The past half-century of archaeology has unearthed a Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) world more urbanized, monetized, and connected to maritime and overland Silk Routes than previously understood. But what did these material changes of the Han period mean to its participants? How did early Chinese writers represent and reorganize the shifting world around them? Why did they introduce new genres and metaphors to do so? How, in other words, might literary analysis yield a fresh perspective on Han economic debates and sentiments?

To address such questions, this book pursues the relationship between literary form and social history. It gathers together a set of received and excavated Han dynasty texts and shows how the innovative forms of these texts are situated in the specific historical circumstances of China’s emergence as an imperialist and commercial power in Eurasia. Bringing the scholarship on literary and visual representation into closer conversation with political and economic studies of early China, this book examines some poems, narratives, images, and symbolic practices through which certain fractions of Han society debated trade and territorial expansion. Aesthetic and cultural concerns shaped the canonical sources of Han economic history to a greater degree than has been previously appreciated. At the same time, novel Han dynasty ways of reconceiving the political economy inspired literary experiments that deserve greater attention in histories of Chinese literature.

This book focuses on the watershed reign of Han Emperor Wu 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE), which marks China’s earliest expansion of monetized markets and the largest-scale extension of frontiers in Chinese imperial history.
Introduction

As shown in figure 0.1, Emperor Wu’s armies forcibly extended the Former Han Empire into modern-day Inner and Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Guangzhou, Vietnam, Korea, and eastern Central Asia. As is also shown on this map, Emperor Wu’s envoy Zhang Qian 張騫 (d. 113 BCE) helped to open up new official trade routes with Central Asia and to uncover some of the unofficial networks of trade with India and southeast Asia that were already flourishing. During this period some officials and scholars took the market as an inspiration for social and aesthetic reform. For the first time, they placed quantitative calculations, not ethics and ritual propriety, at the heart of the political economy. To promote the abstract laws of the market, these scholars and officials developed new forms of fiction, new genres, and new symbolic forms. In opposition to them, a group of traditionalists reasserted the authority of classical texts and promoted a return to the historical, ritual propriety-centered, agricultural economy that such texts described. These classically trained scholars (a group traditionally hostile to merchants) protested that market price was increasingly determining social values and that commerce was facilitating improper exchanges between Chinese and foreigners, between men and women, and between farmers, artisans, and traders.

Figure 0.1. Map of the Former Han empire and the Silk Road, showing the territorial expansion of China during the reign of Emperor Wu and part of the official and unofficial trade network across Eurasia.
Introduction

The discussion of the new frontiers and markets was thus part of a larger debate over the relationship between the world and the written text. To foreground this politics of representation, my book approaches the political economy from the perspective of a history of literary and material practices. Three chapters focus on a textual tradition or genre (philosophical dialogue, prose-poetry, historiography); two explore symbolic or embodied practices (money, kinship). Together these describe the art and conventions of representation through which texts problematized frontiers and markets in relation to language, gender, cosmology, and history. In other studies, modern scholars have observed that the classical record of premodern Chinese market life has come down to us largely through the lens of its critics. By tracing a more implicit ideological battle over the very idiom of the political economy, this study will reconstruct both sides of this debate. Both positions were asserted in and through a set of symbolic practices, whose aesthetically encoded suggestions were sometimes at odds with their expressed content. In this way the political crisis at the frontiers transformed—and was transformed by—diverse debates over money, gender, kinship, and poetic labor.

I trace this disarticulated and ambivalent imagination of the political economy through a selection of transmitted and excavated Han dynasty texts. My treatment does not aim to be comprehensive, but rather to be selective and exemplary in modeling an interdisciplinary approach—one that brings together excavated and transmitted economic, political, legal, mathematical, visual, and literary texts that today are often read separately for reasons of academic specialization. I focus on the transmitted texts that modern historians have relied upon most to reconstruct Han economic history and thought. These texts comprise the two canonical histories of the Former Han dynasty—Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (?145–?86 BCE) *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the grand scribe) and Ban Gu’s 班固 (32–92 CE) *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Former Han)—and the respective economic dialogues of Huan Kuan’s 權昆 (fl. 60 BCE) *Debate on Salt and Iron* (Yantielun 鹽鐵論) and the Guanzi’s 管子 *Qingzhong* 輕重 (“Light and heavy”) chapters (compiled ca. 100 BCE). I bring these more overtly “economic” texts to bear on other prose and poetic texts, including the Han dynasty’s most popular literary genre, the prose-poetic *fu*, whose rhythmic catalogs of exotica have long been associated with trade and empire by art historians and literary scholars.
The broader significance of this case study is, I suggest, twofold. First, the past half century of archaeological discovery has tended to affirm linear narratives of Chinese empire derived from traditional interpretations of Han literary texts. I question the longstanding appropriation of key texts for characterizing Emperor Wu’s reign as that which consolidated the foundations of the Chinese tributary empire, China’s cultural heritage, and Han ethnicity. I trace experiments in Han dynasty dissident thought and aesthetic practice that were radically at odds with what came before and after in China’s history. These “dead ends” in cultural history—that is, the uses of genre and language, and the symbolic practices that failed to become hegemonic—are, I argue, worth recovering for less teleological reconstructions of China’s past. The concluding coda will address this mode of historical inquiry in a comparative context.

Second, the Han archive showcases—more clearly than many other global contexts—the benefits of a literary and cultural approach to economic history. During the Han expansion of monetized markets, there was an unusual self-reflexiveness, creativity, and rhetorical playfulness with the very idiom of monetary exchange. For example, some Han scholars exploited historical shifts in Chinese terms for, and material forms of, money to mythologize monetary exchange. Others used new metaphors and new kinds of literary abstraction to introduce a more quantitative, “economic” logic of market price than one might expect of a premodern text. Since, as chapter 5 will explore further, some Han writers approached coinage as a form of writing, an account of Han dynasty economic thought demands the consideration of Han literary systems of value. A complete analysis of Han money is therefore contingent not only on the definition of money used in analyzing archival sources, but also on the modern reader’s interpretive decisions about literary meaning in the basic sources.

The remainder of this introduction will elaborate this book’s analytical methods and arguments, in the contexts both of existing scholarship and of the particular difficulties of working with early Chinese texts.

Cultural and Material Poetics

Han discussions about frontier and market were embedded in a larger debate over the relationship between the world and the written text.
Scholars and officials differed not only over their ideals of the political economy, but also over how to represent and reproduce those ideals. Did inherited classics represent the past that policy makers should reproduce? Or were new literary forms and metaphors needed? In 136 BCE Emperor Wu established the Five Classics (Wu jing 五經) as the basis of official learning (guan xue 官學) and in 124 BCE as the basis of the new Imperial Academy (tai xue 太學). However, it seems that the classical learning acquired its prestige largely after Emperor Wu, and partly as a backlash against his advisers who had transgressed classical ideals with their political and economic reforms. By the Later Han, scholars had become transformed from ritual experts into textual experts and the imperial examination system developed over subsequent centuries. In this context Han dynasty written texts served not simply as a reflection or product of social reality, but as one of many potentially antagonistic practices that included material and ritual practices.

The Han dynasty conflicts about the political economy helped to shape the ways we now define and appreciate early Chinese “literature” (wenxue 文學). Fifty years or so years after Emperor Wu’s reign, the imperial librarians Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–23 CE) reorganized, edited, and rewrote the entire holdings of the imperial library to produce the copies upon which most of our received books from early China are based. Records of their interpretive choices (in selecting between multiple versions and in translating archaic into standardized Han dynasty characters) have been largely lost. This bibliographic project was very much part of the politicized elevation of classical learning that occurred after Emperor Wu’s demise. Gu Jiegang’s 顧藉剛 (1895–1980) “doubting antiquity” (yigu 疑古) movement developed earlier arguments that the Liu librarians and other Han classicists tampered with texts to legitimate various imperial rulers. According to Gu and his collaborators, by inserting or perpetuating myths about China’s longevity and historical personae into canonical classical texts, such scholars lengthened Chinese history from a mere 2,500 years to over 5,000 years (or to 2,276,000 years, according to apocryphal texts). Although recent

1. On Qin-Han orthographic reforms beginning with Li Si 李斯 (ca. 280–208 BCE) reforms to standardize the script after political unification in 221 BCE, see Boltz, The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System, 156–78 and Galambos, Orthography of Early Chinese Writing.
scholarship on excavated texts has overturned Gu’s textual chronology, it has reaffirmed the collusion of classicism and imperial administration.

Rather than track the well-known rise of this classical “imperial ideology,” my book explores political ambivalence and protest within the classical tradition. Each chapter takes a key genre or practice (philosophy, *fu*-rhapsody, historiography, money, kinship) through which different groups sought to imagine the political economy. Together these chapters describe the art and conventions of representation through which texts problematized frontiers and markets in relation to kinship, language, and history. In contrast to existing English language studies of individual economic texts (e.g., Nancy Lee Swann, Allyn Rickett, Michael Loewe) and social groups such as artisans (Anthony Barbieri-Low), slaves (C. Martin Wilbur), and agriculturalists (Cho-yun Hsu), I focus on the politics of representation. This cultural and material approach to poetics situates the meaning of literary innovations in the larger semiotic world of economic transactions and political/imperial rivalries. Two discernible shifts or ruptures crosscut discourses and genres. Crudely put, these ruptures straddle Emperor Wu’s half-century reign, marking his reign out from what came before and after. The most radical or experimental early Chinese approaches to market and frontier (the *Guanzi*’s “Qingzhong” chapters, the *Shiji*, Sima Xiangru’s *fu*) coincided with Emperor Wu’s activist reign. And the most explicit strategies for containing the forms and ideology that these works provoked are exemplified in works that date to the post-Emperor Wu period (i.e., during the final decades of the Former Han and through the Later Han).

2. For alternate approaches to intracultural conflict in the Han, see, for example, Puett, *The Ambivalence of Creation*, and Aihe Wang, “Correlative Cosmology.” For studies of the role of writing, classical texts, and classical scholars in establishing the political authority during the Han dynasty, see Lewis, *Writing and Authority*; Connery, *The Empire of the Text*.


4. These shifts are far more limited than Michel Foucault’s notion of epistemic ruptures. In the *Order of Things* these refer to wholesale transformations in the limits in what a historical culture could or could not think. This relatively slender selection of texts highlights emergent possibilities and tendencies, rather than defining outermost limits. See the coda for a further discussion.
TEXTS AND GENRES BEFORE “LITERATURE”

Han dynasty readers and writers had no fixed category of “literature.” Although modern literary scholarship on Chinese texts generally focuses on poetry, early readers did not differentiate between literary and non-literary, or fictional and non-fictional genres. They appreciated the greater or lesser moral-aesthetic style or patterning (wen 文) of a text. The general privileging of historiography over fiction was often articulated through the opposition of xu 虛 (“emptiness,” understood as “fiction”) and shì 實 (“fullness”; “historical reality,” conflated with “truth”). The classicizing turn after Emperor Wu brought a more self-conscious discourse privileging wen and wenzhang 文章 as writing. With the political rise of textual experts, wenzhang, which originally referred to ritual demeanor, political order, and ornament, increasingly became associated with classicist learning, official texts, and literature (wenxue). The belles-lettres restriction of early Chinese literature to lyric poetry (shī 詩), rhapsody (fú 賦), and various other prose and poetic traditions, properly began only in the Six Dynasties period (220–589). The Later Han philosopher Wang Chong 王充 (27–ca. 100) had included in his “five classes of literature” (五文 wu wen) the Five Classics; the philosophical masters and commentaries; treatises and theories; letters and submitted presentations; and efficacious works, but not poetry per se. It is only toward the end of the Later Han and over subsequent centuries, with Cāo Pī’s 曹丕 (187–226) “Discourse on Literature” (Lun wen), Lù Jī’s 魯姬 (261–303) “Fu on Literature” (Wen fu), Līu Xiē’s 劉勰 (fl. 6th c.) The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons (Wenxin diaolong), and Xiāo Tōng’s 蕭統 (501–531) Selections of Literature (Wen xuan), that self-consciously belles-lettres Restriction of these traditions began to divorce most types of texts from the proper purview of wen.

5. For example, apt quotation from the Odes (shī, one of the Five Classics) in political and diplomatic speech was a longstanding marker of eloquence and of moral-cultural belonging. See Lunyu 11.3 on wenxue as skill in cultural tradition.

6. See Kern, “Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon,” and Schaberg, A Patterned Past, 57–95. For the argument that Eastern Zhou uses of wen in shī poetry as a generalized positive epithet for ancestors (as part of ancestor cult and ritual) differed from the development of wen as “ornament,” see von Falkenhausen, “The Concept of Wen.”

7. Lun heng, 867. The following post-Han works varied in generic expansiveness.
To consider early notions of texts during this pre-“literature” epoch of Chinese writing, one might look to the “Treatise on Arts and Writing” (Yiwen zhi 藝文志). This chapter of the Hanshu (composed in the Later Han) provides a schema for bibliographical classification that lists a much wider range of texts than we might now associate with literature or the “literary” (wen). Based on an earlier outline by the imperial librarians Liu Xiang and Liu Xin, it catalogs several hundred works, under six major rubrics or tenets (lüe 略), listed by their authors or titles:

1) The Six Arts (liu yi 六藝), i.e., the Five Classics, which lay at the core of any person’s classical education, and their commentarial and related traditions.
2) The Masters (zhu zi 諸子), i.e., philosophical texts.
3) Poetry and Rhapsody (shi fu 詩賦).
4) Military Books (bing shu 兵書).
5) Computations and Arts (shushu 術數), including astronomy and divination.
6) Remedies and Techniques (fangji 方技), including medical texts and arts of the bedchamber.

These six bibliographic categories and their various sub-categories (zhong 種) are not what we would call genres but nevertheless offer a glimpse at the kinds of formal and thematic expectations associated with genre. For example, the “Treatise on Arts and Writing” does not tell us that the Shiji introduced (what we now call) the “annals and traditions form” (jizhuanti 纪傳體) that influenced subsequent Chinese historiography, but it does classify it under the chronicle tradition that the Shiji effectively transformed, namely the Spring and Autumn Annals (Chunqiu 春秋) subsection of the “Six Arts” (liu yi 六藝). Likewise, the classification of the Guanzi and the Debate on Salt and Iron under the “Various Masters” (zhu zi 諸子) tradition draws attention to the use of the philosophical dialogue form in these works. These two texts are now treated as political or economic texts, but this study explores the way each of them uses the medium of philosophical dialogue. The recurrence of names across bibliographic categories suggests that authors did not restrict themselves to a single tradition (or did not know of or use these classifications). For

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8. The classics were generally understood to be works or edited anthologies of Confucius, and also included the Changes (Yì), Odes (Shì), Documents (Shū), Rites, and Music.
Introduction

this reason, the terms *genre* or *discourse* serve as placeholders, and I pursue literary innovations across a number of traditions. Chapter 2, for example, examines the significance of the use of personification in both the Guanzi’s economic dialogues and Sima Xiangru’s *fu.*

Notions of authorship are further complicated by the composite nature of early Chinese texts. Transmitted and excavated Chinese texts were generally the work of multiple, often anonymous, composers and editors that were copied, edited, and interpreted by generations of scribes. The texts or chapters selected for analysis here are contingently dated, based on specialist studies. Names such as Guanzi, Sima Qian, and Ban Gu serve as the conventional author-functions, that is, these are the authoritative names that ancient and modern readers have assigned to the text or textual tradition. Much of the transmitted text that is now called the Guanzi postdates its ascribed author Guanzi (Guan Zhong, d. 645 BCE). Thus, although there is consensus that the Guanzi’s “Qingzhong” section was composed around the Former Han period, I do not single it out as Pseudo-Guanzi, as others do. Instead, chapter 1 asks how the “Qingzhong” section in its introduction of economic theory drew on the rhetorical form of the earlier Guanzian dialogue. In the case of the (multi-author-function) Hanshu and Shiji, I use “Sima Qian” or “Ban Gu” as shorthand for the authorial persona. Thus any resonances that I argue between the autobiographical postface and the authorial end comments to individual chapters pertain not to the historical Sima Qian (or his co-author and father Sima Tan) [d. 110 BCE]), but to the frustrated authorial persona “Sima Qian” constructed by the Shiji. The Shiji offers an extreme example of this problem of the unified work. Parts of the Shiji went missing as early as the first century BCE likely due to its political sensitivity. Our transmitted Shiji contains chapters explicitly composed by a Han scholar writing shortly after the time of Sima Qian (Chu Shaosun 褚少孫, fl. first c. BCE), and the Hanshu reported, “[The Shiji] lacks ten chapters; they have titles but no

9. One might note in this vein that Yang Xiong’s 杨雄 (33 BCE–18 CE) various works appear under the “Six Arts,” “The Masters,” and “Poetry and Rhapsody,” and that Sima Qian, Liu Xiang, the King of Huainan, Ban Gu, and Ban Zhao all composed (largely lost) *fu* in addition to their better known works. See Aihe Wang, “Correlative Cosmology.”

10. See Foucault, “What Is an Author?”
texts."\(^\text{11}\) Although the *Hanshu* ostensibly took its “annals and traditions” structure, as well as long passages, often verbatim, from the *Shiji*, comparisons of graphic variants and lexical or syntactic differences have led many modern scholars to conclude that post-Han scribes reconstructed certain sections of the *Shiji* from the chronologically later *Hanshu*. There is general consensus that these cases need to be evaluated on a chapter-by-chapter basis. In the cases at stake, the debates about chronology do not actually affect my argument. For example, it does not fundamentally matter to my analysis of Sima Xiangru’s prose-poetic *fu* in chapter 2 whether the (nearly identical) *Shiji* or *Hanshu* “Account of Sima Xiangru” came first. We may be left with a Later Han rendition of Sima Xiangru’s life and *da fu* 大賦 (“great* fu*” or epideictic *fu*), but we can follow the approach of other Han writers in attributing to Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117 BCE) the genre’s controversial “excesses” in length and sound patterning.\(^\text{12}\)

This focus on conflict within (as well as across) generic traditions aims to move beyond a tendency in modern scholarship either to conflate all Han texts with “Confucian imperial ideology,” or to explain the syncretism of Han thought in terms of rival Warring States “schools of thought” (jia 家). Although the Han bibliography subcategorizes the *Debate on Salt and Iron* as “Ruist” and the *Guanzi* as “Daoist,” these schools do not coherently organize listings outside the “Masters” category.\(^\text{13}\)

Modern “histories of Chinese economic thought” (*Zhongguo jingji sixiang shi*) usefully draw attention to ideological differences between individual texts, especially during the Han. Ye Shichang, Hu Jichuang, Wu Baosan, Han Fuzhi and others have clarified how these Han period rivalries overshadow those of the Warring States, which usually take center stage in any account of Chinese thought. These authorities generally agree that the *Guanzi*’s Han dynasty “Qingzhong” chapters established

\(^{11}\) *Hanshu* 62.2724. 十篇缺·有錄無書.

\(^{12}\) Likewise, even if lexical variants between the *Shiji*’s “Account of the Xiongnu” and the first half of the *Hanshu* version suggest that portions of the latter predate the former, it is their radically different authorial end comments that matter to the argument of chapter 4.

\(^{13}\) One might note that the *Hanshu*’s ten jia include inconsequential materials or “Storytellers” (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家).
the foundations of Chinese economic thought. Their comparisons with modern economic ideas (e.g., Guanzi’s quantity theory of money, Sima Qian’s laissez-faire) highlight for my own study not so much the “modernity” of the Guanzi’s or Sima Qian’s economic jargon, as its strangeness within the Han idiom. Such histories build on the early efforts of Liang Qichao (1873–1929), Guo Moruo (1892–1978), and others to give China a place within what still remains a West-centric genealogy of economic thought. The problem is that in so doing these authors detach a preconceived rubric of “economic thought” from the synchronic political and literary contexts that my study precisely aims to reconstruct. In delimiting the “economic,” they fail to explain why, for example, a quantity theory of money was both justified and rejected in terms of territorial expansionism or the breakdown of marital norms, and why economic debates entailed experiments in literary style. Cultural approaches to the economy offer ways to address these thicker, more occluded contexts.

**TRIBUTARY, TRANSACTIONAL, AND CULTURAL-AESTHETIC ORDERS**

Previous studies of economic thought that do address problems of representation tend to focus exclusively on the official classical (or “Confucian”) tradition. This book, by contrast, historicizes the political rise of this classicist tradition based on (but not restricted to) the Five Classics during and after the first century BCE.

It explores the innovations in literary genre and style through which traditional values were challenged or re-affirmed. My subject is thus not the Han dynasty frontier or the newly monetized market per se, but rather the unraveling and “re-raveling” of a classical matrix that organized frontier, market, agriculture, commerce, kinship, gender, sexuality, politics,
culture, and literature in mutually constitutive relations. This matrix—or set of conflictual, evolving matrices—patterned social and aesthetic hierarchies of lord-subject, husband-wife, father-son, farmer-artisan-merchant, antiquity-present, and historiography-fiction (or *shi* over *xu* 演). These cultural-aesthetic orders or propositions were encoded in Han texts and were more complex, more historically dynamic, and more contested than earlier studies have shown.

The dominant cultural-aesthetic paradigm of China’s premodern political economy was the tribute system or the Confucian tributary order. This model was drawn from the Five Classics tradition. Rather than conflate traditional China with this singular model, as some studies do, my book foregrounds the ways in which Han dynasty officials and scholars reformulated or contested it. Before introducing the tributary order further, it is worth mentioning several other cultural approaches to economic thought that also prioritize a singular Confucian literary-cultural order. Chen Huan-chang’s *The Economic Principles of Confucius and his School* (1911) differentiated traditional China’s Confucian “human economy” based on moral redistribution (“administering wealth,” *li cai* 理财) from a Western-style economics of exchange.16 To make Confucian texts representative of traditional China, however, Chen explicitly excluded the *Guanzi*’s “Qingzhong” chapters.17 Lien-sheng Yang’s analyses of the traditional economy placed equal emphasis on the Confucian tradition. He borrowed Marcel Mauss’s universal principle of archaic reciprocity, arguing that the Confucian principle of *bao* 报 ("report," “repay,” “revenge”) formed the basis of Chinese social relations. This


17. Chen, *The Economic Principle of Confucius*, 140–41: “The economic system of Confucius is not nationalism, but cosmopolitanism. Before Confucius, economic theories were mostly like the doctrines of the mercantile school and took the nation as the unit. The chief representative of this was Kuan Tzu [Guanzi], who was the most successful minister for the realization of mercantilism and of state socialism. He was the first one to have a complete economic system which we can see today. But we have no room to deal with his economy, and the only reason we mention him is to contrast him with Confucius.” For a different interpretation of Guanzian economics see chapters 1 and 5.
logic of reciprocity included hospitality, sacrifices, and filial mourning as well as gifts and payments. David Schaberg extended this Confucian reciprocity to classical pre-Qin historiography, showing how bao governs the relation between the author and the reader. He-Yin Zhen’s 何殷震 (1884–ca. 1920) earlier theoretical work had similarly drawn attention to the role of Confucian texts in cultural production. She reframed Confucianism within an analysis of the general problem of “livelihod” sheng ji 生計, the system of gender and social inequality that resulted from the institution of private property. In this analysis, Confucian teachings and practices are but one of the many global ideologies that sustain economic and gender oppression. At the same time she denaturalized the relation of classical texts to traditional China, showing how the political institutionalization of classical learning (xue shu 學術) and the writing system came to inscribe gender inequality into Chinese society.

The tribute system is a modern name for a model that was also grounded in canonical classical texts. It refers to a hierarchical and centrally organized agricultural world order that was symbolically reproduced through the annual submission of material tribute to the ruler. Its locus classicus is the Book of Documents (Shang shu 尚書), which Han classicists elevated as one of the Five Classics. Allegedly compiled by Confucius, these Classics held up certain idealized figures and actions from pre-imperial antiquity for emulation. For Han scholars and officials the “Tribute of Yu” (Yu gong 禹贡) chapter of the Book of Documents invoked a world order that had come under threat during the period of Emperor Wu’s radical reforms. The “Tribute of Yu” describes how the ancient sage Yu dredged the world into nine provinces after a flood and determined the material tribute (gong 龜) due to the ruler from each region (according to its soil type). As reconstructed in figure 0.2b, this chapter further schematizes the world into five concentric “zones” (fu 服). These zones, which radiate outward from the central “Royal Domain,” are simultaneously political, economic, military, and cultural.

Within the Royal Domain (see figure 0.2a), the different concentric sub-regions differentiate tax regimes for different populations. The “Tribute of Yu” catalogs the locally produced tribute such as grain in husks or cleaned grain, which betokens political submission to the ruler. The outer zones shown in figure 0.2b differentiate foreign policy modes (such as “civilizing and instruction”) and foreign groups (such as the Yi and Man).

This tribute system is essentially a fragment of the larger set of classically-derived complexes that Chen Huan-Chang, Lien-sheng Yang, David Schaberg, and He-Yin Zhen proposed. It focuses on the lord-subject and farmer-artisan hierarchies rather than on other classical hierarchies (e.g., husband over wife). For this reason the tribute system has served as a useful modern lens through which to explore frontiers and markets alone. Many modern scholars have argued that this text-based ethical paradigm reflected a historical reality as well as a dominant pre-twentieth-century Chinese worldview. For example, the economic historian Hu Jichuang argued that the tribute system was the “canonical classification for land and taxation” from the Zhou through the early twentieth century; and Ying-shih Yü identified the Han dynasty as the first to successfully institutionalize the Book of Documents’ tributary ideal of foreign relations that shaped China’s subsequent foreign relations through to the twentieth century. More recent scholarship on frontiers and markets has, however, rightly reframed the tribute system as an ideological rather than historical phenomenon. Work on excavated materials has revealed a more symbiotic Inner Asian frontier, and more complex, price-setting markets than classicizing Han writers admitted. Nicola Di Cosmo, in particular, has argued the need to use archaeologi-

20. See Hu Jichuang, Concise History of Chinese Economic Thought, 18–19 and Ying-shih Yü, Trade and Expansion in Han China. In John Fairbank’s influential account, this “Chinese world order”—also known as “Sinocentrism”—was the normative traditional Chinese ideal of administering its foreign subjects according the hierarchical patterns laid down for China proper. For critiques of this model see Hevia, Cherishing Men From Afar; Crossley, “Thinking about Ethnicity”; Elliot, The Eight Banners. For a comparative model for thinking about the role of language and symbolic exchange in the context of competing imperial rivalries, see Liu, The Clash of Empires.

21. See Barbieri-Low, Artisans in Early Imperial China for an illuminating account of Han China’s markets.
Figure 0.2. Diagram of the geopolitical relations described in “The Tribute of Yu” (Yu gong 余公) chapter of the Book of Documents (Shang shu 尚書), which shows the types of tribute (figure 0.2a, top) and five zones (0.2b, bottom).
cal materials to move beyond the “claustrophobic narrowness of Chinese classical tradition (largely endorsed by the modern Western exegesis).”

To do so he and others have worked to sift the empirical data from the cosmological and historiographic “rationalizations” of that data within imperial ideology.

This reinterpretation of the tribute system as the ideological product of classics-based scholarship raises two problems that this book addresses. The first concerns the reduction of official texts to a single cultural model; the second concerns the role of literary style in encoding intra-cultural differences. Even as newly excavated materials illumine vital new perspectives, work still remains to be done in reassessing what the transmitted classical tradition has already been assumed to say. In rereading well-known anecdotes, dialogues, and poems concerning frontiers and markets, my book finds several competing literary-cultural ideals, rather than a unitary cultural logic. Han classicists had to quash blatantly anti-tributary suggestions, such as that of the Shiji’s description of a market unregulated by the tributary state:

Therefore [a society] awaits farmers for things to eat; for foresters to extract resources; for artisans to manufacture things; and for merchants to circulate them. Once [these categories of workers] exist, why should there be government regulations and instruction, summons [for labor duty], and


23. Di Cosmo, Ancient China and Its Enemies, especially 1–12 and 255–312. Before this, Ying-shih Yü, Anatoly Khazanov, Thomas Barfield, and others, had argued that nomadic dependence on settled communities for agricultural products shaped frontier relations. However, against this dichotomy of nomadic and settled populations, Di Cosmo presents an interdependent, less differentiated, economic relationship between the two. He explains the formation and disintegration of the Xiongnu state in political terms: the formation as a response to Qin-Han appropriation of their land and aggressive construction of the Great Wall, the disintegration as a result of internal struggles among leaders and a popular revolt against Xiongnu elites. Crucially, it is the politics of Chinese economic interests that better explains the integration of China’s political economy into that of the larger region—that is, there was an increased pressure to acquire foreign horses during the Qin-Han era because of the empire’s adoption of mounted warfare. Ying-shih Yü had interpreted both the Han-Xiongnu peace treaty that followed the defeat of the Han imperial army in 200 BCE and the subsequent resumption of war under Emperor Wu in 133 BCE as different strategies of the same Han tribute system. By contrast, Di Cosmo interprets the terms of the peace treaty as China’s submission of “tribute” to the Xiongnu.
regular assemblies? People are individually responsible for using their own abilities and for maximizing their own labor in obtaining what they desire. Therefore demand for cheap goods will make [such goods] expensive; [decreased] demand for expensive [goods] will make them cheap. When people are encouraged to individually pursue their occupation, they will delight in their own work and, like the downwards plunge of water, day and night without ceasing, they “will naturally come without having been summoned,” and people will produce things without having been asked. Does this not complement the Way and attest to its accordance with nature?24

Since the late nineteenth century, commentators have cited this, and similar passages, to argue for the strange “modernity” of Sima Qian’s economic thought. The division of labor, the individual’s pursuit of material satisfaction, price fluctuation, and the “natural” supply and demand of commodities suggest an outlook closer to that of the laissez-faire (or bourgeois) economist than of the denizen of a primitive economy.25

This book, however, approaches the strange familiarity of Sima Qian’s work, not as proof of what Karl Polanyi called a “dis-embedded economy,” but rather as a context in which to explore the stresses and anxieties produced by dis-embedding economic calculations from traditional political ones (and re-embedding economic calculations in other spheres).

The term tributary orders, as elaborated through this book, refer to the classical-cultural matrices of hierarchies in, through, and against which Han officials and scholars sought to competitively pattern this changing world. Especially during and after the reign of Emperor Wu

25. Liang Qichao, “Shiji huozhi zhuan.” The modernizer, Li Hongzhang 李鴻章, had, in 1893, already made a passing comparison in a speech (given by his secretary) during a banquet hosted by the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank of China: “The theory of political economy which treats of the circulation of wealth, or the banking system, the pivot on which the international commerce of the civilised nations turns, though a modern science in Europe, has been originated, we presume, from the principles of the law of administration of the Chow dynasty. The subsequent writings of the two most celebrated Chinese historians, Tze Ma-chien (司馬遷) [i.e., Sima Qian] and Pan Ku (班固) [i.e., Ban Gu] on the Balance of Trade (貿易書) and commodities (貿易志) may be compared to those of Adam Smith on the ‘Wealth of Nations’” (North China Herald, 17 March 1893, 393–94). For the claim that, via eighteenth-century sinophile French physiocrats, Sima Qian indirectly influenced Adam Smith, see Young, “The Tao of Markets”; for a critique of this claim, see McCormick, “Sima Qian and Adam Smith.”
they did so through innovations in literary genre, language, and symbolic practice. Attempts to redefine the place of expanded markets and frontiers in the Zhou tributary order transformed (and were transformed by) ostensibly unrelated spheres such as kinship practice. Thus during the Han, the “Tribute of Yu” implicated a theory of literary as well as social reproduction: it was used to promote classical learning based on official texts, as well as the ideal Zhou world order described in such texts.

The expansion of monetized markets during the Han did not signal a shift from a gift economy to a money economy, nor from a pre-capitalist to capitalist system, nor from a credit to bullion culture. Monetization in this book loosely refers to the increased circulation of money (whether general-purpose or special-purpose money); market expansion broadly refers to the increase in local or long-distance trade (especially in which money was used as a method of payment), rather than to “self-regulating” markets or to the replacement of what remained a primarily agricultural economy. At stake here is the intersection of imagined and historical economic processes, within which the state was generally understood (Sima Qian aside) to play a central role. For this reason, the Han debate over the meaning of money might be understood, in part, by using the anthropological model of Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry. The tributary orders of Han classicists somewhat resemble the moral “long-term transactional order” that Bloch and Parry contrast with the “short-term transactional order.” These long-term exchanges are understood to be moral because they promote the safe and divinely sanctioned passage of society from generation to generation. The short-term transactional order “is the legitimate domain of individual—often acquisitive—activity.” This economic activity between individuals to facilitate quotidian life is generally morally neutral unless it threatens (rather than complements) the long-term order. For Han classicists, the long-term transactional order was grounded in moral principles of “ritual propriety” (li yi 禮儀) and “moderation” (jie 節).26 Money, in Bloch and Parry’s model, does necessarily transform society as it can be converted into the long-term order (e.g., through taxation). Since money

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26. Since texts such as the Guanzi’s “Qingzhong” chapters reject the priority of such moral terms, my book will at times refer to the traditional ideals of Han classicists loosely as the “moral economy.”
had circulated in China before the Han period, the transactional model offers one way of articulating the Han dynasty transformation of the Zhou tributary order in comparative terms.

Unlike Bloch and Parry’s anthropological studies, however, this book pursues the aesthetic dimension of Han transactional orders, looking to literary and visual practices to reveal rival conceptions of the ideal long-term order. Leslie Kurke’s literary study of the rise of Greek coinage models a more historically sensitive approach in its description of the contestation between aristocratic elites and “middling” citizens over the definition—and redefinition—of the long-term transactional order.27 Important here is the role of literary genre (or the differentiation of genres) in encoding economic discourse. In the context of the Greek political economy, silver coinage became the controversial token of the civic state, but was just one of the many associated literary and symbolic practices in and through which poets and prose-writers contested civic ideology. In Han dynasty China, imperial tribute betokened a tributary empire but was also only one of the many metaphors (including coinage) through which generations of competing scholar-officials debated the political economy. Unlike in the Greek case, genre does not so easily correlate with ideological position. The new genres and the tokens supposedly invented to commemorate tributary empire explored in this volume—philosophical dialogue (the Debate on Salt and Iron, the Guanzi); Han historiography (the Shiji and Hanshu); the Han dynasty fu (of Sima Xiangru and Yang Xiong); the unified currency (the wuzhu 五铢 coin)—exploited ideological ambivalence in ways that were subsequently contained or revised to better fit the tributary order of later Han classicists. As but one part of a tangled set of cultural-aesthetic claims, any tributary order implicated a broader set of asymmetrical relations. Thus the proposition that tributary empire should promote commerce or delimit its frontiers was understood to be interlinked with the future of gender and sexual orders on the one hand, and with literary decorum on the other.

27. Kurke, Coins, Bodies, Games, and Gold; Kurke, “Money and Mythic History.” Kurke draws in part from Pierre Bourdieu’s analyses of symbolic and economic “fields” of competitive struggle. For another useful study of the relation of literary genre to economic discourse, see Poovey, Genres of the Credit Economy.
Outline of the Argument

This book comprises three chapters on discursive genres (philosophical dialogue, epideictic *fu*, and historiography) and two chapters on social practices (money, kinship). Together these chapters argue the significance of literary innovation within political economic debate, and map out two general tendencies. First, the literary and material experiments of the Former Han, especially under Emperor Wu, challenged the tributary order of Zhou texts. Second, to overcome such challenges, the classicists of the post-Emperor Wu period revised aspects of the Zhou tributary order, even as they reasserted its authority. To do so they modified earlier Han developments in genre and language.

Chapter 1 (on Masters dialogue) introduces the historical framework and literary stakes of the debate over frontiers and markets. To finance the unprecedented scale of imperial expansion Emperor Wu’s advisers turned to commerce and industry, introducing state monopolies on iron, salt, and liquor, and new strategies of stimulating and regulating local and long-distance markets. Military campaigns and colonial settlement in the northwest alone cost over one hundred billion cash, or over eight times the entire annual revenue of earlier governments. Chapter 1 begins with the politics and rhetoric of *qingzhong* economics that gained currency during this period. It asks how, and to what effect, the *Guanzi*’s “Qingzhong” chapters and the *Debate on Salt and Iron* appropriated the Masters tradition of philosophical dialogue to propose oppositional ideals. Modern scholars have generally treated these as two different types of non-literary text: that is, the former as an economic treatise (often identified as the foundations of Chinese economic thought); and the latter as a historical record of a court debate over Emperor Wu’s reforms. *Qingzhong* economics departed from the classical tradition by placing economics before ethics, prioritizing the ruler’s profit-seeking strategies over his ritual propriety (*li jie* 禮節). This radical revision of the classical tributary ideal taught its readers economic rules abstracted from cultural contexts, including the calculation of price in terms of quantitative relations between circulating money and commodities. As chapter 1 argues, the *Guanzi*’s provocation was literary as well as political. *Guanzi*,

the eponymous Master, grounded his authority in literary abstractions (e.g., Mr. Calculate-y) rather than in the recorded deeds and sayings of traditional sages and Masters. By inventing new metaphors and personifications of abstract economic principles to explain fiat and international credit currencies, the Guanzi transgressed classical ideals of writing (*wen*).

Neither the *Guanzi* nor the *Debate on Salt and Iron* have garnered much attention in modern histories of Chinese literature. Despite widespread recognition of the political rise of classicism from the first century BCE onwards, the circumstances of that development are generally relegated to historical footnotes. The *Guanzi*’s use of overtly fictive dialogue suggests a more complex discursive space in and through which classical habits of historical and literary citation became dominant. In the *Debate on Salt and Iron*, the Classical Scholars (*Wenxue*) have to actively defend the rhetorical authority as well as the traditional economic ideals of pre-Qin Masters against the attacks of Emperor Wu’s former economic adviser, Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊 (152–80 BCE). The Classical Scholars emerge as the true Masters, despite the political seniority of their interlocutor, in part by recalling the economic metaphors *ben* ("fundamental"; "agriculture") and *mo* ("secondary"; "commercial") that were used in traditional Masters accounts of the moral agricultural order. The Classical Scholars see a fundamental split between antiquity and modernity brought about by the state-sponsored rise of the market and they lament the breakdown of the moral bonds of sodality and kinship organizing the agricultural order. For the Classical Scholars, the growth of the market signifies something as socially destructive as a Polanyian Great Transformation, but of another order. Representation lies at the heart of this social experience. The savagery of market exchange is, for the Classicists, a break from *wen*: from the fundamental patterns of the cultural order encoded in the Zhou texts that they, as scholars of *wen* (the *Wenxue*), must defend. The *Debate on Salt and Iron* thus furnishes a first-century BCE manifesto for classicism as well as an anti-imperialist, antimarket call for a return to traditional hierarchies.

Chapter 2 (on the epideictic *fu*) reconsiders the Han dynasty’s most popular genre, the *fu*, in light of this enlarged politics of representation. Sima Xiangru’s 司馬相如 “Fu on the Excursion Hunt of the Son of Heaven,” the earliest *fu* to be formally presented to the imperial court (and probably the most famous and influential epideictic *fu*), was structured around an economic metaphor of linguistic expenditure. Ancient
and modern critics have traditionally used a classical ideal of moderation and thrift to evaluate the fu’s signature “excesses” in length and ornamentation. As argued in Chapter 1, this classical economic idiom did not occupy a discursive vacuum in the Former Han, but elaborated itself partly in opposition to the Guanzi’s quantitative approach to value. Chapter 2 explores how Sima Xiangru patterned the fu’s generic innovations (self-reflexive dialogue, extended length, euphonic ornament) on both classical and quantitative notions of expenditure. Lavish lifestyles and profit-seeking qingzhong theories were at odds with the ethical promotion of moderation. Pre-Han and Han sections of the Guanzi debated a proposal that “lavish expenditure” (chi mi 侈靡) creates wealth, i.e., that market consumption of luxuries stimulates production, thereby increasing employment and revitalizing the general economy. Excavated examples of such Han dynasty market luxuries, as chapter 2 notes, offer an alternate resource to the classical poetic tradition for considering the fu’s innovations in imagery and style. At the beginning of an era of unprecedented military and public spending, Sima Xiangru exploited both classical and non-classical forms, and the aesthetic encoding of this ideological tension influenced the subsequent development of the genre. During and after the first-century BCE backlash against Emperor Wu’s expenditures, Yang Xiong, Ban Gu, Ban Zhao, Zuo Si, and others re-asserted the tributary model of the political economy through later fu.

Like philosophical dialogue and the prose-poetic fu, historical narrative became a medium through which Han writers challenged or reformulated the ideal of agricultural tributary empire. Chapter 3 (on historiography) examines the Shiji’s new thematic and formal patterning of Chinese historiography. Both at the frontiers and at the core of the Han empire, material accumulation appears to have dissolved classical hierarchical differences between Xiongnu and Chinese, and between persons of different social statuses. The Shiji heretically proposed the withdrawal of the state from market activity, advocated the “natural” rise and fall of market prices, and proposed to consider the businessperson (“commodity producer”) as an ethical subject (junzi 君子). Through competing narrative perspectives, ambiguous metaphors, and authorial comments, the Shiji also draws attention to the politics of economic and cultural ethnography. Although the Hanshu replicates long sections from the Shiji, it determines for the reader the moral significance of these sections through editing and reframing: for example, representing the Xiongnu
as morally deficient, unimprovable foreigners and showing businesspersons as socially destructive. The *Hanshu* thereby configures China’s domestic and foreign markets—and the historiographic act itself—within the unified tributary order of classic texts.

The first half of this book on literary genres thus argues the symbiotic relation between the politics of genre and the politics of expansionist economics. How to *represent* the world order mattered precisely because literary innovation enabled and enacted diverse Former Han challenges to an archaizing agricultural ideal that was grounded in classical texts. Given this inseparability of practice from discourse, the shift to material and embodied practices in the second half of this book is primarily for heuristic purposes. Chapters 4 (on kinship) and 5 (on money) contextualize the canonical genres already encountered within a broader array of literary and visual/material forms. These two chapters explore the encoding of ideology through rival practices, and chart a more complex Han debate over the expanding reach of classical *wen* (writing, pattern, decorum, Chinese civilization) across gendered bodies and coins.

As historians have long pointed out, the conjugal household became the basic administrative and economic unit of Qin-Han society. The expansion of the Han empire is, from the (often conflicting) perspectives of administrative, taxation, and classical documents, generally understood to have enabled the replication of this household unit across space. However, chapter 4 (on kinship) brings the history of that household unit and the history of frontiers into closer conversation. It argues that two of the most important developments in Chinese frontier history—imperial interstate diplomacy (*heqin* 和親 “peace through kinship”) and long-distance tributary trade across Eurasia (the so-called Silk Road)—originated in discourses and practices that departed from classical ideals of kinship. After China’s northern neighbors, the Xiongnu confederacy, defeated the Han imperial army in 200 BCE, the *heqin* peace treaty demanded annual payments to the Xiongnu, along with the marriage of a Han princess to the Xiongnu leader. Before Emperor Wu ended the peace in 133 BCE, Han scholars and officials tied the aberrant kinship rituals of the *heqin* to kinship violations in the imperial court. During the post-*heqin* era of expansion, *qingzhong* economists offered an imagination of long-distance silk markets within which traditional social and marital bonds had no productive place.
In opposition (or in contrast) to this, the new classicizing texts written by or for women that emerged by the late Former Han emphasized women’s kinship roles as good wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. The female author Ban Zhao 班昭 (ca. 48–ca. 120) and other classicists contracted the world of women’s work from the economic frontiers to the conjugal household. They taught women how to experience and to represent their actions in terms of classical aphorisms and tropes, without interpreting women’s scholarship as political or economic work. This new literary tradition for women that became so influential over subsequent millennia might thus be better understood not simply as the (re-)gendering of the evolving classical tradition, but also as a historical reaction, in part, to profit-seeking visions of women’s roles as industrial workers in a world system. One effect of the classical restoration of women to the moral household economy was thus to sever kinship from frontier history, thereby eclipsing a consideration of any productive role the weaver played in the historical Han expansion of the Silk Road.

Chapter 5 brings these two debates—about the imagined relation between China and the world, and about the discursiveness of social practice—to bear on Han money. Modern historians generally treat Emperor Wu’s establishment of the bronze wuzhu coin as an enduring symbol of unified Chinese empire, and as the crucial signifying practice of China’s expanding market. Chapter 5, by contrast, highlights the lack of unity in the competing meanings and pragmatics of Han dynasty money. It maps out four sets of competing social and symbolic “counter-practices” of money: burying money (for afterlife exchanges); experimental minting (including coin design); classicizing money (i.e., elaborating money’s place in classical ethics and historiography); and quantifying money (according to a market logic). These four approaches variously embedded money within cosmological and ethical calculations, or sought to reduce money to its temporal market functions as a medium of exchange, method of payment, and standard of value. This enlarged field of monetary practice illumines an imaginary politics of foreign exchange that has been overlooked within economic history.

For example, burial money helped to mediate between two alien domains, the human and the spiritual. Like other “spirit articles” that accompanied and aided the deceased in their journey to the next world, this money was sometimes—but not always—of a different size or material (e.g., clay instead of bronze). Many understood the relation between the
afterlife and temporal economies to be dynamic and interactive. By contrast, the Guanzi’s “Qingzhong” chapters theorized foreign exchange in a disenchanted, anti-cosmological vein. Since monetary value was established quantitatively, by the relative amounts of commodities and money in circulation, all world currencies could theoretically become exchangeable. It is with such dreams of temporal (and afterlife) commerce with foreign domains that we might reconsider Emperor Wu’s experiments with Central Asian numismatic traditions and the startling excavations of Han coins with blundered Greek inscriptions shown in figures 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, and 5.11, and as described in the appendix.

Han dynasty historiographers and classical scholars tried to contain the threat of the market world by treating the monetary quantity inscribed on coins as a form of writing. A coin’s inscription was commonly termed wen (文), also the term for culture, pattern, and writing. The question of wen (monetary inscription) had no place in the quantitative qingzhong theory of money. However, classicists represented money as a transgressive form of wen that generally failed to adequately represent the shared values that governed classical wen, especially as inscriptions of truth/reality and as patterns of Chinese civilization. In introducing monetary values into classical discourse (for example through etiologies of money or stories of debt), classicists simultaneously embedded market price into a broad array of social and ethical calculations, and asserted the superiority of text-based classicism over market values. Money thus became a new site for the political rise of classicism. In contrast to the Guanzi’s economically connected world of international fiat currencies that demand no translation, the classicizing imagination produced China-centered histories of money that remain influential to this day.

Together, these five chapters offer a counterhistory to the Han dynasty establishment of the expanded frontiers, unified script, classical texts, imperial bureaucracy, and cultural cohesion that has been commemorated over subsequent millennia of Chinese history. By rereading canonical texts and introducing non-canonical and recently excavated texts, this book explores ambivalence and outright opposition to aspects of the

29. In Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt’s account, counterhistories aim to “make apparent the slippages, cracks, fault lines, and surprising absences in the monumental structures that dominated a more traditional historicism.” See Gallagher, Practicing New Historicism, 17; 49–74, and my discussion in the coda.
expansionist project. It shows that for many the savagery of imperialism concerned modes and rituals of exchange, rather than the borders between the civilized and the barbarian. For some, the market appeared to be destroying society and social values; for others, the market enabled new ways of making commensurate the hierarchies of lord and subject, man and woman, cultural Self and Other. (The master-slave, convict-freeman hierarchies were not as extensively problematized, as they might well have been). Representation was intrinsic to this experience of social transformation. For the Han classicists whose political rise was crucial to the ways in which we now define and appreciate Chinese literature, new accounts of expansionist economics threatened a break from the fundamental patterns of the cultural order (wen) encoded in their classical texts.

This book thus narrates the circumstances within which classical texts increasingly became used to restore literary decorum. It emphasizes—overemphasizes, some readers may feel—a historically specific tension between two oppositional tendencies: quantitative and qualitative; abstracting and classicizing; calculating and moralizing; globalizing and sinicizing. Each chapter follows a similar temporal arc spanning Emperor Wu’s reign. Together they show that Han traditionalists had to reinvent the Zhou ideal of the agricultural tributary economy with more linguistic creativity—and in the context of a far more ideologically heterodox, culturally hybrid, and historically dynamic symbolic economy—than modern scholarship has thus far suggested. And the temporal arc of Emperor Wu’s reign is important to this discussion. By the Later Han the expansion of cities, markets, and frontiers under Emperor Wu had ceased or even reversed. In juxtaposing canonical and non-canonical Han texts, this book argues that minor narratives or new uses of genre, language, and sign—even if they failed to become hegemonic—are worth recovering for a better understanding of both literary history and the history of the political economy.

The five core chapters contain the principal argument of my book. However, I have added a concluding coda on the comparative origins

30. Wang Bao’s (/^⿓ HomeController) mock “The Contract for a Youth” is an important exception in the received tradition. See Hanshu 64B.2821. Excavated texts are yielding new insights into the lives of slaves and my book unfortunately does not address this topic in its own right. On debt and bondage, see chapter 5.
and stakes in this argument. I originally trained in classical Chinese, Greek, and Latin literatures, and although this book remains fully grounded in a short period of Chinese cultural history the topic and method used in this book were developed in relation to a set of problems that I perceived in comparative approaches to antiquity. Specialists should feel free to ignore this coda, but others, who desire more enticement to enter into Chinese antiquity, may like to head there next.