知北遊 chapter of *Zhuangzi*.

26. Ibid. 不離於宗, 謂之天人 ... 以仁為恩, 以義為理, 以禮為行, 以樂為和, 薰然慈仁, 謂之君子。

27. Note the absence of the *Changes* and *Annals* from the first version of the list of the classics. The subject of the transmission of knowledge is a continuation from the previous section, which reads: “People of antiquity were complete: they matched the spirits and their percipience, were pure as Heaven and Earth, raised the myriad creatures, were at peace with the people of the world, their benefits

1 reached the commoners, their understanding reached both original procedures and
 2 followed them to their resultant degree, over the six directions and four regions,
 3 across matters of any importance or subtlety, operating omnipresently. Their under-
 4 standing was of procedures and degrees, and much of it may still be found in the
 5 ancient standards and transmitted histories.” 古之人其備乎！配神明，醇天地，育萬
 6 物，和天下，澤及百姓，明於本數，係於末度，六通四辟，小大精粗，其運無乎不在。其
 7 明而在數度者，舊法世傳之史尚多有之。

28. Wang, *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, v. 3, 33.1297–98. Wang notes (33.1300n8) that
 8 Qian Mu 錢穆 argues that the number used in the phrase “Six Classics” indicates
 9 “Tianxia” is a Han text.

10 29. Here, the connotation of *yi* 藝, usually translated as “classics,” is sliding
 11 toward the sense of “attainments,” although the version of the arts here is rather
 12 different from charioteering, etc. Note the absence of the *Changes* classic, which
 13 “guides them in transformation” 道化 in the *Shiji* version of this passage.

14 30. Wang, *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, v. 3, 33.1311: 俱誦《墨經》，而倍譎不同，相
 15 謂別墨。

16 31. Wang, *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, v. 3, 33.1298.

17 32. The view of history as going through distinct stages, or even explicitly
 18 dispensational schemes, is not uncommon even in pre-Buddhist Chinese texts.
 19 On this phenomenon, see “The *Mengzi*’s transtemporal sage” in Csikszentmihalyi,
 20 *Material Virtue*, 191–200; “Équilibre cosmique et logique du déclin” in Espeset,
 21 *Cosmologie et trifonctionnalité*, 379–89; and “Hanshi fuxing de zhengzhi wenhua
 22 yiyi—Chenwei he *Gongyang* xue dui DongHan zhengzhi de yingxiang” 漢室復興
 23 的政治文化意義—讖緯和《公羊》學對東漢政治的影響 in Chen Suzhen, *Chunqiu*
 24 *yu Handao*, 379–484.

25 33. Burton Watson’s treatment of this chapter in the 1958 *Ssu-ma Ch’ien*,
 26 *Grand Historian of China* is titled “The Biography of Ssu-ma Ch’ien.” The rationale
 27 for not calling it “autobiography” is that it additionally includes the “Letter to Ren
 28 An” (Bao Ren An shu 報任安書) from the *Hanshu* adaptation of the *Shiji* chapter;
 29 hence Watson’s title is of a translation of the *Hanshu*’s “Sima Qian zhuan” 司馬
 30 遷傳. The “Letter” was retranslated in a volume of essays by Stephen Durrant, Li
 31 Wai-yee, Hans van Ess, and Michael Nylan called *The Letter to Ren An and Sima*
 32 *Qian’s Legacy*.

33 34. For a fuller treatment of many relevant facets of this work, see Csiksz-
 34 entmihalyi and Nylan, “Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions.”

35 35. *Shiji* 130.3288–89.

36 36. John Major, et al., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of*
 37 *Government in Early Han*, 484.

38 37. *Shiji* 130.3288. Chen Guying 陳鼓應 (*Yi zhuan yu Daojia sixiang*,
 39 179–181) argues that the *Changes* transmission from Tian He 田何 to Yang He is
 40 particularly important for understanding Sima Tan’s development as a Han exponent

of “HuangLao Daoism” 黃老道家. While we contend that this use of “Daoism” is anachronistic, Chen’s survey is important in that it highlights the role of the *Changes* in the intellectual life of the late second-century BCE, a time when Sima Qian outlined a lineage of practices associated with Huangdi and Laozi. See “The *Shiji*’s Counterpoint to the Ru: HuangLao Learning” in Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan, “Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions,” 80–87.

38. Contrast this with the description of Zhuangzi in the “Tianxia”: his connection the Dao never grows obsolete; however, neither the form nor the content of the chapter implies he incorporated the insights of the other figures described before him.

39. *Shiji* 130.3290: 以六藝為法 ... 累世不能通其學, 當年不能究其禮. The latter phrase is also spoken by Yan Ying 晏嬰 in a “Kongzi shijia” dialog (*Shiji* 47.1911).

40. *Shiji* 130.3297. Here, we have translated the titles of the Classics using italics, but the context indicates that the text itself is just the visible part of larger bodies of practice that lurk below the surface.

41. Qi, *Jiazi Xinshu jiaoshi*, 919. For a more general discussion of this relationship, see Csikszentmihalyi, “Chia I’s ‘Techniques of the Tao.’”

42. *Hanshu* 30.1767–68.

43. *Hanshu* 30.1734: 歷象日月星辰. This is a quotation of the *Shangshu* 尚書 “Yaodian”: 乃命羲和, 欽若昊天, 歷象日月星辰, 敬授人時. Li Ling points out that the connection being made between the historical official position of astronomer and these texts is anachronistic; see *Lantai wanjuan: du Hanshu “Yiwen zhi,”* 97.

44. *Hanshu* 30.1768.

45. Zhang identifies Dingzi as the Chu general Ding Gu 丁固 in *Hanshu Yiwen zhi tongshi*, 244–45, and King Xiang is likely Xiang Yu 項羽 of Chu.

46. There are disagreements about how to read Da You, but Marc Winter makes a convincing case that for the “Military” section text *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法, *wuxing* refers to the five visible planets; see Winter, “Suggestions for a Re-interpretation of the Concept of *Wuxing* in the *Sunzi bingfa*.” For the conjunction of the five planets as one of the omens of Liu Bang’s eventual rise, see *Shiji* 27.1348 and 89.2581.

47. *Hanshu* 30.1734: 及拘者為之, 則牽於禁忌, 泥於小數, 舍人事而任鬼神.

48. *Hanshu* 30.1769: 而小數家因此以為吉凶, 而行於世, 浸以相亂. Similarly, *Hanshu* 30.1743 explains the misapplication of agriculture-related texts in the “Many Masters” (Zhuzi 諸子) section: “However, when the base performed them, they thought there was nothing that they owed the sage kings, and wanted the ruler and ministers to plow the fields, disrupting the proper sequence of superior and inferior” 及鄙者為之, 以為無所事聖王, 欲使君臣並耕, 諄上下之序.

49. Li, *Lantai wanjuan: du Hanshu “Yiwen zhi,”* 212.

50. *Hanshu* 30.1780. The Kongzi quotation here appears not in the *Analects*, but in the “Zhongyong” chapter of the *Liji*. Here we read *su* 素 for *suo* 索, consistent with the *Liji* version. The fourth-century Jiangnan promoter of methods of

1 transcendence Ge Hong 葛洪 may have had the *Hanshu's* criticism in mind when
 2 he put these very words of Kongzi in the mouths of “people of this generation”
 3 (*shiren* 世人) that disparaged Liu Xiang as “always reclusive and acting atypically.”
 4 Ge writes that Liu’s work on spirit transcendence was unfairly dismissed by such
 5 persons: “If a work does not come from the gateway of the Duke of Zhou, or if
 6 matters do not square with the hand of Zhong Ni (i.e., Kongzi,) then people of
 7 this generation end up regarding them with disbelief.” 書不出周公之門，事不經仲
 8 尼之手，世人終於不信。 See *Baopuzi neipian* 2.20 and 2.15. Here, Ge seems to also
 9 have in mind the *Huainanzi* quotation about texts being attributed to the Shen
 10 Nong and the Yellow Emperor examined above.

11 51. These methods are likely similar to the ones found in some excavated texts
 12 such as the *Daoyin tu* 導引圖 uncovered at Mawangdui. Donald Harper translates
 13 the title of this text as “Drawings of Guiding and Pulling”; see Harper, *Early Chinese*
 14 *Medical Literature*, 314n4 and 316n2.

15 52. Yao Zhenzong believed that Ge Hong’s 葛洪 (283–343) discussion of the
 16 five categories of *zhi* fungus (stone, wood, grass, meat, and *jun* fungus) was based
 17 on the eighteen-fascicle text from this section of the catalog; Yao, *Hanshu Yiwen*
 18 *zhi tiaoli*, 449–50.

19 53. While the “smelting of gold” sounds like alchemy, in common with later
 20 Daoist practices, the phrase is also connected with longevity and immortality. After
 21 detailing the Qin emperor’s strong interest in spirit immortality practices, the *Hanshu*
 22 “Jiaosi zhi” 郊祀志 describes the continuing practices of natives of the region of Qi
 23 in the Western Han, who were richly rewarded for their *huangye* 黃冶 “smelting of
 24 gold” and “journeys to the sea in order to seek out spirits and harvest the drugs
 25 of immortality” 入海求神采藥; see *Hanshu* 25b.1260.

26 54. This quotation appears in Yan Yan, *Zizhi tongjian bu*, 119.23b. Ye
 27 Changqing (*Hanshu Yiwen zhi wenda*, 187) argued that the reason for the name
 28 “Recipes and Arts” was that “Spirit Immortality” techniques originated from the
 29 “Recipe Masters” (*fangshi* 方士) from the area of Qi.

30 55. *Hanshu* 30.1728.

31 56. *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏 9.138a: 使帥其屬而掌邦教，以佐王安擾邦國。

32 57. *Hanshu* 30.1708 and 30.1715.

33 58. See the entry for “Liu Xin” 劉歆 in Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary*,
 34 383–87.

35 59. Michael Nylan has pointed out to us that we know this from other
 36 writings attributed to Ban Gu, including his “Liang du fu” 兩都賦。

37 60. The theory tracing the various masters to ancient offices is often called
 38 *zhuzi chu yu wangguan* 諸子出於王官。 During the early twentieth century many
 39 scholars heatedly debated the historicity of this theory. More recently, scholars have
 40 begun to approach this theory from a new perspective: how the theory, regardless of
 its accuracy, may have provided the rhetorical framework needed to gather together
 disparate strands of Western and Eastern Han thinking in a single system. For a

recent review of the debates and the new interpretation of this theory, see Deng, 1
“‘Zhuzi chu yu wangguan shuo’ yu hanjie xueshu huayu.” 2

61. *Suishu* 隋書34.1051: 儒、道、小說, 聖人之教也, 而有所偏。兵及醫方, 聖 3
人之政也, 所施各異。 4

Asian-language Bibliography 6

Chen Guoning 陳國寧. *Hanshu Yiwen zhi zhushi huibian* 漢書藝文志注釋彙編. 8
Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983. 9

Chen Guying 陳鼓應. *Yi zhuan yu Daojia sixiang* 易傳與道家思想. Taiwan: Shangwu 10
yinshuguan, 1994. 11

Chen Suzhen 陳蘇鎮. *Chunqiu yu Handao: LiangHan zhengzhi yu zhengzhi wenhua 12*
yanjiu 《春秋》與「漢道」: 兩漢政治與政治文化研究. Beijing: Zhonghua, 2011. 13

Deng Junjie 鄧駿捷. “‘Zhuzi chu yu wangguan shuo’ yu hanjie xueshu huayu” ‘諸 14
子出於王官說’與漢家學術話語. *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 (2017): 15
184–204. 16

Fang Yong 方勇. *Zhuangzi* 莊子. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2015. 17

Ge Hong 葛洪. Annotated by Wang Ming 王明 (1904–1974). *Baopuzi neipian 18*
jiaoshi 抱朴子內篇校釋. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980. 19

Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛. *Handai xueshu shilue* 漢代學術史略. Taipei: Qiye, 1975. 20

Gu Shi 顧實 (1898–1956). *Hanshu Yiwen zhi jiangshu* 漢書藝文志講疏. Taipei: 21
Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1980. 22

Hanshu 漢書. Compiled by Ban Gu 班固 (32–92). Annotated by Yan Shigu 顏師古 23
(581–645). 12 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962. Reprint, 1996. 24

Jiang Boqian 蔣伯潛. *Zhuzi tongkao* 諸子通考. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 25
1985. 26

Li Ling 李零. *Lantai wanjuan: du Hanshu “Yiwen zhi”* 蘭台萬卷: 讀漢書·藝文志. 27
Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2013. 28

Li Shuhua 李叔華. “*Zhuangzi* ‘Tianxia pian’ de zhuzhi he chengwen niandai” 《莊子· 29
天下篇》的主旨和成文年代新探. *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 (May 1995): 72–81. 30

Lin Xiyi 林希逸 (1193–1271). *Nanhua zhenjing kouyi* 南華真經口義. Kunming: 31
Yunnan Renmin chubanshe, 2002. 32

Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢. *Zhuangzi zhexue ji qi yanbian* 莊子哲學及其演變. Beijing: 33
Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1988. 34

Qi Yuzhang 祁玉章. *Jiazi Xinsu jiaoshi* 賈子新書校釋. Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua 35
zazhishe, 1975. 36

Shiji 史記 [Records of the Senior Archivist, aka Historical Records]. Compiled by Sima 37
Qian 司馬遷 (?145–?86 BCE). 10 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959. 38
Reprint, 1982. 39

Wang Shumin 王叔岷. *Zhuangzi jiaquan* 莊子校詮. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan 40
lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1988. 41

- 1 Yao Zhenzong 姚振宗 (1842–1906). *Hanshu Yiwen zhi tiaoli* 漢書藝文志條理. In
2 *Ershiwu shi kanxing weiyuan huibianji* 二十五史刊行委員會編集, *Ershiwu shi*
3 二十五史. Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1935.
- 4 Yan Yan 嚴衍 (c. 1575–1645). *Zizhi tongjian bu* 資治通鑑補. N.p.: Shengshi Sib-
5 ulou, 1876.
- 6 Ye Changqing 葉長青. *Hanshu Yiwen zhi wenda* 漢書藝文志問答. Wuhan: Huazhong
7 shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015.
- 8 Zhang Shunhui 張舜徽 (1911–1992). *Hanshu Yiwen zhi tongshi* 漢書藝文志通釋.
9 Wuhan: Huazhong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004.

Western-language Bibliography

- 13 Aque, Stuart V. “Pi Xirui and *Jingxue lishi*.” PhD diss., University of Washington,
14 2004.
- 15 Cai Liang. *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire*. Albany: State
16 University of New York Press, 2014.
- 17 Csikszentmihalyi, Mark. “Chia I’s ‘Techniques of the Tao’ and the Han Confucian
18 Appropriation of Technical Discourse.” *Asia Major* series III 10, nos. 1–2
19 (1997): 49–67.
- 20 ———. *Material Virtue*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- 21 ———. “The Social Roles of the *Annals* Classic in Late Western Han.” In *Chang’an*
22 *26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*, edited by Michael Nylan and Griet
23 Vankeerberghen, 461–76. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015.
- 24 Csikszentmihalyi, Mark, and Michael Nylan. “Constructing Lineages and Inventing
25 Traditions in the *Shiji*.” *T’oung Pao* 89 (2003): 59–99.
- 26 Drège, Jean-Pierre. *Les bibliothèques en Chine au temps des manuscrits (jusqu’au X^e*
27 *siècle*. Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1991.
- 28 Durrant, Stephen, Wai-yee Li, Michael Nylan, and Hans van Ess. *The Letter to Ren*
29 *An and Sima Qian’s Legacy*. Seattle and London: University of Washington
30 Press, 2016.
- 31 Espeset, Grégoire. *Cosmologie et trifonctionnalité dans l’idéologie du Livre de la Grande*
32 *paix (Taiping jing 太平經)*. PhD diss., Université Paris-Diderot–Paris VII, 2002.
- 33 Harper, Donald J. *Early Chinese Medical Literature*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- 34 Hunter, Michael. “The ‘Yiwen zhi’ 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) Bibliogra-
35 phy in Its Own Context.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 138, no.
36 4 (October–December 2018): 763–80.
- 37 Loewe, Michael. *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods*
38 *(221 BC–AD 24)*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- 39 ———. “Liu Xin, Creator and Critic.” *Rao Zongyi Guoxueyua yuankan* 饒宗頤國
40 學院院刊 (April 2014): 297–323.

Major, John, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth. <i>The</i>	1
<i>Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han.</i>	2
New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.	3
Nylan, Michael. "Han Views of the Qin Legacy and the Late Western Han 'Classical	4
Turn.'" <i>Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities</i> 79/80 (December	5
2013 [published 2020]): 51–98.	6
———. <i>Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in Han</i>	7
<i>China</i> . New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2011.	8
Watson, Burton. <i>Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China</i> . New York: Columbia	9
University Press, 1958.	10
Winter, Marc. "Suggestions for a Re-interpretation of the Concept of <i>Wuxing</i> in the	11
<i>Sunzi bingfa</i> ." <i>Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities</i> 76 (2004):	12
147–80.	13
	14
	15
	16
	17
	18
	19
	20
	21
	22
	23
	24
	25
	26
	27
	28
	29
	30
	31
	32
	33
	34
	35
	36
	37
	38
	39
	40