

spheres. Whether as tools for officials to gather local information or guidebooks for literati to explore regional sites, these map-guides inspired and facilitated literary writings in the mid-Tang period. Accordingly, behind the poetic expressions in mid-Tang local literature was “an epistemological layer of geographical knowledge and spatial imagination” (p. 131), which was often acquired by consulting local geographical works in general and map-guides in particular. In addition to revealing intertextual relations between literature and map-guides, this chapter makes another contribution: it brings to our attention some largely neglected literary genres, including altar records (*tanji* 壇記), office inscriptions (*tingbi ji* 廳壁記), and prayers (*zhuwen* 祝文, or what the author calls “orisons of appeal” [p. 133]). This surely heightens the reader’s awareness of the breadth and richness of Tang literature.

While the second and third chapters focus more on the role of geographical works in shaping the spatial imagination, the fourth chapter, “Into the Deep South: The Aesthetics of New Landmark Creation,” centers on how literati used landscape essays to establish new dwelling places and create new landmarks in the deep south, especially the Lingnan 嶺南 region. As the author demonstrates, the “landscape essays” (namely, “prose writings wherein descriptions of natural scenery are structurally and thematically indispensable” [pp. 195–96]) by scholar-officials demoted to the deep south are always understood in the tradition of “banishment literature” (*bianzhe wenxue* 貶謫文學), that is, reading the favorable literary representation of landscapes as the result of individual authors’ political frustrations. However, when we situate the landscape essays in the context of southward migration after the An Lushan Rebellion, it becomes clear that those writers were not merely appreciating the landscape as travelers; rather, they “all strove to create the central spatial imaginary of their new home in the deep south” (pp. 196–97). Being able to be made into a dwelling place became an important requirement of the landscape. On the other hand, many places mentioned in those landscape essays subsequently became landmarks featured in later geographical works.

The fifth chapter, “Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen: The Wonder of Interactive Geography,” considers the ways in which two prominent literary figures of the day integrated into their poetic exchanges various geographical elements, or what the author calls “interactive geography” (p. 257). Both poets were equipped with rich geographical knowledge, which allowed them to evoke in their writings a mental map through which they mutually trace each other’s locations or texts in the imagination and thus create a shared textual space in defiance of their physical separation. Whether “interactive geography” actually “contributed significantly to their unparalleled popularity in the mid-Tang” (p. 299) is open to discussion, but it does, to be sure, form an integral part of many of the writings by Bai Juyi and Yuan Zhen.

Some minor errors aside (e.g., the translation of Yuan Zhen’s “Song of the Southeast” [Dongnan xing 東南行] [p. 286] is missing the second and third lines), there is no denying that this book makes a major contribution. It draws our attention to important materials and literary genres that have been largely ignored, and presents a new aspect of the mid-Tang literary landscape by bringing spatial imaginaries to the table. This is a challenging task, but Ao Wang has tackled it with success.

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Ancient Chinese Encyclopedia of Technology: Translation and Annotation of the Kaogong ji (The Artificer’s Record). By WENREN JUN. Abingdon, UK: ROUTLEDGE, 2018. Pp. xxviii + 525. \$224 (cloth); \$49.95 (paper).

The “Kaogong ji” 考工記, which dates approximately to the fifth century BCE, is a book that covers about two dozen technological areas of the Eastern Zhou era. For a few of these areas, only the names remain. For the rest of them, we are more fortunate to have descriptions that have been passed down, probably in a haphazard way. The “Kaogong ji” was incorporated into the *Zhou li* 周禮 (The Rites of the Zhou) to hold the place for its last section entitled “Dongguan” 冬官 since the original material for the “Winter Office” section had been missing. Now an integral part of the Confucian

Classics, the “Kaogong ji” has been assured a more or less permanent place in the canon. Out of the extant descriptions of ancient technologies in the “Kaogong ji,” some are described as processes carried out by craftsmen with special skills—e.g., how to clean raw silk fabrics. Others are descriptions of designs—jade tablets of certain dimensions and shapes to be used in particular court functions, bells of a certain configuration, and even a city plan with arrangements of streets and buildings, for example. Whether a process or a design, the original presentation of a technology in the extant text is placed under the heading of an artificer specialized in that technology. An artificer is referred to as either a *ren* 人 (man)—e.g., a craftsman specialized in making arrows is called a *shi ren* 矢人 (an arrow maker)—or a *shi* 氏 (clan or simply a honorific designation)—e.g., a smelting founder is called a *ye shi* 冶氏. The reason behind the distinction is lost.

Given the subtitle of this book, a potential reader may expect to see the book as a professionally done translation of the “Kaogong ji” with annotations. Careful reading will reveal that the author has taken the liberty to insert his assessments and explanations into his translation of the original text, occasionally to the extent of paraphrasing the original paragraphs, which may well be a reason why his book is not just entitled the *Artificers’ Record*. For a reader who expects a rigorous translation, the intermingling of the original text with these extrinsic explanations is quite annoying.

The author divides the original material into twenty-three sections. The first section, “Opening Paragraphs,” includes an important passage that further groups the thirty-some artificers into six groups: woodworking (divided into seven professions), metalworking (six), treatment of animal hides and skins (five), coloring (five), polishing (five), and clay modeling (two.) This division into sections clarifies the scope of the professions and eases the task of locating a passage. Since the extant descriptions of the twenty or so professions are largely unrelated to and independent of one another, the reader can begin with any section without the feeling of discontinuity.

“It is well known that the *Kaogong ji* is difficult to understand because of its laconic style and use of many archaic words and early technical terms” (“Background,” p. xxvi). An English translation, of which this book is the first, is a tremendous resource to a scholar or a student interested in ancient Chinese technology or its history. The effort required to unravel the enigma or mystery of a difficult passage is significant. The voluminous body of commentaries and studies of the “Kaogong ji” included in the book attest to the extent of this challenge. With the numerous illustrations, articles in the bibliography, footnotes, and commentaries, which show the relevance of recently published archaeological findings to the text in the *Kaogong ji*, the author deserves credit for bringing the ancient treatise to a much wider audience, despite the flaws exhibited in the current edition.

First of all, the book evidently has not been through careful editing. Numerous errors in English, grammatical or otherwise, make it hard for a reader who does not know Chinese to trust the translation.

The main issue among the problems identified seems to be the question of what constitutes a good translation. The answer to this question may well depend on the book’s intended audience. For the general public, philological rigor is often not the primary concern. Broadening knowledge and a comprehensive overview of an art may be sufficient. To these standards, this book is well qualified and passes as a useful and even resourceful book for curious readers in general. For serious researchers and scholars, who demand professional rigor with philological and exegetical interpretations, this book falls short in several areas outlined below. For each area, only a couple of examples will be given. Some of the examples are carefully chosen to display more than one of the issues identified below.

1. If a term is rarely seen in literature or is used in a way that is different from its commonly accepted meaning, a footnote should be provided.

無所取之，取諸圓也。(l. 3, p. 121)

無所取之，取諸易直也。(l. 4, p. 121)

無所取之，取諸急也。(l. 5, p. 121)

Nothing else is required, except that it should be perfectly circular. (l. 13, p. 18)

This checks nothing neither more nor less than their smooth and straightness. (l. 1, p. 19)

This checks nothing neither more nor less than the thoroughness and solidity of the workmanship. (l. 5, p. 19)

Comments: These three passages refer to the minimal criterion for selecting a wheel (*lun* 輪), a spoke (*fu* 輻), and a wheel-hub (*gu* 轂) respectively. A proper translation should preserve the rhetorical structure of the original passages. For a wheel, if checking for nothing else, one makes sure that it is perfectly circular. For a spoke, if checking for nothing else, one makes sure that it can be straightened easily. For a wheel-hub, if checking for nothing else, one makes sure that it fits the wheel tightly. The graph *ji* 急 is rendered as “thoroughness and solidity” without any explanation. It is doubtful that *ji* can be read as “thoroughness and solidity.” “Nothing neither more nor less” should be “nothing more or less”; “smooth” should be “smoothness.”

髻壘薜暴不入市。(I. 21, p. 124)

[the products] must be without any material defects, such as crooked, damaged, breakage, and uneven, in order to be marketable. (I. 6, p. 83)

Comments: A note to support how the string of graphs *ji ken bi pu* 髻壘薜暴 is interpreted would be helpful. The graphs *yue* 髻 [or, 髟+舌], *ken* 壘, *bo* 薜, and *bo* 暴 denote the defects of being crooked (irregular), damaged, cracked, and bulging respectively.

2. If a special term or word appears in the original, its interpretation should be presented in the translation; if not, an explanation should be given.

裸圭尺有二寸，有瓚，以祀廟。(I. -9, p. 123)

The jade ladle for drinking (*guizan*), having the cup-shaped hollow and handle of the jade tablet *gui*, is one *chi* two *cun* long. It serves for offering to the deceased emperors. (I. 5, p. 69)

Comments: The name *guangui* 裸圭 does not even appear in the translation. *Guangui*, a ladle used in a *guan* sacrifice, consists of a *zuan* part (the cup-shaped bowl of the ladle) and a *gui* part (the handle, of the given dimension). The sacrificial ceremony is carried out “in the ancestral temple,” *miao* 廟, although the ritual might be performed to honor “the deceased emperors.”

3. No additional explanatory, commentary, or ancillary lines should be inserted in a translation. Additions tends to distort the style of the original text.

琬圭九寸而纁，以象德。(I. -8, p. 123)

The round jade tablet *wangui*, supported with a backing plate, and covered with the painted skin, is nine *cun* in length. It symbolizes virtue (by its rounded shape) and is bestowed by the emperor upon virtuous feudal princes. (I. 7, p. 69)

Comment: The underlined words belong in a footnote.

堂涂十有二分。竇，其崇三尺。墻厚三尺，崇三之。(I. -16, p. 125)

The pavement of frontage is divided, in twelve parts, to regulate the height of the middle or the slope. The conduit of water is three *chi* high. The walls are three *chi* thick. Their height is the triple thickness. (I. 2, p. 104)

Comments: The underlined words should be in a footnote. The last sentence in the translation should be “their height is three times their thickness” or “their height is triple their thickness.”

4. No paraphrasing or rewriting. Although one does not have to follow strictly the order of sentences in a translation, a total rewriting or paraphrasing is not doing justice to the original.

凡任索約大汲其版，謂之無任。(I. -17, p. 125)

To build the tamped-earth walls, (as for ramming down of the earth) the boards and stakes that hold the earth are adjusted and bound together with ropes. The boards should not be stretched too tightly, as the wood will bend and the framework will not bear the weight. (I. 5, p. 104)

Comments: The original statement does not specifically limit the usage to building walls, although in practice the method has been used in building walls. The translation provided by the author is an almost total rewrite of the original. A more precise translation would be: “In the use of ropes, if they wrap around the boards too tight, this is considered *wuren* or ‘unable to carry the weight’.” This passage is about the use of ropes to tie down boards in the practice of *ban zhu* 版築 (rammed earth construction).

If the ropes are too tight, the boards will warp and the rammed earth will not be strong enough to carry the intended weight.

5. Choose appropriate words in a translation. When choosing English words in a translation, the choice should reflect the primary meanings of the Chinese term.

斲目必荼。斲目不荼，則及其大修也，筋代之受病。(1. 18, p. 126)

When one pares the surface of the wood stem and meets nodes, it is necessary to operate slowly. If one does not operate just so, then, with time, the sinew along the stem suffers from the nodes. (1. 2, p. 115)

Comment: A sinew cannot suffer from nodes; it suffers from the defects caused by not removing the nodes slowly. Over time, damages will manifest at the sinew.

鎮圭 (1. -13, p. 123)

The jade tablet of domination (1. 1, p. 66)

Comment: The graph *zhen* 鎮 is translated as “domination.” Domination is only one aspect. The usage here is to convey the idea of a ruler’s authority over his or her subjects and the ruler’s benevolent rule to pacify the people. (A commentary 註 to the *Zhou li* states that “*zhen* is to pacify” 鎮安也.)

6. Consistent translation. When a term is used in several places with the same meaning, its translations should be consistent, if not identical. Inconsistent usage can be misleading. E.g., the term 國工 appears often; the following lists only three instances:

... are considered to be the work of the royal craftsmen. (1. 13, p. 21)

It is considered to be the work of master-craftsmen. (1. -2, p. 22)

One calls that of the state-of-the art work. (1. -2, p. 94)

Another example are the six instances of the word *bi* 敝:

a. 輪敝，三材不失職，謂之完。(1. 2, p. 121)

Thus, the craftsmanship is considered perfect only if the three parts all maintain their function, as long as the old wheel is in use. (1. 7, p. 18)

b. 則輪雖敝不匡。(1. 6, p. 121)

... as long as the old wheel is in use, it will develop neither twist nor split. (1. 10, p. 19)

c. (是故以火養其陰，而齊諸其陽)，則鞞雖敝不蔽。(1. 9, p. 121)

(Consequently, heat is applied to strengthen the Yin side until it has reached the same level of hardness as that of the Yang side.) Upon this, the hub will never show irregularities. (1. -14, p. 19)

d. 是故輪雖敝，不輒於鑿。(1. 21, p. 121)

Then as long as the old wheel is in use, there will be no shaking in the mortises. (1. -7, p. 20)

e. 敝盡而無惡。(1. 19, p. 122)

When it has been worn away, one must see no defect. (1. 3, p. 34)

f. 察其線而藏，則雖敝不輒。(1. 12, p. 123)

Finally, if the thread of the seams is masked in the skin, then the seams maintain their tight junction as long as the skin is in use. (1. 6, p. 52)

Comments: Items a, b, d, and f are all translated into a form that includes the words “is in use.” In the first three cases, the lines also include “the old wheel.” In the last case, there is no indication that the object in question has become old, over-used, or worn out. Item c skips the translation of the word *bi* completely. Only item e renders *bi* as “worn away.” In all these cases, the word *bi* can only mean “to wear out, or to be worn out.” The original lines are all in the structure of “even when the object in question is worn out, . . .”

7. Correctness. Correct understanding of the original words is a minimum requirement.

晝參諸日中之景，夜考之極星，以正朝夕。(1. 10, p. 125)

... They thus determine the direction of the East, West, (North, and South). (1. 7, p. 95)

Comment: The original text states that “one thus can rectify (or standardize) morning and evening.”

殷人重屋 (1. 13, p. 125)

In the royal buildings (*sie zhongwu*) of the Yin dynasty (1. -5, p. 96)

Comment: As is explained in n. 15, p. 179, this section refers to a house with a double-eave roof, or a double roof. Therefore, the word *chong* 重 should not be read *zhong*.

善溝者水漱之，善防者水淫之。(l. -19, p. 125)

A favoring ditch is scouring by its own water, and a favoring dike is consolidated by the sediment brought against it. (l. -5, p. 103)

Comment: The terms *shan gou zhe* 善溝者 and *shan fang zhe* 善防者 refer to craftsmen and should be read as those who are the best in building ditches and dikes, respectively. One does not describe a well-built ditch as a *shan gou (zhe)*.

8. Preservation of the rhetorical structure, if possible.

凡相符，欲生而搏；同搏，欲重；同重，節欲疏；同疏，欲栗。(l. 15, p. 124)

In general, when choosing the arrow shaft, it should be natural circular. If so, one asks the shaft to be heavy. Then, one asks for the shaft with the long distance between the nodes. Furthermore, one asks the shaft to be maroon-featured. (l. -4, p. 80)

Comments: Naturally circular? What is “maroon-featured”? Note 17, p. 174, suggests that the wood of a good arrow shaft should have the color of chestnut and that wood of such a color would be firm. The sentence structured 同 X . . . , 欲 Y . . . should be translated as “in selecting an arrow shaft, if two have the same feature X, one would choose the one with feature Y.” For example, between shafts of equal weight, one would choose the one that has the longest section without a knot.

是故規之以眡其圓也，萬之以眡其匡也，. . . . 故可規、可萬、可水、可縣、可量、可權也，謂之國工。(l. 22, p. 121)

Therefore, when the wheel is under final tests, the wheelwrights have to:

Use a pair of compasses to verify its roundness.

Use a trueness-modulator to verify its trueness. . . .

Wheels satisfying all the tests mentioned above, the compass and the trueness-modulator, buoyancy and suspension, measurement by volume and measurement by weight, are considered to be the work of the royal craftsmen. (l. -1, p. 20 to l. 13, p. 21)

Comments: The translation adds a new line (“when the wheel is under final tests”). It also removes the expressiveness of the six phrases *ke gui*, *ke ju*, . . . , etc. and replaces them by three incongruent pairs of terms. Note 24 (p. 152) introduces the notion of trueness-modulator to check if the wheel is conforming to a pre-made wheel model, without mentioning that the notion of *ju* 萬 (or equivalently 矩) can simply mean to check for squareness (*kuang* 匡)—e.g., to see if the wheel is round enough to be an inscribed circle of a square.

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The Wenzhi: Creativity and Intertextuality in Early Chinese Philosophy. By PAUL VAN ELS. Studies in the History of Chinese Texts, vol. 9. Leiden: BRILL, 2018. Pp. xiv + 233. \$108, €90.

The *Wenzi* 文子 is a paragon of the understudied text, of which there are so many in the broad field of classical Chinese letters. Although it was revered for many centuries and in many quarters as a repository of ultimate wisdom, it is rarely utilized as a source in present-day scholarship even in China or Japan, much less in Europe and America. Paul van Els would change that situation. He fashioned his recent monograph both as a resource for those interested in exploring the *Wenzi*, and as an extended argument for its value as an object and implement of study, and has succeeded significantly in both regards.

The *Wenzi* poses more than the usual quantity of conundrums for present-day interpreters. Conventional lore attributes it to a disciple of Laozi 老子 and thus deems it a “Daoist” text, and its rhetorical