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## Omen Watching, Mantic Observation, Aeromancy, and Learning to 'See': The Rise and Messy Multiplicity of *Zhanhou* 占候 in Late Han and Medieval China\*

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**Abstract:** This article investigates the early history of a Chinese mantic practice unattested before the late first century CE known as *zhanhou* 占候 (lit., omen watching; divination through observation; divination of atmospheric or meteorological conditions). While early occurrences of the term primarily present it as a learned form of divination used to forecast human fortune through the interpretation of anomalous emanations of *qi* 氣 in heaven-and-earth (e.g., wind; clouds; rain; rainbows), *zhanhou* is also variously classified as an astrological, Five Agents, or military technique; and variously identified as a hemerological, medical, and contemplative-visualization practice by the end of the Tang. I not only contend that *zhanhou*'s inherent polysemy and its multiple identities helped broaden and perpetuate its transmission during the first millennium of the

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Common Era, but also that the same messy multiplicity makes its early history and development difficult—but not impossible—to trace and understand. *Zhanhou* closely resembles many earlier named forms of astrology and divination focused on the observation and interpretation of macrocosmic *qi* conditions or phenomena, but late Han and early medieval writers carved out a space for *zhanhou*. This was done through increasingly frequent use of the term, by explicitly distinguishing it from similar families of techniques (e.g., astrology; turtle and yarrow divination; *yinyang*; algorithmic mantic techniques), and by identifying and constructing networks and lineages of practitioners, both of which helped form and perpetuate *zhanhou*'s identity as a discrete technique (*shu* 術). The present study compares different definitions and translations of *zhanhou*, analyzes a handful of late Han occurrences, and illustrates the term's increasingly widespread medieval circulation, chiefly through biographic narratives and technical texts.

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## Introduction

Pre-modern China had its fair share of weather experts, but their scope of inquiry and reportage tended to be much wider than those of modern meteorologists or weathermen. Instead of merely forecasting the weather, the experts discussed in this article watched for and interpreted anomalous manifestations of *qi* 氣 (pneuma; vapor; vital force; *materia vitalis*) in the heavens and on earth to divine human fortune. These watchers (*hou* 候), surveyors (*wang* 望), and investigators (*shi* 視) were all essentially portrayed as observers and interpreters of macrocosmic or meteorological *qi*. One of the named techniques they are known to have engaged in is *zhanhou* 占候.

Unattested before the late first century CE, the term *zhanhou* was used in radically different ways over the ensuing centuries. Some used it to refer to two separate but interrelated practices (divination and observation); others as an amalgam of the two (divinatory or mantic watching or observation);<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'mantic' tends toward the inspired rather than the mechanical side of the intuitive-inductive or natural-artificial horizons traditionally attributed, respectively to, Plato (427-347 BCE) and Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-143 BCE). According to Barbara Tedlock, "Mantic and -mancy are derived from the Greek term *mantike*, which in its early usage simply referred to inspired divination of past, as well as present, and future events. Later Greek usage became more inclusive, combining divine possession, shamanic trances, and other inspirational methods on the one hand with inductive methods such as those of Roman divination." Tedlock (2001), p. 191. The present study equates mantic practice with divination.

divination based on atmospheric, meteorological, or seasonal conditions). Some presented *zhanhou* as a way to forecast seasonal conditions based on emanations of collective human *qi*, others as a way to prognosticate human fortune based on atmospheric conditions, and others as a way to predict atmospheric phenomena based on observed anomalies in those phenomena. Some described it as a learned, text-based, and inductive technique; others as an intuitive, inspired, or internalized way of ‘seeing’; and others, in part, both. While many celebrated it as a way to save humanity from disaster, others criticized it as an inferior or deviant technology. And, while some presented it as an end in itself (i.e., a way to ensure personal or communal welfare), others framed it as step toward, but one to be left behind for the pursuit of higher spiritual goals.

Most late Han to early Song occurrences of *zhanhou* appear in imperial and Confucian classicist texts, where the term is associated with both Daoist and classicist teachings. Medieval Daoist texts often introduce *zhanhou* as a beneficial activity, yet even when it is explicitly presented as a step beyond classicist teachings, it is, in the end, merely framed as a step leading to higher Daoist goals and is often distinguished from ultimately more efficacious Daoist techniques (*daoshu* 道術). Although early supporters and practitioners of the Buddha’s teachings—in and outside of China—are said to have engaged in *zhanhou*, early Chinese Buddhist doctrine denounces it as a deviant activity. So, while it is fair to identify *zhanhou* as a Daoist, Confucian, imperial, or astrological practice in specific instances, we will generally approach it as a popular pre-modern Chinese religious and mantic technology and technique.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Religious’ in the sense that comparative academic approaches to the study of ‘religion’ regularly associate the notion with divine or ultimate power (ranging from external, theistic agency to internal, spiritual essence), salvation (ranging from otherworldly spiritual bliss to practical human welfare), and worldview. The primary materials collected for this study regularly associate *zhanhou* with numinous powers like spirits, Heaven, and the Dao; they frequently portray *zhanhou* as a means to help ensure human welfare or as a step toward a higher spiritual or soteriological goal; and constructive and constructed worldviews provide the foundation for mantic techniques and applied forms of cosmology like *zhanhou*.

For more on the notions of ‘technique’ and ‘technology’, see Ingold (1987), pp. 30-31; (2000), p. 315ff. The latter work contends that “technique” is “embedded in, and inseparable from, the experiences of particular subjects ... [and] places the subject at the center of activity, whereas technology affirms the independence of production from human subjectivity.” As such, the present study approaches *zhanhou* as a technique or skill performed by people according to a body of technical knowledge—or ‘technology’.

Temporal and spatial systems of representation like the Five Agents (*wuxing* 五行),<sup>3</sup> *yinyang* 陰陽, and the sexagenary cycle were promoted by the imperium for their homologizing powers, and mantic techniques and technicians were two of their greatest vehicles. Harmonized versions of these systems continued to develop after the fall of the Han. Displaced Confucian scholars and newly formed religious communities, instead of rejecting these systems, appropriated the political and cultural capital they had already accrued and applied them locally to help make sense of and order self and society. These knowledge systems represented the ‘science’ of their times and provided the rational basis for mantic techniques like *zhanhou*,<sup>4</sup> which were essentially forms of applied cosmology.

This study begins with a review of classical Chinese, modern Chinese, and modern Western glosses, definitions, and translations for *zhanhou* before investigating and comparing a few of the term’s earliest attested occurrences. I then review late Han to early Tang narrative descriptions of *zhanhou* and its purported adepts to help determine who practitioners were, who they served, whence and from whom they received their knowledge, and to whom it was transmitted. These materials can also be collectively compared to help determine how *zhanhou* was conducted, but the final section on *zhanhou* texts reveals much more about learned forms of the technique.

### The Definition, Classification, and Translation of *Zhanhou*

There is no conventional English or French translation for the term *zhanhou*. Published translations include “soothsaying,”<sup>5</sup> “astrology,”<sup>6</sup> “prognosticate situations,”<sup>7</sup> “meteorognostics,” “analysis of atmospherics,”<sup>8</sup> “uranomancy,”<sup>9</sup> “meteoromancy,”<sup>10</sup> “divination through the observation of signs in nature,” “prognostications by natural events,”<sup>11</sup> “l’observation des présages” (the

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the emergence and development of *wuxing* cosmology in late Warring States and early imperial China, see Wang (2000), p. 4ff. For later tract on the subject, see Marc Kalinowski’s 1991 translation of Xiao Ji’s 蕭吉 (d. 614) *Wuxing dayi* 五行大義 (Great Principles of the Five Agents).

<sup>4</sup> Works that examine *zhanhou* through the lens of modern science include Zhang (1995a), (1995b), (2004); Yang (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Forke (1962), vol. 1, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> Ware (1967), p. 202; Shi (2007), p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Ware (1967), p. 216.

<sup>8</sup> DeWoskin (1983), p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Kalinowski (2004), p. 235.

<sup>10</sup> Kalinowski (2005), p. 116.

<sup>11</sup> Harper (2010), p. 74; Kalinowski (2010), pp. 343, 357.

observation of omens),<sup>12</sup> “prognostication,”<sup>13</sup> and “astrometeorology.”<sup>14</sup> Most frame *zhanhou* as a way of knowing by observing and analyzing nature, the heavens, the firmament, or the atmosphere. While Marc Kalinowski’s 2010 rendering “divination through the observation of signs in nature” perfectly captures the broad scope of the practice as it is portrayed in medieval texts, a more emic translation might trade “signs in nature” for ‘*qi* images in heaven-and-earth’.<sup>15</sup> Because Han through medieval occurrences of *zhanhou* tend to focus on atmospheric phenomena or *qi* images (*qixiang* 氣象; also the modern Chinese term for ‘meteorology’), the terms ‘meteorology,’ ‘meteoromancy’ and the more general ‘aeromancy’ are all viable translations, and although it is certainly fair to describe *zhanhou* as a form of “astromancy,”<sup>16</sup> this term obfuscates the very distinct and situated ways that *zhanhou* was identified and classified in Han and medieval Chinese texts. Nevertheless, let us look a bit more closely at how *zhan* and *hou* are defined in early and modern Chinese dictionaries before returning to the compound.

The early second century CE *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Explanations of Graphs and Characters) defines *zhan* as: “to inspect an omen enquiry” (*shi zhaowen ye* 視兆問也). There is no separate entry for the character *hou* 候, but the variant *hou* 候 is glossed as “to keep watch” (*siwang* 伺望).<sup>17</sup> Modern encyclopedic dictionaries add to each of these semantically overlapping definitions in entries on *zhan* and *hou* 候. For example, the *Zhongwen dacidian* 中文大辭典 (Great Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language), much like the other two great encyclopedic dictionaries of the Chinese language, lists over a dozen definitions for each character.<sup>18</sup> Pre-

<sup>12</sup> Kalinowski (2011), p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> Raphals (2013), p. 172.

<sup>14</sup> Kalinowski (2012-2013), p. 360.

<sup>15</sup> For more on the cultural and temporal situatedness of the notion of ‘nature’, see Rochberg (2017); Vogel *et al.* (2010). I thank one of my EASTM reviewers for both of these references.

<sup>16</sup> Pankenier (2013), p. 10 (*passim*); (2015), p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> See, respectively, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, chap. 3, p. 42b (卜/占) and chap. 8, p. 20b (人/候).

<sup>18</sup> *Zhan* is equated with *zhanbu* 占卜 (to divine; to interpret an omen), *hou* 候, turtle-shell divination (*guibu* 龜卜), and yarrow-stalk divination (*shizhan* 筮占). Other definitions include *zhao* 兆 (omen), *xiangqieshi* 相竊視 (to spy and assess), *shi* 視 (to inspect) or *zhan* 瞻 (to look), *yan* 驗 (to verify; to examine), *wen* 問 (to inquire), *cedu* 測度 (to measure) or *panduan* 判斷 (to judge), *koushou* 口授 (oral instruction; to recount orally), and *mingling* 命令 (an order or decree). Zhang *et al.* (1993), vol. 2, pp. 293c-294a (占). Definitions listed for *hou* include *ciwang* 伺望 (to watch; to look), *zhang songying binke zhe* 掌送迎賓客者 (to serve as an escort for guests), *denghou* 等候 (to wait for the right conditions), *ying* 迎 (to welcome; to greet), *shi* 視 (to inspect) or

Song examples of usage regularly refer to interpretation, prognostication, or divination for *zhan*,<sup>19</sup> and watching, surveying, or observing for *hou*. Observation is an active process in which the mind receives and processes data in reference to an assumed worldview and habitus. As such, there is always some interpretation in observation and vice versa. These semantic commonalities are, however, brought back into contrast when a term meaning ‘to observe’ or ‘to attentively watch’ (*hou*) is paired with a term that means ‘to divine,’ ‘to interpret,’ or ‘to prognosticate’ (*zhan*). *Zhanhou* is essentially a way to divine by observing *qi* in the world around us, but the more exact object of this observation, according to the *Zhongwen dacidian*, is either seasonal conditions, *qi* conditions, an enemy, an enemy’s territory, or an omen/image.

The *Zhongwen dacidian*’s brief definition for the compound *zhanhou* reads, “to track solar and lunar eclipses and variations in the movements of stellar bodies to extrapolate auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.”<sup>20</sup> Based on the materials collected in the present study, this definition is accurate but too narrow. *Zhanhou* certainly involves the observation and interpretation of celestial phenomena to interpret the best course of action for human beings, but it also commonly involves a wide range of terrestrial and human phenomena, as both extant *zhanhou* texts and specialized dictionaries contend.

Chen Yongzheng’s 陳永正 *Zhongguo fangshu da cidian* 中國方術大辭典 (Great Dictionary of Chinese Formulas and Techniques), for example, records two separate definitions for the term *zhanhou*. One reads: “to trace changes in *qi*-images to forecast auspiciousness and inauspiciousness in human affairs.”<sup>21</sup> Another reads: “to observe and examine natural events in

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*zhencha* 偵察 (to investigate), *chihou* 斥候 (to patrol) or *zhencha diqing zhe* 偵察敵情者 (to scout the conditions of an enemy), *ciwang jingjie diqing zhi di* 伺望警戒敵情之地 (to spy on an enemy’s lands), *zhanyan* 占驗 (to verify a prognostication [i.e., to divine]) or *cehou* 測候 (to measure *qi* conditions [*hou*]), *zhencha* 診察 (to examine or diagnose), *hu* 護 (to guard), *wuri* 五日 (a five-day period) [72], *shihou* 時候 (seasonal conditions), and *zhenghou* 徵候 (symptomatic conditions). Zhang *et al.* (1993), vol. 1, p. 1080a-b (候).

<sup>19</sup> *Zhan* often refers to an omen, prediction, or forecasting, but the term is not solely focused on the future like the English verb ‘prognosticate’ (i.e., one can *zhan* the past, present, or future). I favor the term “mantic” over “prognostic” as a general translation of *zhan*, but in contexts where the focus is on clearly on the future, “prognostic” or “prognosticate” is used.

<sup>20</sup> 就日月蝕及星象之變異以推測吉凶。Zhang *et al.* (1993), vol. 2, p. 295b.

<sup>21</sup> 根據氣象的變化來預測人事的吉凶。Chen (1991), p. 176. I am assuming that Chen intends the term *qixiang* to be read in the classical sense rather than the modern – and narrower – sense of ‘meteorological’.

order to divine and verify auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.”<sup>22</sup> Both accurately reflect the wide range of phenomena covered by the term, and both essentially describe divination based on the observation and interpretation of natural phenomena, which in Han and medieval China, would have been roughly equivalent to aeromantic watching or divination based on seasonal, meteorological, or atmospheric conditions, particularly as they are manifested in *qi*.

Han and medieval Chinese texts commonly identify *zhanhou* as an astrological or mantic practice, but the two categories are not mutually exclusive.<sup>23</sup> Kalinowski contends that Han classicists and diviners regarded “divination through the observation of signs in nature (*zhanhou* 占候)” as a combination of “astro-meteorology (*tianwen qixiang zazhan* 天文氣象雜占) ... and the interpretation of natural disasters and prodigies (*zaiyi* 災異),” and that institutional structures continued to be devoted to the observation and reporting of both astral and terrestrial omens through the early imperial period.<sup>24</sup> David Pankenier aptly refers to this kind of combination of astrology and divination in early China as “astral-divination,” “astral-omenology,” or “astromancy.” From our perspective, *zhanhou* ultimately deserves this label, but it is never described as such in Han or medieval Chinese texts. The following digression into issues of categorization is meant to address the question of how *zhanhou* and similar named techniques focused on the observation and interpretation of *qi* images in heaven and earth were organized by the royal and imperial state in administrative structures and in bibliographic and encyclopedic classification systems. As we will see, while *zhanhou* straddled the fields of astrology and divination in its multiplicity, situated systems of classification tended to clearly place it in one or the other field.

The earliest received descriptions of state institutions charged with astrology and divination appear in the ‘Chunguan’ 春官 (Spring Offices; Department of Rites) chapter of the early fourth century BCE *Zhouli* 周禮 (Zhou Rites),<sup>25</sup> which includes descriptions of the purported duties of both

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<sup>22</sup> 觀察自然現象以占驗吉凶。Chen (1991), p. 243. Chen’s dictionary defines *zhan* as: “to inspect an omen to extrapolate and discern auspiciousness and inauspiciousness” (視兆推知吉凶), and “to inspect an omen and then judge it in discourse” (視兆以後判斷說). See Chen (1991), p. 66. No separate entry for *hou* is recorded.

<sup>23</sup> Kalinowski (2010), p. 344, for example, contends that “the interpretation of portents of the physical world does not differ basically from divination involving celestial and atmospheric phenomena; all forms of anomalies could be read as signs pointing to good or bad events.”

<sup>24</sup> Kalinowski (2010), p. 343.

<sup>25</sup> My dating of the *Zhouli* is informed by Zhou and Zhou (1981), pp. 1-9; Hou (1987), pp. 5-29; Boltz (1993), pp. 24-32. The *Zhouli* received relatively limited attention

the office of the Great Diviner (*dabu* 大卜) and that of the Great Scribe-Astrologer (*dashi* 大史).<sup>26</sup> The former is said to include sub-departments charged with divination by turtle shell, yarrow stalks, dreams, and miscellaneous practices, along with ‘the inspection of invasions’ (*shijin* 視祲/眡祲).<sup>27</sup> Inspectors of Invasions were reportedly responsible for the ‘methods of the ten effulgences’ (*shuhui zhi fa* 十輝之灋),<sup>28</sup> which focused on the inspection of anomalous manifestations of *qi* in the macrocosm to determine fortune. The first of the ten is titled *jin* 祲, which is defined as “the clashing (or

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during the Western and Eastern Han, but provided an important administrative model for Wang Mang, and later for the sixth century Liang, Western Wei, and Northern Zhou dynasties. See Pearce (2001), pp. 157-178. More on the medieval use of the *Zhouli* in state administrative and ritual systems is discussed below.

<sup>26</sup> The Offices of Spring were responsible for ritual activities and constituted the third of six major institutional divisions featured in the *Zhouli*. See *Zhouli zhushu*, chap. 17, p. 755a-b, chap. 25, p. 808b-c (春官).

<sup>27</sup> *Zhouli zhushu*, chap. 17, p. 755a7-9 (大卜). The term *jin* 祲, translated as ‘invasion’ here, refers to the encroachment of *yin* and *yang* on one another or the clashing of these two forces. The inspection of these ‘invasions’ tends to pop up in records of administrations that adopted the *Zhouli* model, but the staying power and pervasiveness of the practice is well described in the following passage from the mid-tenth century *Jiu Tangshu*: “Generally, methods involving technical calculations and divination by physical shape emerge from the *yinyang* lineage traditions. From Liu Xiang’s (79-8 BCE) elaborations on the discourse in the ‘Great Plan’ [chapter of the *Documents Classic*] to the methods transmitted from Jing Fang (77-37 BCE) to Jiao Gan (c. 70-10 BCE), all surveyed *qi* and inspected invasions to pronounce and discern the coming of disasters and marvels” [夫術數占相之法，出于陰陽家流。自劉向演鴻範之言，京房傳焦贛之法，莫不望氣視祲，懸知災異之來]。 *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 191, p. 5087 (方伎列傳). For more on the responsibilities of the *shijin* or “watchers for invasions,” see Needham and Wang (1959), vol. 3, pp. 475-477; Goh (1967), pp. 80-83. For a description of similar posts in the Han Imperial Observatory, see Bielenstein (1980), p. 23; Hulsewé (1979), p. 40ff.

<sup>28</sup> These ‘ten effulgences’ are: [1] *jin* 祲 ([invasive]): the clashing of *yin* and *yang qi* (陰陽氣相侵也); [2] *xiang* 象 (image): like a scarlet bird (如赤鳥也); [3] *xi* 鑷 (whittled); the *qi* surrounding the sun glowingly refracts back at the sun (日旁氣四面反鄉如輝狀也); [4] *jian* 監 (imprisoned): cloudy *qi* surrounds the edges of the sun (雲氣臨日也); [5] *an* 闇 (dark): the sun or moon are eclipsed (日月食也); [6] *meng* 瞢 (dim): sun and moon are dim and dull and they emit no light (日月瞢瞢無光也); [7] *mi* 彌 (pervasive): a white halo fills the heavens (白虹彌天也); [8] *xu* 敘 (sequential): clouds that proceed in a sequence; for example ‘mountain covering sun’ (雲有次叙如山在上也); [9] *ji* 躋 (ascending): rising *qi* (*shengqi* 升氣); [10] *xiang* 想 (perceived): glow (*huiguang* 輝光). *Zhouli zhushu*, chap. 25, p. 808b-c (視祲). Similar lists, with minor variants, are found in *Jinshu*, chap. 12, pp. 330-331 (天文志); *Suishu*, chap. 29, pp. 571-572 (天文志); *Songshu*, chap. 52, p. 1068 (天文志). For English translations of the *Zhouli* list, see Needham and Wang (1959), vol. 3, pp. 475-477; Goh (1967), pp. 80-83.



mutual encroachment) of *yin* and *yang qi*" (陰陽氣相侵). The duties of these Inspectors were very similar to those of the Guardians of the Regulations (*baozhang shi* 保章氏) under the Great Scribe-Astrologer, who were not only responsible for astrological, chronomantic, and omenological reports aimed at distinguishing auspicious from inauspicious and predicting disaster, but also "investigating celestial-terrestrial harmony through the twelve winds to distinguish between the malevolent and the propitious" (以十有二風，察天地之和、命乖別之妖祥).<sup>29</sup> Thus, the observation and interpretation of *qi* in heaven and earth is associated with both divination and astrology in the *Zhouli*. Inspectors of Invasions and Guardians of the Regulations were both essentially astromantic watchers for anomalous *qi* phenomena, and they both tended to focus on inauspicious omens for signs of disaster.

Early imperial histories like the first century BCE *Shiji* and the first century CE *Hanshu* plainly mention the presence of state diviners and astrologers during the Zhou,<sup>30</sup> Qin,<sup>31</sup> and Han dynasties.<sup>32</sup> According to

<sup>29</sup> *Hanshu*, chap. 28, p. 1542 (地理志). These Guardians upheld statutes related to both the celestial patterns and systems involving the correlations between specific geographic regions and astrological configurations. They were essentially guardians of the seasonal regulations, which meant that much of their work involved the calendar. For more on the responsibilities of the *Zhouli*'s Great Scribe-Astrologer and subordinate offices, see Goh (1967), pp. 76-84.

<sup>30</sup> *Shiji*, chap. 128, p. 3223 (龜策列傳), for example, mentions "the house of Zhou's offices of divination" (*Zhoushi buguan* 周室卜官).

<sup>31</sup> According to *Hanshu*, chap. 19, p. 726 (百官公卿表), Han Thearch Jing 景帝 (r. 157-141 BCE; Liu Qi 劉啓) restored the Qin post of Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*fengchang* 奉常) in 152 BCE using the title 'taichang' 太常 (also translated as Chamberlain for Ceremonials). Each of the Chamberlain's six subordinate branch offices is said to have been headed by a director (*ling* 令) and vice-director (*lingcheng* 令丞), one of whom was a Grand Diviner. See *Hanshu*, chap. 19, p. 726 (百官公卿表). Directors of each of the six offices included [1] a grand musician (*taiyue* 太樂), [2] a grand liturgist (*taizhu* 太祝), [3] a grand sacrificial butcher (*taizai* 太宰), [4] a grand scribe-astrologer, [5] a grand diviner, and [6] a grand physician (*taiyi* 太醫). The same *Hanshu* passage goes on to claim that in 104 BCE, Thearch Wu 武帝 (r. 141-87; Liu Che 劉徹) instituted a series of broad administrative changes, establishing the post of Erudite of the Grand Diviner (*taibu boshi* 太卜博士) following Qin dynasty precedents. For more on these changes, both administrative and symbolic, see Loewe (1986), pp. 172-173. There is also mention of a Qin dynasty grand diviner in the *Shiji*, and references to imperial diviners in recovered Qin bureaucratic and legal manuscripts. For the former, see *Shiji*, chap. 87, p. 2562 (李斯列傳). For the latter, see Hulsewé (1985), pp. 85, 176.

<sup>32</sup> *Hanshu*, chap. 19, p. 726 (百官公卿表). Chu Shaosun's 褚少孫 (c. 104-c. 30 BCE) early to mid-first century BCE supplements to the *Shiji* maintain that the Office of the Grand Diviner originated at the beginning of the Western Han dynasty and existed during his lifetime. His 'Rizhe liezhuan' 日者列傳 (Arrayed Traditions of

early imperial received and recovered texts, the Qin dynasty offices of Grand Diviner and Grand Scribe-Astrologer were adopted by the Western Han court sometime during the second century BCE, but the former was subsumed into the staff of the latter during the Eastern Han, no later than 128 CE.<sup>33</sup> This apparent subordination of divination to astrology coincides with an increasingly apparent imperial emphasis on astro-calendrical practices.<sup>34</sup> More specifically, it seems to reflect a decline of royal lineage worship in the manner of the Zhou and a new emphasis on astral deities in

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Hemerologists) and ‘Guice liezhuan’ 龜策列傳 (Arrayed Traditions of Turtles and Stalks) both explicitly refer to the office at the end and in the years after the reign of Thearch Wu. Basic responsibilities of the Han dynasty Grand Scribe-Astrologer included the formulation of the calendar and the observation and recording of astronomical and meteorological phenomena. For more on the Han institution, see Bielenstein (1980), pp. 19, 22-23; Kalinowski (2009), pp. 344-345. On the corresponding Tang office, see Schafer (1977), pp. 11-16. For a detailed diachronic history of the office, see Goh (1967).

<sup>33</sup> See *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 10, p. 438 (本紀); *Dongguan Hanji jiaozhu*, chap. 6, p. 213 (順烈梁皇后), both recording that the Grand Scribe-Astrologer oversaw divinatory consultations during the spring of 128 CE. For a similar statement, see *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 6, p. 3144 (禮儀). See also *Hanguan liuzhong*, chap. 1, p. 6 (漢官), recording that of the thirty-seven expectant officials (*daizhao* 待詔) under the grand astrologer, there were three plastrancers, three *Yijing* achilleamancers, and a number of experts of mathematical astrology, hemerologists, exorcists, tomb guardians, and physicians. The *Hou Hanshu* also claims that sites for major Eastern Han imperial burials were selected and prepared by a minister of works (*sikong* 司空), while dates for burial ceremonies were divined (*bu*) by a grand astrologer. *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 6, p. 3144 (禮儀/大喪). The earlier *Xu Hanshu* 續漢書 (Supplement to the Documents of Han)—attributed to Sima Biao 司馬彪 (243-306) but only surviving in fragments—also maintains that a grand scribe-astrologer was expected to divine a date for major burials during the Eastern Han, specifically in cases of the death of a Son of Heaven. See *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 9, p. 391 n. 1 (本紀/孝獻帝). The subordination of divinatory to astrological imperial posts during the Eastern Han is further supported by *Tang liudian*, chap. 14, p. 411 (太常寺), pointing out that expectant official members of the Eastern Han dynasty Imperial Observatory (*Lingtai daizhao yuan* 靈臺待詔員) also included three pyro-plastrancers (*guibu* 龜卜) and three *Yijing* achilleamancers (*Yi shi* 易筮).

<sup>34</sup> Kalinowski points out that the contents of the late first century CE *Hanshu* “Shushu” bibliographic division closely match the basic responsibilities of the Eastern Han Office of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer. He argues that “Studies of the social and cultural history of the Office [of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer] suggest that its existence was largely motivated by religious considerations, as was the policy of subjecting astro-calendrical practices to state control.” Kalinowski (2005), p. 110. For a detailed study of the divination (including astrology) texts catalogued in the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, see Raphals (2008-2009).

the imperial Han ritual system.<sup>35</sup> By joining together offices responsible for astrology and general mantic techniques, practices involving the attentive observation of *qi* to interpret human fortune were brought, so to speak, under one roof. This is the period in which the term *zhanhou* first begins to appear in received texts, and although it is not portrayed as a state responsibility, similar techniques like *shijin*, *houqi* 候氣 (watching for *qi*), and *wangqi* 望氣 (surveying *qi*) are, and they are commonly linked to the Grand Scribe-Astrologer in Han and medieval imperial texts.<sup>36</sup>

Administrative records tell us very little about the exact duties of the Grand Diviner or the Grand Scribe-Astrologer in the centuries immediately following the Han, but both posts continue to be mentioned in texts dating to or describing the early medieval period.<sup>37</sup> Northern Wei Thearch Xiaowen 孝文帝 (r. 471-499; Tuoba Hong 拓拔宏 or Yuan Hong 元宏 [467-499]) adopted much of the *Zhouli*'s system of administration in the 490s, during his sweeping late fifth century CE sinicization campaigns.<sup>38</sup> And,

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<sup>35</sup> For additional comments on an obvious shift from human historic lineage founders to astral deities as sources of authority before the start of the Western Han, see Cook (2009), p. 239.

<sup>36</sup> According to the *Hanshu*, "The Grand Scribe-Astrologer tracks astral bodies and surveys *qi*, while the Grand Diviner divines turtle-shells and yarrow stalks" (太史治星望氣，及太卜龜蓍). *Hanshu*, chap. 96, p. 3913 (西域傳). The Grand Scribe-Astrologer is associated with *houqi* in *Hanshu*, chap. 99, p. 4170 (王莽傳) and *wangqi* in *Sanguo zhi*, chap. 6, p. 176 (董二袁劉傳). The office kept track of the celestial patterns but had two aides (丞), one in the Hall of Light (*mingtang* 明堂) and one in the Numinous Observatory (*lingtai* 靈臺). The latter was reportedly in charge of "watching for the *qi* of sun, moon, and stars" (候日月星氣). *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 115, p. 3572 (百官志). According to the *Hanguan* 漢官 (Han Offices), the Numinous Observatory employed over forty men, including fourteen observers of stars, two of the sun, three of wind, three of the sun dial's shadow, seven of the tuning of bells, and thirteen observers of *qi*. *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 72, p. 2330 (董卓列傳). For a few relatively detailed descriptions of the methods of *houqi* or 'watching for *qi*' from received primary texts, see *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 30, p. 3016 (律曆志); *Suishu*, chap. 16, p. 394 (律曆志); *Jinshu*, chap. 12, p. 336 (天文志). For secondary studies, see Needham and Wang (1965), vol. 4, pp. 135-141, 186-192; Bodde (1959), p. 355; Chen (1991), p. 42; Liu (1992); Huang and Chang (1996), pp. 82-106.

<sup>37</sup> Grand Scribe-Astrologers are frequently mentioned in texts dating to or describing the Three Kingdoms, Jin, and Northern Wei periods; Grand Diviners are not. For clear but rare mentions of Grand Diviners placed in, respectively, the mid-third, mid-fourth, and mid-fifth century, see *Quan Sanguo wen*, chap. 32, p. 11a2-3 (魏 32); *Quan Jinwen*, chap. 32, p. 7a3-6 (何充); *Weishu*, chap. 93, p. 1988 (恩倖/王叡). The Grand Diviner appears to have remained subordinate to the Grand Scribe-Astrologer until the late fifth century.

<sup>38</sup> These late fifth century campaigns included the relocation of the Northern or Tuoba-Wei 拓跋魏 capital from Pingcheng 平城 (present-day Datong) to Luoyang,

the Northern Zhou, following the Western Wei's adoption of the *Zhouli*-based administrative structure, is said to have included a place for at least one Grand Diviner in charge of a staff responsible for the same four techniques featured in the *Zhouli*.<sup>39</sup> The Inspectors of Invasions and the Guardians of the Regulations resurface in mid-medieval imperial texts, where both are closely associated with the Grand Scribe-Astrologer, astrology, and Heaven in descriptions of the administration and in encyclopedic classifications.<sup>40</sup> Bibliographies, however, which we will examine below, tell a different story.

The Northern Qi Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*taichang si* 太常寺) reportedly included a Subordinate Office of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer (*taishi shu* 太史署), but no corresponding Office of the Grand Diviner. Instead, two Grand Scribe-Astrologers concurrently directed their own office along with the Imperial Observatory (*lingtai* 靈臺) and a Bureau of the Grand Diviner (*taibu ju* 太卜局).<sup>41</sup>

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the changing of the royal clan's surname from Tuoba 拓跋 to Yuan 元, and the official adoption of the *Zhouli* as a standard bureaucratic and ritual model. For more comprehensive discussions on changes instituted by Thearch Xiaowen at this time, see Jenner (1980), pp. 28-31, 58; Graff (2002), p. 98. Xiaowen's reformed administration system is said to have included the posts of Erudite of the Grand Diviner (*taibu boshi* 太卜博士) and Erudite of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer (*taishi boshi* 太史博士), suggesting that the offices of both of these 'Grands' were restored following *Zhouli* precedents. *Weishu*, chap. 113, p. 2992 (官氏志).

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, *Zhoushu*, chap. 2, p. 36 (帝紀/文帝), chap. 24, p. 404 (盧辯傳); *Beishi*, chap. 30, p. 1101 (盧辯傳), chap. 77, p. 2612 (裴政傳); *Suishu*, chap. 66, p. 1549 (裴政傳), all claiming that Thearch Wen 文帝 (r. 535-551; Yuan Baoju 元寶炬) of the Western Wei planned to follow Northern Wei precedent by fully implementing the *Zhouli* administrative system, but passed away before accomplishing this task. This *Zhouli*-based system was finally put into effect in 556 CE overturning Han and Cao-Wei models, then re-adopted the following year when the Northern Zhou was formally established. The *Tongdian*'s reconstruction of the Northern Zhou administrative structure, even with the many new posts instituted at this time, faithfully retains the basic structure of the *Zhouli*'s offices of the Great Diviner and Great Astrologer. *Tongdian*, chap. 39, pp. 222a-223c (職官); *Bei Zhou liudian*, chap. 4, pp. 301-303 (春官). All of this well-defined structure aside, the *Zhouli* system never seems to have taken hold during the Northern Zhou, and by the end of this short-lived dynasty, many Qin and Han offices of rank are said to have already been inserted back into the administration. *Zhoushu*, chap. 24, pp. 404; *Beishi*, chap. 30, p. 1101; *Suishu*, chap. 27, p. 771. See also, Pearce (2001), p. 177; Tomida (1980), p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> For example, the late fifth century *Songshu* states that celestial patterns, which was once the responsibility of the Guardian of the Statutes, is now managed by the Grand Scribe-Astrologer. *Songshu*, chap. 39, p. 1229 (百官志).

<sup>41</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 27, p. 755 (百官中/北齊官制). Commentary claims that the bureau "handled all crack and yarrow [consultations]" (*zhang zhu bushi* 掌諸卜筮), but note

The Sui court initially adopted the Northern Qi administrative system and corresponding offices,<sup>42</sup> but it reestablished a Bureau of the Grand Diviner in the early years of the dynasty. Headed by a Director of Divination (*taibu ling* 太卜令), this bureau was a subordinate office in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices. There is no mention of duties involving the watching for, investigation, observation, or interpretation of macrocosmic *qi*. However, the Grand Scribe-Astrologer Section (*taishi cao* 太史曹), a subordinate office in the Department of the Imperial Library (*bishu sheng* 祕書省) during the Sui, was headed by two directors who supervised two Managers of the Calendar (*sili* 司曆) and four Supervising Watchers (*jianhou* 監候), one for calendrical sequences (*li* 曆), one for the celestial patterns, one for the clepsydra (*louke* 漏刻), and one for ‘the inspection of invasive *qi*’ (*shijin* 視稜).<sup>43</sup>

Supervising Watchers were recognized at the start of the Tang, until 624, when their responsibilities were shifted to the Five Offices (*wuguan* 五官) in the Bureau of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer (*taishi ju* 太史局).<sup>44</sup> These Five Offices were each responsible for one of the five seasons (four seasons, plus a ‘mid-year’ [*zhongguan* 中官] season). Their staff included two Guardians of the Regulations, three Supervising Watchers, two Managers of the Calendar, and one Gentleman-Attendant of the Observatory (lit. Numinous Terrace; *lingtai lang* 靈臺郎) charged with “watching for changes in the celestial patterns” (*hou tianwen zhi bian* 候天文之變).<sup>45</sup> They, along with their staff and the Grand Scribe-Astrologers, were responsible for submitting annual reports on the conditions of the seasons along with “all portents verified as auspicious through *zhanhou*” (所占候祥驗).<sup>46</sup> While officials in the Five Offices were immediately responsible for the observation and interpretation of variations in the celestial and terrestrial patterns, administrative records of the Tang also list *zhanhou* as a responsibility of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer.<sup>47</sup> Between the early Tang and 758 CE, the

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that the two Grand Scribe-Astrologers were ultimately in charge of traditional forms of solicited divination along with their customary duties involving astrology, the calendar, and aeromantic watching.

<sup>42</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 28, p. 776 (百官志).

<sup>43</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 28, p. 775 (百官志).

<sup>44</sup> The Grand Scribe-Astrologer Section was renamed Directorate of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer (*taishi jian* 太史監) at the start of the Tang, then renamed Bureau of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer (*taishi ju* 太史局) in 621. *Xin Tangshu*, chap. 47, p. 1216 (百官志).

<sup>45</sup> *Xin Tangshu*, chap. 47, p. 1216 (百官志).

<sup>46</sup> *Tang huiyao*, chap. 63, p. 1285 (史館).

<sup>47</sup> See *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 43, p. 1855 (職官志), stating that “the Grand Scribe-Astrologer managed the observation and investigation of the celestial patterns, the determination of the calendar’s numbers, and generally led all of his subordinates

office of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer switched names a number of times and was moved back and forth between the Court of Imperial Sacrifices and the Department of the Imperial Library. In 758, however, the Supervising Watchers were reestablished in the Office of the Imperial Observatory (*si tiantai* 司天臺), where they appear to have remained through the rest of the Tang.<sup>48</sup> For example, an imperial decree dated to the twelfth lunar month of 840 CE declares that “the Manager of the Celestial Terrace (i.e., Observatory) watches to divine (*zhanhou*) disaster and propitious portents” (司天臺占候災祥) before it chastises members of this office for “frequently interacting with [high] ranking imperial officials and motley folk” (多與朝官並雜色人交游). The decree then forbids this from continuing, adding that the Censorate (*yushi tai* 御史臺) will conduct its own investigation into the matter.<sup>49</sup>

In short, although *zhanhou* and similar techniques are classified as both astrological and general mantic practices in the ancient *Zhouli* administrative model, they were far more frequently associated with astrology and the Grand Scribe-Astrologer in the Han, Northern Qi, Northern Zhou, Sui, and Tang administrations. This is also the case in medieval encyclopedic classification systems, which tend to place practices like *zhanhou*, *houqi*, and *wangqi* in sections devoted to ‘Heaven’ (*tian* 天), as is the case for the two encyclopedias we cite from below in the section on ‘*Zhanhou* Texts’. Other early encyclopedias, like the early seventh century court-sponsored *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Categorically Compiled Arts and Letters), also tend to place *zhanhou* and related practices in encyclopedic entries meant to define ‘Heaven’, but not exclusively. The term *zhanhou* is also found in entries featuring earth, clouds, mist, mountains, bells, omens, transcendents, imperial offices, the thearch, and the military.<sup>50</sup> As a whole, *zhanhou* is presented as a practice focused on the heavens, but not exclusively, and it is not nearly as intently focused on celestial patterns or stellar bodies as general astrology.<sup>51</sup>

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in the divinatory watching for changes in the sun, moon, stars, or markers, along with all anomalies in wind, clouds, *qi*, or hue” (太史令掌觀察天文，稽定曆數。凡日月星辰之變，風雲氣色之異，率其屬而占候之).

<sup>48</sup> *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 43, p. 1856 (職官志); *Xin Tangshu*, chap. 47, p. 1216 (百官志). For their presence during the Song, see *Songshi*, chap. 168, p. 3996 (職官志).

<sup>49</sup> *Tang huiyao*, chap. 44, p. 933 (太史局); *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 36, p. 1336 (天文志).

<sup>50</sup> There is a long entry entitled ‘*Zhanhou*’ in the ‘Bing’ 兵 (Military) section of the encyclopedia. See *Taiping yulan*, chap. 328, pp. 3b5-8b13 (兵部 59).

<sup>51</sup> The great early eighth century imperial astrological-astronomical encyclopedia *Tang Kaiyuan zhanjing* 唐開元占經 (Astral-Divination Classic of the Tang Kaiyuan [Reign-Period]) [attributed to Qutanxida 瞿曇悉達 (fl. 718)] contains almost nothing on *zhanhou* or related practices. Where watching or observation is mentioned, it tends to focus of astral bodies like the sun and moon.

*Zhanhou* is not mentioned in the *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise, but when it does start to appear in major Tang and Song court-sponsored bibliographies, either in comments or in text titles, it is primarily associated with the Five Agents. For example, the conclusion to the ‘Five Agents’ bibliographic subdivision in the *Suishu* claims that: “The [Northern] Zhou administration distinguished between Guardian of Regulations, Ascender to View (*fengxiang* 馮相), Master Pyro-Plastromancer, Achilleamancer, Oneiromancer, and Inspector of Invasions (*shijin* 眡祲), yet as official duties of the Grand Scribe-Astrologer, they were actually managed as a collection” (周官則分在保章、馮相、卜師、筮人、占夢、眡祲，而太史之職，實司總之).<sup>52</sup> While this passage might seem to reinforce the view that *zhanhou* and related practices were primarily associated with astrology, it appears in the historian’s comments to the ‘Five Agents’ bibliographic subdivision, where texts with *zhanhou* or *wangqi* in their titles are classified. The two *zhanhou* texts included in the *Book of Sui* bibliographic treatise (see Table 2 p. 108) are both classified as Five Agents texts, and a majority of the other *zhan* and *hou* texts are as well.<sup>53</sup> The titles of these texts feature the observation of clouds, the sun, and the wind to divine human welfare.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the purpose of the Tang dynasty ‘Five Agents’ bibliographic subdivision

<sup>52</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 34, pp. 1039-1040 (經籍志).

<sup>53</sup> While it is easy to understand why a text titled *Tianwen yunqi tu* 天文占雲氣圖 (Charts on the Astrological Divination of Cloud Qi) would be catalogued as a ‘Celestial Patterns’ rather than a ‘Five Agents’ text, at least one exception—a title that does not feature any terms referring to sun, moon, or stars (i.e., general astrology)—is the *Hou yunqi* 候雲氣 (Watching for Cloud Qi). *Suishu*, chap. 34, pp. 1020-1021 (經籍志).

<sup>54</sup> For example, the five *hou*-texts—all long-lost—in the ‘Wuxing’ subcategory of the *Suishu* bibliographic treatise are: [1] *Fengjiao yaohou* 風角要候 (Essential Observations on Wind Angles), attributed to Yi Feng 翼奉 (fl. first century BCE); [2] *Fengjiao yaohou*, attributed to Zhangchou Taiyi 章仇太翼 (581?-617?; also known as Lu Taiyi 盧太翼); [3-4] *Zhouyi feihou* 周易飛候 (On-the-Fly Observations from the *Zhouyi*), attributed to Jing Fang; and [5] *Zhouyi sishi hou* 周易四時候 (Observations on the Four Seasons from the *Zhouyi*), also attributed to Jing Fang. These titles are listed in *Suishu*, chap. 34, pp. 1027, 1032 (經籍志). For a Han account of the life of Yi Feng, see *Hanshu* chap. 75, pp. 3167-3178 (眡兩夏侯京翼李傳). For early Tang traditions of Lu Taiyi, see *Suishu*, chap. 78, pp. 1768-1769 (藝術列傳); *Beishi*, chap. 85, pp. 2950-2951 (藝術列傳). Both describe Lu Taiyi as an expert of *zhanhou*. Lu’s *Suishu* tradition is discussed below. For the standard history tradition of Jing Fang, see *Hanshu*, chap. 75, pp. 3161-3167 (眡兩夏侯京翼李傳). The only *wangqi* text catalogued in the *Suishu* bibliographic monograph is an anonymous *Wangqi shu* 望氣書 (Book on Surveying Qi) listed under ‘Five Agents’ in *Suishu*, chap. 34, p. 1038 (經籍志).

is explicitly stated as: “to chronicle ‘crack and yarrow’ and ‘omen observation’” (紀卜筮占候).<sup>55</sup>

Although the mid-twelfth century *Tongzhi* contains a bibliographic subdivision under ‘Celestial Patterns’ devoted to *fengyun qihou zhan* 風雲氣候占 (divination based on wind, clouds, *qi*, and seasonal conditions), two of the bibliography’s three *zhanhou* texts are listed under ‘Five Agents’ (along with the only *wangqi* text in the catalogue). A third text with *zhanhou* in its title is listed under ‘Celestial Patterns’, as are two *zhanfeng* 占風 (divination) texts and one text with *zhanyun* 占雲 (cloud divination) in its title. Texts focused on specific atmospheric or meteorological phenomena seem to be classified as astrological in this system, while texts featuring more general notions of *qi* are listed under ‘Five Agents’. This trend back to astrology, however, does not last. The mid-fourteenth century *Songshi* lists four *zhanhou* texts, two under ‘Five Agents’, one under ‘Celestial Patterns’, and one under ‘Military Texts’ (*bingshu* 兵書).<sup>56</sup> There are no *wangqi* texts in the catalogue, but one title featuring *houqi* is included under ‘Five Agents’, as are five of the ten *zhanfeng* or ‘wind divination’ texts in the bibliography (four others are listed under ‘Military Texts’).

*Zhanhou* shares strong links to much earlier named techniques focused on the observation and interpretation of *qi* in the heavens. Some of these techniques were explicitly associated with state astrologers or general astrology,<sup>57</sup> but medieval bibliographic and narrative materials link *zhanhou* to terrestrial and atmospheric *qi* more frequently than to stars or general astrology.<sup>58</sup> As an interpretive and observational technique focused on *qi*,

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<sup>55</sup> *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 46, p. 1964 (經籍志); *Tang liudian*, chap. 10, p. 300 (秘書省). The pair of compounds mentioned in this passage seem to refer, respectively, to provoked and unprovoked forms of divination.

<sup>56</sup> *Songshi*, chap. 206, pp. 5234, 5241, 5245; chap. 207, p. 5283 (藝文志).

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Pankenier’s translation of the idealized description of specialized military astrologers employed by the royal army in the late Zhou *Liutao*, chap. 3, p. 15b1-2 (龍韜/王翼 18). Called ‘Celestial Pattern Men’ (*tianwen ren* 天文人), these astrologer-advisors were purportedly “in charge of observing the movements of the heavenly bodies, watching the winds and atmospheric phenomena, projecting [the auspiciousness of] seasons and days, studying the signs and verifying predictions, examining [the implications of] natural disasters and anomalies, to understand the mechanisms [sc. ‘triggers’] that move people’s minds” (主司星曆，候風氣，推時日，考符驗，校災異，知人心去就之機). Pankenier (2015), p. 20.

<sup>58</sup> Li Chunfeng’s 李淳風 (602-670) mid-seventh century *Yisi zhan* 乙巳占 (Yi-si Year Divination), for example, describes divination by wind (*zhanfeng* 占風) and the watching of wind (*houfeng* 候風) [using pitch-pipes or feathers] as mantic techniques focused on anomalies in the regular patterns of “terrestrial *qi* under the heavens” (天下地氣). *Yisi zhan* chap. 10, pp. 2a-b (#68-69). Techniques like watching



*zhanhou* also shared much in common with contemporary methods of medical diagnosis focused on the observation and diagnosis of *qi* in the human body.<sup>59</sup> Katherine Park points out that classical Western writers also regularly described astronomy, meteorology, and medicine in the same terms and rarely, if ever, isolated their observations from “direct, sensory engagement” with the natural phenomena they observed and studied.<sup>60</sup> The methods of these early ‘observers’ were theoretical and based on empirical evidence, but just like early Chinese forms of observation, their practices continued to be associated with “natural divination” and “sense-based knowledge.”<sup>61</sup> As a form of interpretive or contemplative observation, *zhanhou* shares much in common with the kind of ‘natural divination’ that Park finds in classical and medieval Western discourse on the divinatory sciences. Park emphasizes at least two points about observation in the classical West that overlap with and help clarify the meaning of *hou* in Han and medieval China. First, the root meaning of observation during this period was more confirmational (e.g., to watch; to attentively wait for) than experimental (e.g., to test; to submit to trial), and second, observation was primarily a personal and predictive activity.<sup>62</sup> Although these two points help defend my choice of ‘observation’ or ‘watching’ for *hou*, the absence of an explicit object leaves much ambiguity.

So, what was being observed and what was being divined in early forms of *zhanhou*? The evidence collected in this study suggests that a variety of celestial, human, and terrestrial phenomena were observed to divine human fortune (or the immediate causes of it). Some practitioners are said to have lifted their heads to *zhanhou*, and similar practices are well-documented in royal and imperial institutions responsible for keeping track of the celestial patterns. *Zhanhou*, however, is not a stellar-based or

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for *qi* (*houqi* 候氣) and divination based on meteorological phenomena (*qixiang zhan* 氣象占) are similarly described as terrestrial just much if not more than celestial or astrological techniques in the *Yisi zhan*, and they much more concentrated at the end of the text. For more on the *Yisi zhan*, and for references to Dunhuang materials that match certain parts of the text, see Harper (2010), pp. 73-76.

<sup>59</sup> For more on the “easy communication” and congruencies between the fields of divination and medicine, see Harper (1998), p. 46; (1999a), pp. 91-110; Lloyd and Sivin (2002), pp. 231-232. See also, Lo and Yoeli-Tlalim (2008), pp. 143-187, illustrating how early Chinese astrological and medical practices informed one another and shared common *qi*-based and correlative interpretive models.

<sup>60</sup> For a number of examples, see Park (2011), pp. 16-20.

<sup>61</sup> Park (2011), pp. 18-20, featuring the views of Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Pliny (23-79). See also, Park (2011), pp. 15-16, for a good summary of the kind of phenomena that natural philosophers tended to observe. For an excellent recent work on the seer in ancient Greece, see Flower (2018).

<sup>62</sup> See, respectively, Park (2011), pp. 18, 20.

general form of astrology.<sup>63</sup> Nor is it primarily a medical,<sup>64</sup> hemerological,<sup>65</sup> or omenological practice. It shares much in common with these practices, but it is not solely focused on the heavens, the human body, or the earth. And, it is not restricted to the interpretation of any particular visible natural phenomenon like wind, clouds, or rain. It often acts as an umbrella term for a wide range of already traditional techniques focused on the interpretation of specific varieties of *qi* or natural phenomena in the visible macrocosm (Heaven-as-nature [*tian* 天]; heaven-and-earth [*tian* 天地]).

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<sup>63</sup> Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 (fl. 736 CE) *Shiji zhengyi* 史記正義 (Correct meaning of the *Shiji*) uses the term *zhanhou* five times in his commentary on the "Tianguan shu" 天官書 (Treatise on the Celestial Offices). Though his comments are clearly astrological in nature, *zhanhou* does not appear to be used as a true compound but rather as a general reference to divination and observation.

<sup>64</sup> Two rare comments explicitly tying *zhanhou* to medical practice include a comment attributed to Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) in Liu Su's 劉肅 (fl. 759-820) *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語 (New Tales of the Great Tang [Dynasty]), which claims that doctors employ different versions of *zhanhou*. *Da Tang xiyu ji* (T 2087), chap. 51, p. 877c24. And, the official histories of the Tang dynasty both describe the office of the Court Gentleman for Personnel Evaluations (*kaogong langzhong* 考功郎中) as a post responsible for the recommendation of court appointments. The twenty-third of twenty-seven 'most excellent' (*zui* 最) designations awarded by the Court Gentleman for Personnel Evaluations is called 'omen observation and medical divination' (i.e., iatromancy) (*zhanhou yibu* 占候醫卜) and is given to men who have established a pattern of efficacious diagnosis and use of 'formulas and techniques'. *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 43, p. 1823 (職官志); *Xin Tangshu*, chap. 46, p. 1191 (百官志).

<sup>65</sup> Pei Yin's commentary on the title of the *Shiji*'s 'Rizhe lizhuan' begins with a quote from the *Mozi* 墨子: "Mozi was proceeding north in Qi 齊 when he met a hemerologist (*rizhe* 日者; lit. dayist) who said, 'Lord Di 帝 kills black dragons in the north on this day, and you sir, because of your dark complexion, cannot proceed north.' Mozi did not listen to him and subsequently went north, but when he reached the Black (Zi 淄) River, he turned back. The hemerologist said, 'I told you sir that you could not go north.'" Pei Yin's comments read: "So, for the ancients, omen watchers and 'crack and yarrow' (*bushi* 卜筮; turtle-shell and yarrow-stalk divination) specialists were commonly called 'hemerologists/dayists'." Sima Zhen's 司馬貞 (679-732) much later *Shiji suoyin* 史記索隱 (Searching for the hidden in the *Shiji*) comments seem to take up the triple duty of explaining the *Shiji* title, the *Mozi* passage, and Pei Yin's explanation. Sima Zhen's comments read: "According to the *Mozi*, 'crack and yarrow' diviners are referred to as 'hemerologists/dayists', so crack and yarrow diviners, omen observers, and [diviners of] seasons and days are all called 'dayists'." *Shiji* chap. 127, p. 3215 (日者列傳). The ambiguity in the term *rizhe* in this account—and in the *Shiji*'s 'Rizhe lizhuan'—is clearly defended in Harper and Kalinowski (2017), pp. 59, 109. The first reference is from Liu Lexian's "Daybooks: A Type of Popular Hemerological Manual"; the second is from Harper's "Daybooks in the Context of Manuscript Culture."

While meteorological conditions, atmospherics, the firmament, astral phenomena, situations, signs in nature, natural events, disasters, and omens have all been proposed as either translations for *hou* or as supplements to make up for the lack of an explicit object, I contend that ‘macrocosm’ or ‘atmospheric *qi*-conditions’ not only represent common implicit objects in the aforementioned translations, but are also the most common foci of Han and medieval *zhanhou*—when the term refers to a discrete form of divination. Nevertheless, the broad range of phenomena associated with *zhanhou*, the fact that the term is open to multiple readings, and the fact that it was classified and used in very different ways by Han and medieval writers all helped perpetuate its transmission through the medieval period.

### Early Occurrences

The earliest attested occurrences of the term *zhanhou* are found in Wang Chong’s 王充 (27-100?) late first century CE *Lunheng* 論衡 (Discourses Weighed). The first instance appears in a discussion about whether Heaven possesses the agency to initiate change, Wang Chong claims that: “There are changes and anomalies, so there is *zhanhou*. Because of the *yinyang* in all things, they begin and they end. Stepping upon frost to discern when hard ice will come is the way of Heaven-as-Nature.”<sup>66</sup> Wang seems to be stipulating that *zhanhou* and *yinyang* depend on—and essentially represent—knowledge of seasonal or *qi* cycles or conditions. ‘Divination based on seasonal conditions’ would be an accurate translation here, but the second occurrence in the *Lunheng* is accompanied by less detail.

The second occurrence of the term appears in the following passage:

People cannot make the auspicious and inauspicious fleeting hues that appear on their faces; the hues appear on their own. Heaven-and-earth is like the human body, and its *qi* transforms like facial hues. People are not able to make the hues, so how can heaven-and-earth make the *qi* transform? Manifestations of the transformation of *qi* seem to happen on their own. The transformations appear by themselves, the hues are stimulated on their own, and experts of *zhanhou* depend on this to make pronouncements.

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<sup>66</sup> *Lunheng jiaoshi*, chap. 14, p. 646 (謹告). My translation is informed by Forke (1962), vol. 1, p. 102; Kalinowski (2011), p. 70. The former translates *zhanhou* as “determined beforehand,” the latter as “les phénomènes observés.” The comment on frost and ice is first found in the *Classic of Changes*. See *Zhouyi zhengyi*, chap. 1, p. 18a (坤).

吉凶蜚色見於面，人不能爲，色自發也。天地猶人身，氣變猶蜚色。人不能爲蜚色，天地安能爲氣變？然則氣變之見，殆自然也。變自見，色自發，占候之家，因以言也。<sup>67</sup>

Here, Wang Chong clearly mentions experts of *zhanhou* and attributes their powers of prediction to the careful observation and interpretation of transformations of *qi* in the macrocosm; transformations that transpire much like they do in the microcosmic human body. 'Divination based on the transformation of *qi*' better fits this context than 'divination based on seasonal conditions', but they are both more generally forms of omen watching, mantic observation, or aeromancy.

Wang's use of the term in the *Lunheng* is ambiguous and—as far as received records show—new, making any kind of confident claim regarding its meaning in these two instances difficult to defend with any certainty. According to Wang Chong, experts of *zhanhou* rely on knowledge of *qi* rather than an immediate connection or instantaneous moral resonance with the ultimate generator of this material and spiritual 'stuff'. For Wang, *zhanhou* seems to refer to a mantic-diagnostic technique based on knowledge of seasonal cycles and the observation of *qi* in "heaven-and-earth." And although much of the *Lunheng* questions and critiques notions of divine power (e.g., the idea that Heaven directly intervenes in the affairs of man),<sup>68</sup> the existence of a greater power is never denied. The macrocosm is holistic and spontaneous, but it is also spiritually charged by a divine Heaven too distant and different to fathom, let alone respond in any meaningful way to human actions. The workings of the observable macrocosm and the microcosmic human body are, however, related to Heaven through *qi*.

Wang argues that Heaven abides but does not act purposefully and does not respond to human actions in any caring or direct way. Human beings do, however, live in a world that is spontaneously sustained, distantly generated, and 'hosted' by it.

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<sup>67</sup> *Lunheng jiaoshi*, chap. 18, p. 785 (自然). My translation is informed by Forke (1962), vol. 1, p. 102; Kalinowski (2011), p. 112. The former translates *zhanhou zhi jia* 占候之家 as "soothsayers," the latter as "spécialistes de l'observation des présages."

<sup>68</sup> Wang Chong clearly critiques what he identifies as a common Han worldview involving a morally resonant cosmos with the potential for human reward and retribution from an anthropomorphic Heaven.

Heaven is the root and human beings are the tips of its branches. If you climb a tree to shake its branches,<sup>69</sup> you won't be able to move its trunk. [But], if the trunk is cut, the myriad sprouts will wither away. Humanity is like a tree's branches; that which is able to provide heat is like the roots and trunk. [Human beings] are generated by Heaven, they hold the *qi* of Heaven, and regard Heaven as host, just like the ears, eyes, hands, and feet are bound to the heart-mind.

天本而人末也。登樹怪其枝，不能動其株。如伐株，萬莖枯矣。人事猶樹枝，能溫猶根株也。[人]生於天，含天之氣，以天為主，猶耳目手足繫於心矣。<sup>70</sup>

Here, the *Lunheng* distances Heaven from human beings, but they are linked through warmth, heat, or interaction with *qi*. Heaven is the host; humankind the guest. Heaven is the roots and the trunk; humankind are the branches. And much like the human body ("ears, eyes, hands, and feet") is linked with the mind, humankind is linked with Heaven, providing just the kind of holistic, interconnected, and spiritual worldview needed to create and sustain practices like *zhanhou*.

Chinese practitioners of *zhanhou* begin to be identified by the late second century CE, when Cai Yong's 蔡邕 (132-192) "Pengcheng Jiang Bohuai bei" 彭城姜伯淮碑 (Stele for Jiang Gong of Pengcheng) claims that Jiang Gong 姜肱 (styled Bohuai 伯淮; c. 97-d. 173) not only studied and understood the *Sanfen* 三墳 (Three Tombs), the *Wudian* 五典 (Five Exemplars), the *Basu* 八索 (Eight Cords), and the *Jiuqiu* 九丘 (Nine Hills),<sup>71</sup> but also "lifted his head for mantic observation, predicted the movements of *yin* and *yang* (i.e., the celestial bodies), possessed the ability to name things and settle affairs, and uniquely manifested proof of his prescience" (俯仰占候，推步陰陽，有名物定事之能，獨見先睹之效).<sup>72</sup>

Less than a century later, Meng Kang 孟康 (200?-249) describes Wei Xian 魏鮮 (fl. second century BCE) as a practitioner of *zhanhou*, as it is recorded in Pei Yin's 裴駟 (fl. 438) *Shiji jijie* 史記集解 (Collected Explanations on the *Shiji*). The *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the [Grand] Scribe-Astrologer) passage that Meng Kang and Pei Yin are commenting on features four different ways to understand the beginning of the year, along

<sup>69</sup> Following the *Lunheng jiaoshi*'s suggested reading of *yao* 搖 (to shake) for *guai* 怪 (strange; to blame).

<sup>70</sup> *Lunheng jiaoshi*, chap. 15, p. 654 (變動). Informed by Kalinowski (2011), p. 112.

<sup>71</sup> For more on this list of four ancient collections of esoteric summoning and prognostication texts, attested by the late Warring States *Zuozhuan*, see Steavu-Balint (2010), pp. 87-88, focusing on interesting connections between the *Sanfen* and the *Sanhuang wen* 三皇文 (Writ of the Three Sovereigns).

<sup>72</sup> *Cai zhonglang ji*, chap. 2, p. 6 (彭城姜伯淮碑).

with the injunction that the first day of each of these new years should involve phenological forecasting. It reads:

Now, to measure the good and bad qualities in the annual harvest, carefully observe the beginning of the year. The beginning of the year is sometimes on <1> the day of the winter solstice, when natal *qi* starts to sprout, and [sometimes] on <2> the day after the *la*-sacrifice,<sup>73</sup> when communities usher out the old year by gathering together to feast, which triggers *yangqi*, so it is called the beginning of the [solar] year. [The beginning of the year is also sometimes] <3> the dawn of the first day of the first [lunar] month, which is the start of the [lunar] year for the ruler, but <4> [the day of] the vernal equinox is the beginning of the four seasons. These four beginnings are days for watching.

凡候歲美惡，謹候歲始。歲始或冬至日，產氣始萌，臘明日，人眾卒歲，一會飲食，發陽氣，故曰初歲。正月旦，王者歲首；立春日，四時之始也。四始者，候之日。<sup>74</sup>

This passage goes on to explain that Wei Xian of the Han gathered everyone together at dawn on the day after the *la*-sacrifice—“when communities usher out the old year by gathering together to feast”—to judge the eight winds (*jue bafeng* 決八風); winds that seem to be triggered by the *yangqi* mentioned in the *Shiji* passage. Meng Kang, in his mid-third century comments on this passage, describes Wei Xian as “a practitioner of divination based on atmospheric conditions” (*zuo zhanhou zhe* 作占候者), apparently based on his observation of winds from the eight directions and his forecasts regarded the coming year.

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<sup>73</sup> This refers to an end-of-the year sacrifice held three days after the winter solstice.

<sup>74</sup> *Shiji*, chap. 27, p. 1340 (天官書); *Hanshu*, chap. 26, p. 1299 (天文志). For another translation of the *Shiji* ‘Tianguan shu’ 天官書 (Treatise on the Celestial Offices) passage, see Pankenier (2013), p. 501, translating the whole chapter (pp. 458-511). Another passage in the *Shiji* ‘Tianguan shu’ explains that Han methods for predicting lunar and solar eclipses do not work outside of the empire. Pei Yin’s *Shiji jijie* quotes the Jin dynasty scholar Jin Zhuo 晉灼 (n.d.), who argues that far across the sea, “the sexagenary system used for [the representation of] dates and times cannot be used for *zhanhou*” (甲乙日時不以占候). *Shiji*, chap. 27, p. 1332 (天官書). The connection between hemerology and *zhanhou*, divinatory observation, or divination based on seasonal conditions suggested in this line is uncommon, yet even more remarkable is that Han and medieval scholars appear to have been fully aware of the localized (and limited) nature of the systems of representation they used for these techniques and technologies.

The *Shiji* continues with phenological and military forecasts that closely resemble how *zhanhou* would eventually be presented in medieval technical descriptions. Based on notions of *yinyang* correlativity, the Five Agents, and the localized (mid-Yellow River valley) observation of wind, clouds, and sunshine (i.e., *qi*), a few of these examples read:

[If] winds arrive from the southern quarter, great drought. Southwesterly, minor drought. Westerly, there will be troops. Northwesterly, broad beans will ripen; minor rains; the advancement of troops. Northerly, there will be a medium-yield harvest. Northeasterly, there will be a supreme-yield harvest. Easterly, much water. Southeasterly, the people will be ill and the annual harvest will be bad.

風從南方來，大旱；西南，小旱；西方，有兵；西北，戎菽爲，小雨，趣兵；北方，爲中歲；東北，爲上歲；東方，大水；東南，民有疾疫，歲惡。

Desirable are whole days with clouds, wind, and sun, and in seasons like these, there are lush and plentiful fruits. In seasons with no clouds but with wind and sun, there are lean but plentiful fruits. In seasons with clouds and wind but no sun, there are lush but scarce fruits. With sun, but no clouds or wind; in seasons like these, crops fail.

欲終日有雲，有風，有日，當其時者，深而多實。無雲有風日，當其時，淺而多實。有雲風，無日，當其時，深而少實。有日，無雲，不風，當其時者，稼有敗。<sup>75</sup>

These early forms of meteorology, atmospheric, and phenology are ancestors of the kind of *zhanhou* described in late Han and medieval texts.<sup>76</sup> While the medieval *zhanhou* texts introduced later in our study do not mention sunshine, they do include divination by clouds and wind, along with a variety of other atmospheric *qi* phenomena, including rain and moon halos or glories.

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<sup>75</sup> *Shiji*, chap. 27, p. 1341 (天官書); *Hanshu*, chap. 26, p. 1299 (天文志). For more on these passages, see Loewe (1994), pp. 202-203.

<sup>76</sup> For a brilliantly concise overview of the connections between religion and agriculture in early China, see Chavannes (1910), 501. For a brief history of modern Chinese phenology, see Koch (2010), pp. 35-36.

## Early Narrative Accounts

How and why was *zhanhou* practiced in Han and medieval China? Was it a fixed technique, a general variety of divination or astrology, or simply a reference to two general practices (divination and watchful observation)? Who practiced it and for whom was it practiced? Was *zhanhou* a learned technique based on long-term application or an inspired skill gained through realization or revelation? How was practical expertise and mastery attained, and how was the technique transmitted? The following discussion introduces and compares early narrative portrayals of adepts of *zhanhou* to help determine how these questions were—or most likely would have been—answered in certain contexts between the late Han and early Tang dynasties.

Three principles will help guide this section of our study. First, narratives are not people, but are inter-subjective, social constructs frequently recalled or reimagined long after the fact. Second, narratives are not inanimate or static constructs that relate information, but are dynamic social transactions, negotiations, and mediations initiated and received by human beings with their own situated aims and perspectives. Third, a person is an adept or expert by virtue of being designated as such. All three of these maxims are particularly applicable to the narratives compared here. I analyze and compare accounts of adepts to help document and identify general perspectives and trends in the narratological commemoration and making of *zhanhou* and its practitioners in early imperial and medieval China.

Table 1 lists almost three dozen skilled practitioners of *zhanhou* identified in late Han through early Tang texts.<sup>77</sup> The left column lists, in chronological order, their names and dates. The right column lists the same figures, but there they are arranged according to the date of the earliest work in which they are identified as adepts of *zhanhou*. Because the ensuing discussion will focus on late Han and medieval descriptions, it follows the order outlined in the right column. Coverage will become increasingly selective as we approach the Tang dynasty and move away from the earliest attested narratives.

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<sup>77</sup> For similar surveys of late Han to Tang practitioners, see Liu (1994), pp. 13-16; He (1989), pp. 123-136.



Table 1. Early adepts of *zhanhou*

In Chronological Order of Lives (to the early Tang)	In Chronological Order of Records (third-seventh centuries CE)
Yellow Thearch 黃帝 (mythical)	Jiang Gong in <i>Cai zhonglang ji</i> [c. 173 CE]
Yaśodharā (c. 563-c. 485)	Kāśyapa in Zhi Qian's <i>Taizi ruiying benqi jing</i> [224]
Kāśyapa (Jiashe) 迦葉 (fl. 483 BCE)	Wei Xian in <i>Shiji jijie</i> [c. 250 (Meng Kang)]
Zi Wei 子韋 (fl. 480 BCE) and Gan Jun 甘均 (fl. fourth century BCE)	Guan Lu in his brother Chen's eulogy in <i>Sanguo zhi</i> [256]
Wei Xian 魏鮮 (fl. second century BCE)	Zhou Qun and Zhang Yu in <i>Sanguo zhi</i> [256]
Xie Yiwu 謝夷吾 (fl. 75 CE)	Yaśodharā: in Kang Senghui's <i>Ṣaṭ-pāramitā-saṃgraha</i> [c. 280]
Lang Zong 郎宗 (fl. 106 CE)	Yellow Thearch in Ge Hong's <i>Baopuzi neipian</i> [317]
Lang Yi 郎顛 (c. 100-c. 134)	Zi Wei and Gan Jun in <i>Baopuzi neipian</i> [317]
Feng Liang 馮良 (c. 48-c. 115)	Feng Liang in <i>Baopuzi neipian</i> [317]
Gongsha Mu 公沙穆 (fl. 155)	Xian Chao in Gan Bao's <i>Soushen ji</i> [322]
Jiang Gong 姜肱 (c. 97-d. 173)	Dai Yang in <i>Soushen ji</i> [322]
Liu Wan 劉琬 (fl. 193)	Lang Yi in <i>Hou Hanji</i> [c. 376] and <i>Hou Hanshu</i> [445]
Zhou Qun 周羣 (fl. 180-214) and Zhang Yu 張裕 (fl. 190-219)	Xie Yiwu in Fan Ye's <i>Hou Hanshu</i> [445]
Yang You 楊由 (E. Han)	Gongsha Mu in <i>Hou Hanshu</i> [445]
Guan Lu 管輅 (209-256)	Liu Wan in <i>Hou Hanshu</i> [445]
Xian Chao 弦超 (c. 254-c. 280)	Yang You in <i>Hou Hanshu</i> [445]

Chen Xun 陳訓 (fl. 280)	Kong Zhaoxian in Shen Yue's <i>Songshu</i> [487]
Suo Dan 索統 (c. 270-c. 315)	Lang Zong in <i>Zhen'gao</i> [360s; comm. 499]
Dai Yang 戴洋 (c. 260-c. 340)	Zhang Yuan in Wei Shou's <i>Weishu</i> [554]
Zhang Yuan 張淵 (c. 385-429)	Tu Lu in <i>Weishu</i> [554]
Wang Zao 王早 (c. 424-452)	Wang Zao in <i>Weishu</i> [554]
Kong Zhaoxian 孔熙先 (d. 445)	Guo Jingshang in <i>Weishu</i> [554]
Guo Jingshang 郭景尙 (fl. 515)	Li Yexing in <i>Weishu</i> [554]
Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536)	Wu Zunshi in Li Baiyao's <i>Bei Qi shu</i> [636]
Tu Lu 徐路 (c. 515-c. 563)	Zhou Hongzheng in Yao Silian's <i>Chenshu</i> [636]
Li Yexing 李業興 (c. 521-c. 549?)	Gu Yewang in <i>Chenshu</i> [636]
Wu Zunshi 吳遵世 (c. 532-561)	Wang Fuxian in Wei Zheng's <i>Suishu</i> [636]
Zhou Hongzheng 周弘正 (c. 496-c. 574)	Shi Wansui in <i>Suishu</i> [636]
Gu Yewang 顧野王 (519-581)	Liu You in <i>Suishu</i> [636]
Wang Fuxian 王輔賢 (fl. 581)	Lu Taiyi in <i>Suishu</i> [636]
Shi Wansui 史萬歲 (549-600)	Yuan Chong in <i>Suishu</i> [636]
Liu You 劉祐 (fl. 600)	Sui Empress Xiao in <i>Suishu</i> [636]
Lu Taiyi 盧太翼 (c. 581-c. 617)	Chen Xun in Fang Xuanling's <i>Jinshu</i> [646]
Yuan Chong 袁充 (d. 618)	Suo Dan in <i>Jinshu</i> [646]
Sui Empress Xiao 蕭皇后 (567-648)	Tao Hongjing in <i>Nanshi</i> [659]

Two of the three earliest comments on the adepts of *zhanhou* listed above appear in Chinese Buddhist texts. They report, rather matter-of-factly, that both Yaśodharā (Juyi 俱夷; 563?-485? BCE), the wife of the historical Buddha, and Kāśyapa (Ch. Jiaye 迦葉), one of the Buddha's principal disciples, engaged in *zhanhou*.<sup>78</sup> In the first account, the term *zhanhou* is paired with astrology (*tianwen* 天文; lit. celestial patterns) and is used to translate an Indian or Central Asian practice of earlier times. The second account claims that Kāśyapa "rose at night to *zhanhou*" (*yeqi zhanhou* 夜起占候), suggesting an astrological practice. Aeromancy and meteoromancy are both valid translations here, given the term's explicit distinction from general astrology in the account of Yaśodharā.

Other early Chinese Buddhist texts proscribe *zhanhou* as a deviant, non-Buddhist activity. The perhaps late second century CE *Analü banian jing* 阿那律八念經 (Aniruddha's Scripture on the Eight Kinds of Mindfulness) claims that "right living includes the layperson's right living without greed or avarice, and the aspiring bodhisattva's right living without deviant activities like divinatory watching."<sup>79</sup> These proscriptions of *zhanhou* contradict the more complimentary presentations of the term in the accounts of Kāśyapa and Yaśodharā, and it is still far from certain that *zhanhou* does not refer more specifically to aeromantic observation in these instances.

Perhaps the earliest clear Buddhist critique of an aeromantic technique called *zhanhou* is found in Jñānagupta's 闍那崛多 (523-600) translation of

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<sup>78</sup> Kang Senghui's 康僧會 (d. 280) mid-third century CE translation of the *Ṣaṭ-pāramitā-saṃgraha* (Collected Sūtras on the Six Pāramitās) is primarily comprised of *jātaka* tales that the Buddha told his disciples to illustrate the bodhisattva practice of the six perfections or *pāramitā* (*liudu* 六度). One tale in the collection mentions the wife of the historical Buddha, Yaśodharā. She is introduced as a worthy and intelligent daughter of a Brahmin and is said to possess a profound knowledge of 'fortune-misfortune, astrology, and aeromancy' (*jixiong tianwen zhanhou* 吉凶天文占候). *Liudu jijing* (T 152), chap. 5, p. 26a (#45). For the account of Kāśyapa, who rises at night to engage in *zhanhou*, see the early third century CE *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* (T 185), chap. 2, p. 481a-b. Also recorded in *Puyao jing* (T 186), chap. 8, p. 531a-b.

<sup>79</sup> 以離邪業，捨世占候，不犯，是為道正命。 *Analü banian jing* (T 46), p. 836c10-11. 'Right living' (*zhengming* 正命) is the fifth component or 'fold' of the Eightfold Correct Path (*bazheng dao* 八正道). This path is the fourth component of the Buddha's Four Sagely Truths (*sishengdi* 四聖諦). Perhaps the best-known and most comprehensive classical Theravāda statement on divinatory and prognostic practices is found in the *Brahmajāla sūta* (Brahma-net sūtra), the first scripture included in the Pali *Dīgha nikāya* or *Collection of Long Discourses*. One part of the text lists seven sets of 'base arts' that some ascetics and Brahmins engage in to make a living. Most are forms of prognostic divination. The fifth set includes arts of prediction based on wide array of phenomena, including eclipses, meteors, earthquakes, and thunder. See Walshe (1995), p. 72 (1.24).

the *Qi shi jing* 起世經 (Sutra on the Arising of Worlds).<sup>80</sup> The *Qi shi jing* relates the Buddha's teachings on the formation, development, and destruction of various realms of existence. In a discussion on the causes of drought, the point that mantic watchers, mantic investigators (*zhancha ren* 占察人), and masters of astrology see the visible causes of rain but not the spiritual causes responsible for drought is expressed in slightly different ways.

All you *bhikṣus* (i.e., ordained monks)! There are five direct and indirect causes that are able to block rain [up] in the empty void (i.e., the heavens). If you order a master of aeromancy [to investigate these causes], they will neither be fathomed nor discerned, and it will increase delusion. The report will be that it is sure to rain, yet no rains will fall from the sky. And what are these five [causes]?

諸比丘！於虛空中，有五因緣，能障礙雨。令占候師，不測不知，增長迷惑，記天必雨而更不雨。何者為五？

All you *bhikṣus*! Sometimes clouds rise and thunder rolls in the heavens, simultaneously making 'kæ-dræ kæ-dræ,' 'gju-drju gju-drju'<sup>81</sup> and other sounds. Sometimes [the heavens] discharge lightning flashes; and sometimes wind gusts and cold *qi* arrive one after the other. Similar types and varieties [of natural phenomena] are all signs of rain. Masters of aeromancy, masters of astrology, and others like them all pay attention to the timeliness [of these phenomena]. When rain is sure to fall, at these times Rāhu, King of the Asura,<sup>82</sup> emerges from his palace, and uses his two hands to gather up the rain and clouds, which he scatters into the seas. All my *bhikṣus*, this is the first direct cause of blockages in rain, and neither astrologers nor aeromancers can see or discern it.

<sup>80</sup> Jñānagupta, a Buddhist monk from the ancient kingdom of Gandhāra (around present-day Peshawar in NW Pakistan; extending into NE Afghanistan), is said to have arrived in China in the late sixth century with hundreds of scriptures. His translation work in Chang'an was supported by the Sui court, and more than forty translations attributed to him are found in the Taisho Buddhist Canon. For more on his life and work, see Chavannes (1905), pp. 332-356.

<sup>81</sup> The sounds transcribed here are based on William H. Baxter's reconstructions of Middle Chinese. See, respectively, Baxter (2000), pp. 58, 12, 113, 18.

<sup>82</sup> Luohouluo 羅睺羅 is the name of Rāhula, son of the Buddha. Here, however, I read the term Luohou lu'axiu 羅睺羅阿修 as Luohou axiuluo 羅睺阿修羅, in reference to Rāhu-asura or Rāhu asurēndra 吸氣阿須倫, who medieval Chinese Buddhist scriptures tell us can "eliminate the moon and return it" (*shēyue er huan* 捨月而還) (i.e., cause lunar eclipses). *Za ahan jing* (T 99), chap. 2, p. 155a19-20.

Uncertainties arise in their heart-minds, and though they record that the heavens are sure to rain, in the end, there is no rain.

諸比丘！或有一時，於虛空中，雲興雷動，作伽茶伽茶瞿廚瞿廚等聲，或出電光，或復有風吹冷氣至。如是種種，皆是雨相。諸占察人及天文師等，悉剋此時，必當降雨。爾時，羅睺羅阿修羅王從其宮出，便以兩手撮彼雨雲，擲置海中。諸比丘！此是第一雨障因緣，而天文師及占候者，不見不知。心生疑惑，記天必雨而竟不雨。<sup>83</sup>

This portion of the scripture continues with four additional points, all contending that practitioners of *tianwen* and *zhanhou* merely see the phenomenal, illusory, or visible signs of rain. Aeromancy and astrology are depicted as related yet distinct activities throughout the discussion. One is focused on the upper celestial realm, the other on the atmosphere, but both of them are regarded as inferior ways of knowing because they rely on empirical methods and are blind to higher Buddhist spiritual truths. *Zhanhou* is rarely mentioned in early medieval Chinese Buddhist texts, but it more frequently surfaces in Sui and Tang Buddhist works as a reference to aeromancy.

Soon after Meng Kang's early to mid-third century comments on Wei Xian, Guan Chen 管辰 (fl. mid-third century) wrote that local scholars considered his elder brother Guan Lu's 管輅 (209-256) 'practice of *zhanhou* to be infallible' (*zuo zhanhou wucuo* 作占候無錯).<sup>84</sup> Chen explains that these scholars were convinced Lu relied on 'esoteric texts' (*yinshu* 隱書), but he points out that his older brother lived alone and had few writings in his collection. While he does speculate that some of Lu's texts could have been stolen after he died in 256 CE, he seems to be pointing out that his brother no longer needed texts at all. His allusion to "esoteric texts" might be read as a strategy employed by Chen to set up the higher level of spiritual attainment he ultimately ascribes to Guan Lu.<sup>85</sup> *Zhanhou* is regularly portrayed as a technical and text-based activity in medieval Chinese narratives, yet it is also sometimes depicted as an inspired or intuitive form of 'seeing'. There is at least a hint of the latter understanding informing Guan Chen's account of his brother. Guan Lu purportedly relied on textual forms of knowledge to acquire expertise in divinatory observation and other mantic techniques, but the higher level of spiritual mastery that Chen assigns to

<sup>83</sup> *Qishi jing* (T 24), chap. 8, p. 349b1-11. The same passage, with minor variants, appears in the early seventh century *Qishi yin ben jing* (T 25), chap. 1, p. 404b6-15.

<sup>84</sup> *Sanguo zhi*, chap. 29, p. 826 (魏/管輅傳), quoting Guan Chen's 'Chen xu' 辰敘 (Chen's Appraisal).

<sup>85</sup> For more on the need to advertise a secret in order to establish it, see Urban (1998), pp. 235-236, 247-248; Company (2009), p. 89-90ff.

him here is—as Chen makes perfectly clear a bit later is his account—“ineffable” or “too marvelous to explain” (*miao buke shu* 妙不可述).<sup>86</sup>

The *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms) biography of Guan Lu claims that he was skilled in astrology, rhetoric, yarrow-stalk divination, exorcism, auspicy, augury, medical diagnosis, physiognomy, and more. *Zhanhou* is never mentioned in his biography, but the ‘Lu biezhuān’ associates Lu with a number of closely related practices. For example, it records that once, right after Guan Lu defended the axiom that “Heaven cannot speak,”<sup>87</sup> he reminded all present of the importance of maintaining a watch on Heaven because it “circulates stellar essences on high, and channels spirits down low, verifying [itself] through wind and clouds to reveal anomalies.”<sup>88</sup>

Another passage from the ‘Lu biezhuān’ introduces an anonymous scholar who possesses techniques of the Dao (*daoshu* 道術), but is unable to perfect them. He asks Guan Lu if spending more time investigating variations in the wind would help. Guan Lu says “no,” explaining that wind is just one strand in a complex, holistic, and spiritually charged cosmos that operates according to principles that can only be understood through watching, distinguishing, and recording. He adds that if comprehensive observation and contemplation are mastered, wind can be an extraordinary indicator of situational timeliness that people ignore at their own peril.

If the arrayed [stellar] lodges are left unguarded, a horde of spirits will chaotically advance forward, the eight winds will rise from all directions, turbulent *qi* will inspire lightning to fly, crumbling mountains will project stones, and trees and plants will break and topple, stirring up dust for ten thousand *li*. You will not be able to look up and see the heavens, birds and beasts will hide away or flee, and the populace will be stricken with panic. This is what made the disciples of Zi Shen (d. 536? BCE) climb the high watchtower, watch for wind *qi*, distinguish disasters and anomalies, and mark the periods and days. Only after this did they understand the profundities and subtleties of spiritual contemplation and become fearful of the numinous winds.

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<sup>86</sup> Chen blames his own shortcomings for the difficulties he has describing Guan Lu’s abilities, but he also points directly to the ineffable quality of Lu’s mastery when he writes that Guan’s abilities were “too marvelous to describe.” See, respectively, *Sanguo zhi*, chap. 29, p. 826 and p. 817 (魏/管輅傳).

<sup>87</sup> See *Lunyu zhushu*, chap. 17, p. 2526a (#17.19).

<sup>88</sup> 運星精於上，流神明於下，驗風雲以表異。 *Sanguo zhi*, chap. 29, p. 816 (魏/管輅傳).

若夫列宿不守，眾神亂行，八風橫起，怒氣電飛，山崩石飛，樹木摧傾，揚塵萬里。仰不見天，鳥獸藏竄，兆民駭驚。於是使梓慎之徒，登高臺，望風氣，分災異，刻期日。然後知神思遐幽，靈風可懼。<sup>89</sup>

In short, the very act of maintaining a watch on the winds (a form of *zhanhou* or divination through the interpretation of atmospheric *qi* conditions) at least partially ensures the pacification of otherwise capricious spirits. *Zhanhou* is never, to the best of my knowledge, explicitly assigned this kind of magical power to propitiate, pacify, or exorcise spirits, but spirits abound in medieval accounts of adepts of *zhanhou*.

Many adepts of *zhanhou* are commemorated in early fourth century CE texts. Lineages are constructed during this period and technological traditions begin to develop. Ge Hong's 葛洪 (284-364) *Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇 (Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces the Uncarved Block), for example, extends the transmission of *zhanhou* back to the Yellow Thearch and the thearch's teacher and minister, Fenghou 風后 (Lord of Winds).<sup>90</sup> Ge also identifies Zi Wei 子韋 (fl. 480 BCE) and Gan Jun 甘均 (fl. fourth century BCE) as sages of *zhanhou*.<sup>91</sup> By associating this form of divination with the Lord of Winds, the Yellow Thearch, and with the astrological and *yinyang* arts shared by Zi and Gan, Ge Hong sketches out a traditional lineage extending from the mythical past to the eve of the imperial era. His re-descriptions of these men present *zhanhou* as a traditional mantic technique that was transmitted from the time of the Yellow Thearch to the eve of the imperial era.

The power Ge attributes to *zhanhou* is also illustrated in a transmitted fragment missing from received editions of the *Baopuzi neipian*. It explains that Feng Liang 馮良 (48?-115?), a native of Nanyang 南陽 (SW Henan),

<sup>89</sup> *Sanguo zhi*, chap. 29, p. 817 (魏/管輅傳); DeWoskin (1983), p. 104. The *Sanguo zhi* biography of Zhou Qun 周羣 (fl. 180-214) claims that both he and his associate Zhang Yu 張裕 (fl. 190-219) understood *zhanhou*. Zhang Yu is also said to have understood physiognomy (*xiangshu* 相術). *Sanguo zhi*, chap. 42, p. 1020 (蜀書).

<sup>90</sup> *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, chap. 13, pp. 218-219 (極言); Ware (1967), p. 216. For an early seventh century text that attributes the invention of *zhanhou* to Gui Shenqu 鬼申區, one of the Yellow Thearch's seven ministers, see *Bianzheng lun* (T 2110), chap. 1, p. 490c (三教治道篇).

<sup>91</sup> *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, chap. 12, p. 204 (辨問); Ware (1967), p. 202. The *Shiji* celebrates Zi Wei of Song 宋 and Sire Gan 甘公 of Qi 齊 as ancient transmitters of 'heavenly calculations' (*tianshu* 天數; astrology). *Shiji*, chap. 27, p. 1343 (天官書). Neither this, nor the very similar description of these men in the *Hanshu*, use the term *zhanhou*. See *Hanshu*, chap. 30, p. 1775 (藝文志/數術), listing "Zi Wei of the Spring and Autumn period state of Song and Sire Gan of the Six States period state of Chu 楚" as two of seven prominent pre-first century BCE masters of *shushu*. For more on Zi and Gan, see Harper (1999b), pp. 828-829.

was a local administrator who was promoted at around the age of thirty but became ashamed of his lack of ambition. Feng Liang gave up his material possessions, donned shabby robes, and wandered off to find a master. He received the *Shijing* 詩經 (Poetry Classic), the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo's Commentary [on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*]), the *Liji* 禮記 (Records of Rites), and the *Yijing* 易經 (Changes Classic), then studied techniques of the Dao and *zhanhou* for fifteen years before returning home. He was summoned to the regional court but was not assigned a post. Later, he was specially recommended as 'Worthy and Excellent' (*xianliang* 賢良). At the age of sixty-seven *sui*, Feng 'entered the mountains' (*rushan* 入山) and disappeared.<sup>92</sup> There is not enough information in the account to state with certainty that Feng Liang studied mantic observation, aeromancy, or simply divination and observation, but Ge Hong appears to present *zhanhou* – and techniques of the Dao – as steps beyond the Confucian canon, tied to higher and more ineffable spiritual goals. This, as examples illustrate below, becomes a common trope in later accounts of *zhanhou* as aeromancy.

*Zhanhou* is best documented as a learned, text-based means of ensuring human welfare, but certain genres of writing, like 'accounts of anomalies' (*zhiguai* 志怪), just as commonly portray it as a spiritually revealed or inspired technique. Gan Bao's 干寶 (fl. 317-322) *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (Records of Inquests into the Divine), for instance, records an account of Dai Yang 戴洋 (260?-340?), who purportedly died at the age of twelve before resurrecting five days later. While dead, he was escorted on a formal journey through several named mythical sites only to be returned to earth and brought back to life with "a marvelous understanding of *zhanhou*."<sup>93</sup> The same account is recorded in Dai Yang's *Jinshu* biography, but there he is said to have died, returned, and grew up with skills in [divination by] wind angles (*fengjiao* 風角; austromancy).<sup>94</sup> It adds that he eventually obtained skills in techniques of the Dao (*daoshu* 道術) and an understanding of omen watching and divinatory calculation (*jie zhanhou bushu* 解占候卜數).

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<sup>92</sup> *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, vol. 3, chap. 1/appendix, p. 364 (附錄/佚文). A similar account is found in Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (456-536) *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected) where, once again, Feng Liang's studies of the classics give way to prognostic observation and techniques of the Dao. *Zhen'gao jiaozhu*, chap. 14, p. 442 (稽神樞).

<sup>93</sup> *Xinjiao Soushen ji*, chap. 15, p. 112.

<sup>94</sup> *Jinshu*, chap. 95, p. 2469 (藝術列傳). For a translation of Dai Yang's full *Jinshu* biography, see DeWoskin (1983), pp. 155-166. His skills in *zhanhou* are also mentioned in *Jinshu*, chap. 95, p. 2494 (藝術列傳).



The *Soushen ji* also records an account of Xian Chao 弦超 (254?-280?), who dreamt that a jade maiden (*yunu* 玉女) proposed marriage to him.<sup>95</sup> She descended to earth, and they married. She edited and annotated a number of texts for her husband's benefit, including an *Yi* 易 (Changes [Classic]) and other mantic calculation texts like Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 BCE-18 CE) *Taixuan jing* 太玄經 (Supreme Mystery Scripture) and Mr. Xue's 薛氏 *Zhongjing* 中經 (Middle Scripture).<sup>96</sup> Xian Chao is said to have used these texts to perfect his skills in *zhanhou*.<sup>97</sup> Here, a spirit editor helps a human being learn how to 'see'. Xian relies on the study of texts to perfect his skills in mantic observation, but Dai Yang's spiritual journey ends with an inspired and marvelous understanding of it. Both accounts feature spirits, but only the latter demands textual learning.

The *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected), a carefully annotated late fifth century compendium of mid-to-late fourth century Shangqing 上清 (Upper Clarity) Daoist revelations, contains an account of Lang Zong 郎宗 (fl. 106 CE) from Anqiu 安丘 (central Shandong), who "learned the essence of techniques of the Dao and *zhanhou* based on wind *qi* (i.e., uranomantic meteoromancy)" (學精道術，占候風炁).<sup>98</sup> Lang Zong once carefully observed a strong gust of wind to prognosticate the outbreak of a fire in the capital. His prediction was verified and he was subsequently awarded an official post. However, similar to the earlier *Baopuzi neipian* account of Feng Liang's self-perceived lack of ambition, Lang Zong was purportedly ashamed of the manner in which he had obtained his office and ended up retiring to the base of Huashan 華山 (E Shaanxi) where he pursued and attained the Dao.<sup>99</sup> Once again, *zhanhou* appears alongside techniques of the Dao. Both are described as learned bodies of knowledge, but Lang Zong, ashamed of what seems to be an indirect reference to his

<sup>95</sup> *Xinjiao Soushen ji*, chap. 1, p. 10.

<sup>96</sup> Given the other two texts listed here, Xue's *Zhongjing* more likely refers to the *Dunjia zhongjing* 遁甲中經 (Central Scripture of the Hidden Stems) than either the better attested and studied *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture of the Way and Its Potency) addendum *Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經 (Middle Scripture of Laozi) or the long-lost bibliographic catalogue *Wei zhongjing bu* 魏中經簿 (Wei [Dynasty] Register of the Central Classics). The *Dunjia zhongjing* is first mentioned in the *Baopuzi neipian*, but to the best of my knowledge, it is never attributed an author, let alone an author surnamed Xue. See *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, chap. 17, p. 302 (登涉).

<sup>97</sup> *Xinjiao Soushen ji*, chap. 1, p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> *Zhen'gao*, chap. 14, p. 442 (稽神樞). The *Hou Hanshu* tradition of his son, Lang Yi, claims that Lang Zong was skilled in a wide variety of astrological and divinatory techniques including wind angles, astrological calculation, surveying *qi*, and *zhanhou*, all of which he peddled at market. *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 30, p. 1053 (郎顛襄楷列傳).

<sup>99</sup> *Zhen'gao*, chap. 14, p. 442 (稽神樞).

interpretation of wind to predict fire, ends up—like the *Baopuzi neipian* account of Feng Liang—letting go of *zhanhou* to pursue more profound Shangqing Daoist goals.

Yuan Hong's 袁宏 (328-376) *Hou Hanji* 後漢紀 (Chronicles of Latter Han) records a memorial submitted to the Eastern Han throne by Lang Yi 郎顛 (fl. 133 CE), son of the previously mentioned Lang Zong, in the first month of 133.<sup>100</sup> The memorial celebrates the great virtue cultivated of the rulers of the past and the healthy and beneficial sympathetic resonance shared between Heaven and the imperial court. The end of the memorial simply states that numerous disasters have befallen the populace and that the Han thearch must be reminded of his power and duty to rectify the decline. Yuan Hong goes on to say that the Imperial Secretary (*shangshu* 尚書) personally questioned him about these matters, and Lang Yi's response was mostly discourse on 'technical calculations and mantic observations' (*shushu zhanhou* 術數占候), the main point of which was to claim that because of the conduct of the Three Ducal Officials (*sangong* 三公), there would soon be famine, drought, earthquakes, and banditry.<sup>101</sup> The account ends with the comment that all of these disasters were verified. The object of these calculations and observations might appear to be disasters (a meaning of *hou* according to the *Zhongwen dacidian*), but it can just as confidently be associated with the condition of Mandate of Heaven, manifested in both earth and man, until the more immediate causes are considered. Famines, droughts, earthquakes, and banditry are directly linked to the meteorological conditions (e.g., sunshine, rain; wind) caused by Heaven's sympathetic response to the conduct of the Three Ducal Officials.

The next two occurrences of *zhanhou* appear in the very next *Hou Hanji* entry, attributed to Hua Qiao 華嶠 (c. 240-d. 293), author of a long-lost *Hou Hanshu*. The passage does not identify any named adepts of *zhanhou*, but it introduces an apocryphal prophecy text (*chen* 讖) transmitted during the reign of Wang Mang 王莽 (r. 9-23 CE) by an "adept of Daoist techniques" (*daoshu zhishi* 道術之士) named Ximen Junhui 西門君惠 (fl. 23 CE) predicting the reestablishment of the Han by Liu Xiu 劉秀 (5 BCE-57 CE; r. 25-57). Similar prophecies were subsequently transmitted with increasing frequency, making it difficult to judge their worth. After admitting that these matters are difficult to understand, Hua Qiao states that:

<sup>100</sup> *Hou Hanji*, chap. 18, pp. 11a4-b5 (孝順皇帝紀).

<sup>101</sup> For more on the Three Dukes or Three Ducal Officials, see Hucker (1985), p. 399a-b (no. 4871), claiming that during the Eastern Han, the three included the Grand Preceptor (*taishi* 太師), the Grand Mentor (*taifu* 太傅), and the Grand Guardian (*taibao* 太保).

To skillfully discourse about the past, one must have experience in the present, and to skillfully discourse about Heaven, one must have experience in the realm of man, so when it comes to discourse on Heaven's sequence of calculations, *yin* and *yang*, and omen watching, this is what we should currently be worried about.<sup>102</sup> As for technical calculation and mantic observation, [only] if one is able to lift their head to gaze and lower their head to investigate, making it a trinity with the affairs of men, will fortune-misfortune and auspiciousness-inauspiciousness respond, and if guided by the doctrines, there will be clear manifestations.

善言古者必有驗於今，善言天者必有驗於人，而托云天之歷數、陰陽、占候，今所宜急也。占候術數，能仰瞻俯察，參諸人事，禍福吉凶既應，引之教義，亦有著明。<sup>103</sup>

Hua Qiao presents *zhanhou* as a dangerous activity if it is too narrowly approached, but an efficacious technique if it conforms to the doctrines and is applied in an adequately comprehensive manner (by looking both up and down).

Fan Ye's 范曄 (398-445) *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Book of Latter Han) identifies a number of adepts of *zhanhou* who are celebrated for their ability to protect people from disaster. They include Xie Yiwu 謝夷吾 (fl. 75 CE) of Kuaiji 會稽 (northeast Zhejiang), who studied wind angles and engaged in *zhanhou* to aid his community;<sup>104</sup> Gongsha Mu 公沙穆 (fl. 155) of Jiaodong 膠東 in Beihai 北海 (central Shandong), who used the technique to warn his fellow villagers to move to higher ground before torrential rains flooded the lands east of the capital in 155 CE;<sup>105</sup> and Liu Wan 劉琬 (fl. 193), who received his skills in *zhanhou* from his father Liu Yu 劉瑜 (d. 193) and was able—presumably because of those transmissions—to foresee 'disasters

<sup>102</sup> All three of these practices are deemed worrisome because they are used to calculate or assess the mandate of Heaven. I am grateful to one of my *EASTM* reviewers who pointed out that the term "*tian zhi lishu*" 天之歷數 likely refers to a numerological-based theory of the chronology of mandate transfers first documented in weft literature, but combined with *Yijing* numerology and astro-calendrical systems during the Eastern Han to create algorithms used to calculate the fall of dynasties. For more on this use of the term *lishu* 歷數/曆數, see Cullen (2017), p. 126. For more on the aforementioned algorithms and calculations, see Nielsen (2009-2010), pp. 65-107; (2018), pp. 47-98. For a very helpful table listing different early through seventh century meanings for *li* 歷/曆, including compounds like *lishu*, see Morgan (2017), pp. 20-25.

<sup>103</sup> *Hou Hanji*, chap. 18, pp. 12a6-b1 (孝順皇帝紀).

<sup>104</sup> *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 82A, p. 2713 (方術列傳).

<sup>105</sup> *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 82A, p. 2731 (方術列傳); DeWoskin (1983), p. 70.

and anomalies' (*zaiyi* 災異).<sup>106</sup> Liu Wan is also said to have engaged in an activity known as *zhanhou* and to have relied on learned forms of knowledge to 'see'.

The *Hou Hanshu* biographic tradition of Lang Yi further differentiates *zhanhou* from related categories of practice in the following passage, which is likely borrowed from Yuan Hong earlier *Hou Hanji*.

The ancients had a saying: "To skillfully discourse on Heaven, one must have experience in humanity."<sup>107</sup> Moreover, Zhang Heng (78-139) also said, "As for astrology, calendrical numerology, *yinyang*, and aeromancy; these are what we should currently be worried about."

論曰：古人有云：善言天者，必有驗於人。而張衡亦云：天文歷數，陰陽占候，今所宜急也。<sup>108</sup>

According to Zhang Heng, *zhanhou* refers to a category of techniques that, like astrology, mathematic astrology, and *yinyang*, deserves to be treated with caution, not because it inherently falls outside the scope of canonical practice, but because of deficiencies in how Zhang Heng sees it applied.

Wei Shou's 魏收 (506-572) *Weishu* 魏書 (Book of Wei) was completed a bit over a century after Fan Ye's history.<sup>109</sup> *Zhanhou* is prominently placed

<sup>106</sup> *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 57, p. 1858 (劉瑜列傳). Other aeromancers include Yang You of Chengdu, who studied the arts of the *Changes* and the prognostic observation of winds and clouds (*fengyun zhanhou* 風雲占候). Yang You's tradition focuses on his personal experiences rather than any kind of community aid. It reports that a strong gust of wind once blew twigs down from the trees around Yang You's home. The grand protector asked Yang You what it meant. He answered, "In a moment there will be tree born fruit, and it'll be yellow red (orange)" (方當有薦木實者，其色黃赤). After a few seconds, someone arrived to deliver mandarin oranges to him. Yang You's prediction appears to be intuitive in its immediacy, yet the mention of wind in tandem with color (orange/red) suggest correlative *qi*-based systems of interpretation informing his prediction. *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 82A, p. 2716 (方術列傳); DeWoskin (1983), p. 56.

<sup>107</sup> *Huangdi neijing suwen buzhu shiwen* (DZ 1018), vol. 24, p. 1aff. (舉痛論). The same line also appears in the biographic tradition of Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581?-682?) in *Jiu Tangshu*, chap. 191, p. 5095 (方伎列傳). A shorter version appears in *Da Tang xinyu* chap. 10.23, p. 200 (隱逸). For much earlier comments framing the macrocosm as a human-like body, see *Xunzi jijie*, chap. 23, p. 803 (性惡); *Lüshi chunqiu*, chap. 13, p. 1.14 (有始); *Lunheng jiaoshi*, chap. 18, p. 785 (自然).

<sup>108</sup> *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 30B, p. 1085 (郎顛襄楷列傳).

<sup>109</sup> The *Weishu* was presented to Thearch Wenxuan 文宣 (r. 550-559) of the Northern Qi 北齊 (550-577) in the third lunar month of 554. See *Beishi*, chap. 56, p. 2030 (魏收傳). Like most court-appointed directors of dynastic histories, Wei

in both the introduction and conclusion to *Weishu*'s 'Shuyi liezhuan' 術藝列傳 (Arrayed Traditions of Technicians and Artists). The introduction begins with the following passage describing *zhanhou* as an outgrowth of canonical 'crack and yarrow' techniques.

Now, "there is always something worth observing in the minor teachings";<sup>110</sup> how much more so in the techniques of mathematical astrology that were standardized by the sages of the past! The former kings passed down canons on 'crack and yarrow'; their arguments and investigations were based on canonical standards. Aeromancy was mutually transmitted, challenging, yet extending categories, and the currents of transmission subsequently widened.

蓋小道必有可觀，況往聖標曆數之術。先王垂卜筮之典，論察有法。占候相傳，觸類長之，其流遂廣。<sup>111</sup>

*Zhanhou* is described as a disruptive category of techniques inferior to the canonical standards established by the sages of the past, but it is also presented as a fully accepted practice with the power to help "extend" or perpetuate and "widen" or expand canonical standards.

The conclusion to the *Weishu*'s 'Shuyi liezhuan' shifts emphasis from the novel nature of *zhanhou* to its identity as one of many common general categories of 'techniques and arts' (*shuyi* 術藝).

Chao Chong, Zhang Yuan, Wang Zao, Yin Shao, Geng Xuan, and Liu Lingzhu were all adepts of techniques and arts, and when we look at their aeromantic [observations], their 'crack and yarrow' [consultations], their extrapolations from the marches and from the waxing and waning [of celestial bodies] (i.e., astronomical calculations), we can see that they penetrated the arcane, fathomed the subtle, and were close to discerning the innate qualities of ghosts and spirits.

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Shou worked with a team of historians and scribes to compile the *Weishu*. He seems, however, to have played an especially active role in its composition, a point made in Gardiner (1973), p. 47. He and his team made extensive use of both private histories and the imperial archives, and most descriptions of his work agree that its twenty-five 'introductory comments' (*xuyan* 序言) and ninety-four 'historian's comments' (*shilun* 史論) were composed by Wei Shou. See *Weishu*. intro., p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> *Lunyu zhushu*, chap. 19, p. 2531c (#19.4).

<sup>111</sup> *Weishu*, chap. 91, p. 1943 (術藝列傳). For obvious appropriations and interpolations, see *Suishu* chap. 78, p. 1786 (藝術列傳). The last line in the passage translated above draws from the *Classic of Changes*: "Pushing the categories expands them and all possible situations on earth are encompassed" (觸類而長之天下之能事畢矣.). *Zhouyi zhengyi*, chap. 7, p. 80c (繫辭傳).

晁崇、張淵、王早、殷紹、耿玄、劉靈助皆術藝之士也。觀其占候卜筮，推步盈虛，通幽洞微，近知鬼神之情狀。<sup>112</sup>

Viewed from a certain perspective, Wei's introduction makes room for *zhanhou*, while his conclusion presents it as an already conventional subcategory of divination, distinct from both general astrology and solicited mechanical and material forms of divination.

Canonical or not, *zhanhou* continues to be commonly celebrated for its power to aid humanity. For example, Wang Zao 王早 (424?-452) of Bohai 勃海 (NE Shandong), an expert of wind angle divination, is said to have used his skills to help members of his community during hard times in the 420s. He also reportedly used *zhanhou* or mantic observation to help settle a local feud in the district of Dongguan 東莞 (SE Shandong) between the Zheng clan 鄭氏 and the Zhao clan 趙氏. Wang engaged in mantic observation for members of the Zhao clan and handed a talisman (*fu* 符) to them, saying:

Select seven strong gentlemen and order one of them to be the leader. Put the talisman on his belt as a pendant, and when roosters crow, he is to take cover two *li* to the southeast of the enemy's residence.<sup>113</sup> At dawn, eighteen people will pass by heading to the northwest. Two of them will be riding black oxen. One of these black oxen will be the first to pass and the other should be in the seventh place. Just capture the seventh and come back here. Make sure to do nothing else.

選壯士七人，令一人爲主者。佩此符，於雞鳴時伏在仇家宅東南二里許。平旦，當有十人相隨，向西北行，中有二人乘黑牛，一黑牛最在前，一黑牛應第七。但捉取第七者將還，事必無他。<sup>114</sup>

The Zhao clan followed his instructions, all turned out as predicted, and the feud was settled. *Zhanhou* is used to formulate a plan, but a talisman is deemed necessary to carry it out; all for the ultimate goal of communal welfare.

<sup>112</sup> *Zhouyi zhengyi*, chap. 7, p. 77c (繫辭傳).

<sup>113</sup> In medieval times, one *li* was approximately equal to 300 double paces (*bu* 步), 600 yards, or the distance that one could walk on level ground in about twelve minutes. See Wilkinson (2000), pp. 236-237.

<sup>114</sup> *Weishu*, chap. 91, pp. 1957-1958 (術藝列傳).

The *Weishu* includes many other accounts of aeromancers or omen watchers alleged to have aided state and society.<sup>115</sup> One reports that Wang Zao helped Thearch Taiwu take over Liangzhou 涼州 (SE Gansu) in 439 CE. He rode back to the capital with the thearch, and because the area was in the midst of a drought, the thearch asked him when it might rain. Wang Zao immediately used *zhanhou* to predict an exact time, and though there were doubts as the time arrived, rain came, and he won additional praise and fame. The many portrayals of *zhanhou* in the *Weishu* introduce a healthy variety of applications, but the term regularly refers to a form or aeromancy.

The many standard histories compiled during the first few decades of the Tang dynasty include several accounts of omen watchers, prognostic observers, aeromancers, or seers.<sup>116</sup> Most merely identify named individuals as practitioners, but at least two longer narratives commemorate men who purportedly engaged in *zhanhou* and spent significant portions of their lives as recluses seeking the Dao.<sup>117</sup> The first, from the *Bei Qi shu* 北齊書 (Book of Northern Qi) 'Fangji liezhuan' 方技列傳 (Arrayed Traditions of [Adepts of] Formulas and Skills), describes the life of Wu Zunshi 吳遵世 (532?-561) of Bohai 渤海 (SE Hebei), who studied the *Changes*, entered the Heng mountains 恒山 (NW Shanxi) in the mid-sixth century, and roamed around different areas following hermits and adepts of the Dao as a youth. After many years, a venerable old man suddenly appeared to him and said: "I bestow upon you an 'opening the mind talisman' (*kaixin fu* 開心符)." Wu Zunshi knelt down, ingested it, and was consequently illuminated in mantic observation. He later entered the capital in Yecheng 鄴城 (S Hebei) and gained a reputation for his "skills in mantic techniques."<sup>118</sup> Like the earlier account of Wang Zao, a talisman is prominently placed in the narrative, but here it is used for the seer rather than the querent. The *Bei Qi shu* tradition of Wu Zunshi describes his mastery of *zhanhou* as an inspired practice or a reward rather than the result of long-term observation or textual knowledge. As such, it is an unusual account in the *Bei Qi shu*

<sup>115</sup> See the tradition of Guo Jingshang 郭景尚 (fl. 515; byname Sihe 思和), and that of Li Yexing 李業興 (521?-549?), in, respectively, *Weishu*, chap. 64, p. 1427 (郭景尚列傳) and chap. 84, p. 1861 (儒林列傳).

<sup>116</sup> For example, see *Chenshu*, chap. 18, p. 308 (周弘正傳), chap. 24, p. 399 (顧野王傳); *Bei Qi shu*, chap. 39, p. 516; *Suishu*, chap. 36, p. 1111 (蕭皇后傳), chap. 45, p. 1232 (王輔賢傳), chap. 53, p. 1353 (史萬歲傳), chap. 69, p. 1611 (袁充傳), chap. 78, p. 1779 (劉祐傳); *Jinshu*, chap. 95, p. 2468 (陳訓傳), pp. 2502-2503 (索統傳).

<sup>117</sup> Note, however, that Daoist precepts often proscribe all forms of *zhanhou*. The early-Tang *Laozi xiangming jing* 老子像名經 (Scripture of the Symbols and Names [of the Heavenly Worthy, Revealed] by Laozi), for example, describes *zhanhou* as 'a grave transgression' (*zui* 罪). *Laozi xiangming jing* (DZ 661), chap. 2, p. 2a.

<sup>118</sup> *Bei Qi shu*, chap. 49, p. 677 (方技列傳).

‘Fangji liezhuan’, and because the ability or skill is blatantly inspired by spiritual power, it suggests mastery and ‘seeing’ rather than a potentially fallible practices of observation and interpretation.

The second account, from the *Book of Sui* ‘Yishu liezhuan’ 藝術列傳 (Arrayed Traditions of Artists and Technicians), describes the life of Lu Taiyi 盧太翼 (581?-617?), who purportedly began textual studies at an early age and was considered to be a spirit-like prodigy. He turned to the Dao when he was a young man and became a teacher, but later sought transcendence in the mountains. Lu then uses the combination of technological and spiritual knowledge he attains there to become skilled in aeromancy and astronomical calculations based on the civil calendar (*suanni* 算曆). He uses these skills to serve the state, quickly gains a reputation at court for his accurate forecasts, and is eventually consulted by rulers on important military and state affairs.<sup>119</sup> This account attributes Lu Taiyi’s prognostic powers to esoteric secrets that the world will never know. What we do know, or at least are told, is that he was employed by the state after having engaged in the pursuit of both technological and spiritual learning. This account is probably best read as a purposeful attempt by the court historians to advertise the learned nature of Lu’s powers and the importance of state service by subverting or ‘one-uping’ ideals associated with teachings outside—or at least distinguishable from—early Tang court classicism. It also suggests that there was a need for this kind of clarification. Lu Taiyi’s contemporary Xiao Ji 蕭吉 (d. 614) clearly claims that *zhanhou* is worthy of esteem but rooted in heterodox teachings (*zuodao* 左道), and he explicitly distinguishes it from *bushi* 卜筮 (pyro-plastromancy and achilleamancy) in the “Preface” (序) to his great compendium on the Five Agents, the *Wuxing dayi* 五行大義 (Great principles of the five agents).<sup>120</sup>

Han and medieval authors, historians, and scribes mention adepts of *zhanhou* in passing, celebrate their powers to save people from natural disaster, and criticize them as charlatans. They claim that mantic observers or aeromancers relied on textual forms of knowledge (particularly the kinds of technical works introduced in the following section), or were suddenly inspired through revelation, spirit journeys, or talismans. Others claim that they attained their abilities through some combination of both. Experts of *zhanhou* could always reach a high level of intuitive mastery, but this achievement is predicated on technical and learned knowledge in many extant medieval descriptions of adepts. Long-term observation,

<sup>119</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 78, pp. 1768-1769 (藝術列傳).

<sup>120</sup> *Wuxing dayi*, preface, p. 2a8-9 (序); Kalinowski (1991), p. 141. While the term *zhanhou* occurs at least half a dozen times in the *Wuxing dayi*, a pair of occurrences are found in the same passage introducing the many varieties of spirits employed in it and in mantic techniques in general. *Wuxing dayi*, chap. 5, pp. 7b10-8a1 (論諸神); Kalinowski (1991), p. 383.



textual knowledge, and technical skills facilitated expertise, but mastery—intuitive or inspired—demanded more. There is a clear relationship between reclusion from society and the attainment of more profound levels of ability in many of the narratives we have covered. Spirits and talismans can immediately inspire mastery, but mastery is more commonly described as the end of a protracted process involving long periods of seclusion, learning, and spiritual training.

*Zhanhou* initially emerges sometime shortly before the end of the first century CE to describe a combination of divination and observation in the *Lunheng*. It is mentioned in late Han Chinese Buddhist texts where it is used to translate a foreign practice and proscribe a native one. Third century accounts of Wei Xian and Guan Lu present *zhanhou* as a form of wind divination and as either a text-based mantic technique or as an intuitive skill. Fourth century accounts—of which there are many—construct lineages of practitioners and assign mythical origins and revealed or inspired qualities to the practice. Many fifth century texts associate *zhanhou* with ‘techniques of the *dao*’, while works like the *Hou Hanshu* describe it as a learned technique able to prevent disaster. *Zhanhou* is depicted as an imperial form of divination in the mid-sixth century *Weishu*, yet it never stops being reassessed and reimagined in different ways. The narratives featured in this portion of our study construct images of omen watchers, mantic observers, or aeromancers ranging from techno-diviners to inspired seers. The texts introduced in the following discussion provide us with glimpses into the knowledge systems underlying learned—and sometimes partially-inspired—medieval forms of *zhanhou*.

### *Zhanhou* Texts

No less than eleven texts with the term *zhanhou* in their titles were composed in China before the end of the first millennium CE. One is extant, and remnants of seven others are at least partially recorded in manuscripts or compendia. Each of these ‘*zhanhou* texts’ is listed in Table 2 (next page) according to their latest possible dates of composition. My translations of these titles are based on the evidence collected below.

The first three texts in the table—all likely completed before the Tang—are linked to prominent early and mid-Han dynasty historical figures known for their technical and rhetorical skills (Dongfang Shou, Jing Fang, and Xie Yiwu). They collectively point to a tradition that—much like the lineage proposed in Ge Hong’s *Baopuzi neipian*—traced adepts of *zhanhou* back into the distant past.

**Table 2. Titles and approximate dates of composition for eleven pre-1000 CE zhanhou texts**

1	<i>Fengyu yaojue zhanhou</i> 風雨要訣占候 (Aeromancy and Essential Instructions for Wind and Rain), attributed to Jing Fang 京房 (78-37 BCE) <sup>121</sup>	58? BCE to 611 CE
2	<i>Zhanhou shuihan xiaren shan'e</i> 占候水旱下人善惡 (Mantic Observation for Floods and Drought and the Good and Bad that Befalls Men), attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (160?-93?) <sup>122</sup>	140? BCE to 636 CE
3	<i>Fengjiao zhanhou</i> 風角占候 (Wind Angle [Divination] and Aeromancy), attributable to Xie Yiwu 謝夷吾 (fl. 75 CE) <sup>123</sup>	55? to 636 CE
4	<i>Junguo zhanhou</i> 軍國占候 (Military and State Aeromancy) <sup>124</sup>	100 BCE to 700 CE
5	<i>Dongzhen taishang basu zhenjing zhanhou ruding miaojue</i> 洞真太上八素真經占候入定妙訣 (Marvelous Instructions for Mantic Observation and Entry into Concentration from the Perfect Scripture of the Most High's Eight Purities in the Dongzhen [Division]) <sup>125</sup>	364 to 750 CE
6	<i>Zhanhou shier yue didong jixiong</i> 占候十二月地動吉凶 (Mantic Observation of the Auspiciousness and Inauspiciousness of Earthquakes in the Twelve Lunar Months) <sup>126</sup>	400-900 CE

<sup>121</sup> *Bianzhu*, chap. 1, p. 10B (天地部); *Chuxue ji*, chap. 1, p. 16 (天部/雲).

<sup>122</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 34, p. 1027 (經籍志). For a late first century CE court-sponsored tradition of the eclectic sage and trickster Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (160?-93?), see *Hanshu*, chap. 65, pp. 2841-2874 (東方朔傳).

<sup>123</sup> *Suishu*, chap. 34, p. 1035 (經籍志).

<sup>124</sup> *Chuxue ji*, chap. 1, p. 9 (天/月) and p. 16 (天/雲). Also recorded in *Taiping yulan*, chap. 4, p. 10a2 (天/月), chap. 8, p. 7b5 (天/雲). The title in the second *Chuxue ji* reference is recorded as *Junzhong zhanhou* 軍中占候, but the *Taiping yulan* records *Junguo zhanhou* for both. My adoption of the *Taiping yulan* emendation is based on a combination of the content of each oracle and the fact that I am unable to confirm the second *Chuxue ji* title elsewhere.

<sup>125</sup> *Dongzhen Taishang Basu zhenjing zhanhou ruding miaojue* 洞真太上八素真經占候入定妙訣 DZ 1324.

<sup>126</sup> P2610 (recto), col. 21/22-40. The numbers assigned to Dunhuang manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale de France are preceded by a P referring to the [Paul] Pelliot Collection. Those in the British Library are preceded by an S in reference to the [Aurel] Stein Collection.

7	<i>Taigong zhanhou yu shiri zhunze fa</i> 太公占候雨時日准則法 (The Grand Sire's Standard Methods of Aeromancy for the Dates and Times of Rain) <sup>127</sup>	400-900 CE
8	<i>Zhanhou shieryue shengsi qifa</i> 占候十二月生死氣法 (Methods for the Mantic Observation of Generative and Degenerative Qi in the Twelve Lunar Months) <sup>128</sup>	400-900 CE
9	<i>Sigong zhanhou</i> 四宮占候 (Four-Palaces Aeromancy) <sup>129</sup>	400-900 CE
10	<i>Zhanhou fengqi mijue</i> 占候風氣秘訣 (Secret Instructions for Aeromancy Based on Wind Qi), attributed to Wu Fan 吳範 (d. 226) <sup>130</sup>	226 to 983 CE
11	<i>Yueling zhanhou tu</i> 月令占候圖 (Charts on the Divination of Seasonal Conditions According to the Monthly Ordinances)	100 BCE to 983 CE

The titles of the second and third *zhanhou* texts listed in Table 2 are recorded in the early Tang *Book of Sui* bibliographic treatise, both under the 'Five Agents' sub-division of 'Calculations and Techniques'. Neither is extant and little can be said about them except for the fact that the almost two-century earlier *Book of Latter Han* tradition of Xie Yiwu—purported author of *Fengjiao zhanhou*—describes him as a reclusive “adept of formulas and techniques” (*fangshu zhi shi* 方術之士) who studied “wind angles and aeromancy” (*fengjiao zhanhou* 風角占候).

Later references to *zhanhou* texts include passages from the works they cite. For example, the early eighth century encyclopedic primer *Chuxue ji* 初學記 (Records for Primary Studies) records two different passages from *Junguo zhanhou* in the first section of the text ('Tian' 天 [Heaven]). Both involve state affairs, and both feature protasis-apodosis statements. The first passage reads:

<sup>127</sup> P2610 (recto), col. 106-110; P3288 (recto), col. 274-277; S2729 (verso), col. 162-164. The Stein manuscript records a slightly different title: *Taigong zhanhou yu fa* 太公占候雨法 (The Grand Sire's Methods of Prognostic Observation for Rain). See S2729 (verso), col. 162.

<sup>128</sup> P2610 (recto), col. 110-115; S2729 (verso), col. 165-169.

<sup>129</sup> P2610 (recto), col. 215-250; P3288 (verso), col. 368-418; S2729 (verso), col. 249-299.

<sup>130</sup> *Taiping yulan*, chap. 8, p. 8a7 (天/雲).

If there is a three-ringed halo around the moon, the great officials will be happy. If it is capped and there are additional halo [rings], all of Heaven's subordinates will be happy.

若月三珥者，大臣有喜；若有冠而復暈者，天下有喜。<sup>131</sup>

The second passage mentions the color black, the heavenly stem (*tiangan* 天干) *ren* 壬 (9th of 10), and the earthly branch (*dizhi* 地支) *zi* 子 (1st of 12). All three of these variables – color, stem, and branch – are commonly associated with water, suggesting reliance on the Five Agents.

If black clouds on a *ren-zi* (49/60) day cover the sky like a bolt of cloth, troops will rise in that state.

若壬子日有黑雲似一疋布者，其國兵起。<sup>132</sup>

Five of the *zhanhou* texts listed in Table 2 are fully or partially extant. Perhaps the earliest, the *Dongzhen taishang basu zhenjing zhanhou ruding miaojue* (hereafter, *Instructions for Observation*), can be traced back to the *Basu jing* 八素經 (Scripture of the Eight Purities),<sup>133</sup> one of the Shangqing scriptures revealed to Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386) in the mid-to-late 360s. Scholars who emphasize the connection between these texts tend to describe *Instructions for Observation* as a pre-seventh century Shangqing Daoist scripture,<sup>134</sup> while those who do not tend to describe it as a product of the eighth century, during the mid-Tang.<sup>135</sup> Internal evidence strongly

<sup>131</sup> *Chuxue ji*, chap. 1, p. 9 (天/月); *Taiping yulan*, chap. 4, p. 10a2 (天/月).

<sup>132</sup> *Chuxue ji*, chap. 1, p. 16 (天/雲); *Taiping yulan*, chap. 8, p. 7b5 (天/雲).

<sup>133</sup> The *Basu jing* was divided into at least two separately transmitted works after the late fourth century: the *Shangqing taishang basu zhenjing* (DZ 426) and the *Dongzhen Taishang Basu zhenjing fushi riyue huanghua jue* (DZ 1323). The latter work is listed as an early Shangqing scripture in the “Shangqing dadong zhenjing mu” 上清大洞真經目 (Catalogue of the Perfected Scriptures from the Great Grotto[Heavens] of Upper Clarity), which is recorded in the *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始 (Regulations for the Practice of Daoism in Accordance with the Scripture of the Three Caverns), vol. 5, pp. 1a4-5. For more on this mid-sixth to mid-seventh century liturgical scripture, see Ren and Zhong (2005), pp. 533-535 (no. 1116); Schipper and Verellen (2004), pp. 451-453; Kohn (2004), *A Daoist Monastic Manual*.

<sup>134</sup> For example, see Hu (1995), p. 237; Ren and Zhong (2005), p. 641 (no. 1313).

<sup>135</sup> Isabelle Robinet seems to favor the later dating in her entry on the *Dongzhen taishang basu zhenjing zhanhou ruding miaojue* in *The Taoist Canon*, which points out that methods featured in the text involve the curing of illness through visualization and contemplation of the body's spirits. She concludes that, “The names of the body spirits are those of the Shangqing tradition, but the style of the work bears little resemblance to the writings of that school.” Schipper and Verellen (2004), p. 622.

suggests that *Instructions for Observation* was either revised or rewritten sometime during the early to mid-Tang.<sup>136</sup>

The first of three major sections of this scripture opens with the Grand Thearch (Taidi 太帝) telling the “perfected beings of the four poles” (*siji zhenren* 四極真人) that there are those who erroneously expend great effort to accrue the merit needed for heavenly bliss. They reach heaven, but when their merits run out, they return to earth, where the endless cycle of effort and reward continues. The Grand Thearch reminds the perfected that the ability to maintain unity with the Dao is far superior for it helps one constantly avoid disaster, disease, and misfortune. This ability, however, depends on the sanctity of the person who engages in it. The first section of *Instructions for Observation* ends with a discussion of purification rites that can be used to erase impurities caused by transgressions. These rites involve the visualization of the Most High (Taishang 太上) and the Azure Lad (Qingtong 青童).

The second section of the scripture begins with a passage on how to study the Dao:

Generally, to study the supreme Dao, attentively settle your body and mind, for if your body and mind are not settled, study will not accomplish anything. When your studies are complete, enter concentration, and prioritize the maintenance of the One.<sup>137</sup> The minute and mysterious make it difficult to put it into practice, and if guarding it is not possible, it is because you have been paying too much attention to other things. *If you guard [the One] but are unable to enter into concentration, you should focus on mantic observation, examining how the self interacts with things, how the self is the same as or different*

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<sup>136</sup> Much of the *Instructions for Observation* is based on a rare set of nine essences (*jiujing* 九精; corresponding to Table 3:B) that shares names with items recorded elsewhere in three different sets (upper, middle, and lower) of eight effulgences (*bajing* 八景). For an early record of the set of eight, see *Shangqing zijing jun huangchu ziling daojun dongfang shangjing* (DZ 405), vol. 1, pp. 8a9-b9. For a brief description of them, see Pregadio (2008), vol. 1, pp. 210-211. The nine essences appear to be a revised, repackaging of these earlier sets of eight, suggesting that at least one of the texts that record them likely predated the *Instructions for Observation*.

<sup>137</sup> The term *shouyi* refers to a meditation or visualization practice focused on maintaining the psycho-physical unity manifest in the Dao. For more on the term, see Robinet (1993), pp. 119-138; Pregadio (2008), pp. 902-903; Bokenkamp (2013), p. 191. In religious Daoist texts, the term commonly refers to maintaining or protecting the wholeness or integrity of the body’s internal spirits. For more on this reading, see Bokenkamp (1997), pp. 89, 144 n. 26; and in Campany (2009), pp. 246-247 n. 422.

from the body, and the changes and abnormalities in these things, and adjust according to how you perceive them. Having cultivated the techniques and employed the formulas, eliminate and reject them, without transgressing again for a long time. Then after entering into concentration, one will mutually join hands with all of the perfected.

凡學上道，諦定身心，身心不定，學無所成。成學入定，守一爲先。微妙難習，守之不能，即堅雜營他事。守之不能入定，當精占候，省己及物，己身異同，物有變怪，覺之即改。修術用方，消而卻之，久無復異。然後入定，衆真相攜矣。<sup>138</sup>

Nine entries follow, each conforming to the following formulaic instructions: "If an ailment is suffered in [A], enter a chamber, burn incense, and visualize and contemplate the essences or *jing* of [B], robed in [C], with attendants." These essences are the robed and named spirits of different parts of the body. They are listed in Table 3. The end of this section of *Instructions for Observation* explains that the nine bodily spirits must be visualized or observed, but skill rests in the ability to interpret or divine to defend against unwelcomed intrusions before they ever occur.<sup>139</sup> Extended visualization and contemplation can, as the passage corresponding to the first spirit in Table 1 (p. 91) claims, help provide the conditions needed for the manifestation of the spirit Daotong (#1). If this is maintained for 360 days, "one's powers will match those of the spirits" (*yu shen he de* 與神合德).<sup>140</sup> Long-term observation and prognostication help the practitioner avoid the kinds of obstacles that get in the way of purification and unity with the Dao. They help one locate the self in the macrocosm and concentrate, both of which are needed to actualize or 'see' and activate internal spirits. The final goal involves a withdrawal inward to join together with the perfected and the One, where techniques like *zhanhou* are no longer needed. Here, text-based technical learning is essential for the student of the Dao, but it is to be ultimately left behind for the pursuit of higher spiritual goals.

The third section of *Instructions for Observation* includes nine entries that associate images (*xiang* 象) seen in dreams to the nine body parts listed above. Dreams reveal images, simulacra, or analogues of what is to come. If the good and bad in these images are properly correlated with the health of

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<sup>138</sup> Dongzhen Taishang Basu zhenjing zhanhou ruding miaojue (DZ 1324), pp. 4b7-5a2.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7a2-3.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5a9.

**Table 3. Nine body spirits in instructions for observation and concentration**

	[A] Body Part	[B] Name of Essence	[C] Robe Color
1	eyes	Daotong 道童 (Pupils of the Dao)	five-colored
2	ears	Daoping 道平 (Balancer of the Dao)	white
3	nose	Daowei 道微 (Subtlety of the Dao)	black
4	mouth	Daoqi 道岐 (Sustainer of the Dao)	crimson
5	head/brain	Daodu 道都 (Capital of the Dao)	blue-green
6	heart	Daoming 道明 (Light of the Dao)	multicolored
7	spine/torso	Daocheng 道成 (Fruition of the Dao)	multicolored, speckled
8	skin	Daolian 道連 (Connector of the Dao)	raw silk (i.e., off white)
9	kidneys	Daosheng 道生 (Generator of the Dao)	

different parts of the body, the proper spirit can be visualized to affect a cure where and when it is needed. The term *zhanhou* is never mentioned in this section of the text, but observation and prognostication are emphasized throughout, as is the lesson that learning is an essential step back to the Dao.

Four of the other *zhanhou* texts listed in Table 2 (p. 108), perhaps better described as long fragments, are found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. All are technical in nature, providing us with evidence of the kinds of learned knowledge inherent in medieval versions of *zhanhou*. Three different manuscripts contain at least two of these texts or fragments. One – P2610 – contains all four.<sup>141</sup>

The first example from P2610 is *Zhanhou shier yue didong jixiong* or *Mantic Observation of the Auspiciousness and Inauspiciousness of Earthquakes in the Twelve Lunar Months*. This short text lists oracles about the aftereffects of earthquakes in each of the twelve months. One of this work's twelve similarly framed entries reads: "If there is an earthquake in the ninth lunar month, disaster will arise in the northeast, unsafe for princes of state."<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup> For more on P2610, see Kalinowski (2003), pp. 59-63; Harper (2010), pp. 64-68. The former includes a detailed survey of the titles and basic content of every part of the manuscript. Harper's study provides a more detailed contextualization and description of the manuscript itself, which he refers to as an "occult miscellanea."

<sup>142</sup> 九月地動者東北方大災起國王不安。 P2610 (recto), col. 30.

Earthquakes were predicted from very early times in China,<sup>143</sup> but here and in the other eleven entries they are depicted as signs of what is to come. The active and passive overcoming (*ke* 克) cycles of the Five Agents are operative in the example. Soil (the ninth lunar month; *xu* 戌) overcomes water (north), and is overcome by wood (east), resulting in a negative prognosis based on the ‘overcoming’ rather than the ‘production’ (*sheng* 生) cycles of the Five Agents.

The second work is *Taigong zhanhou yu shiri zhunze fa* or *The Grand Sire's Standard Methods of Aeromancy for the Dates and Times of Rain*. After explaining that one must inspect the four quarters of the heavens to predict violent winds and torrential rains, the text records the following five omenological-oracular protasis-apodosis pronouncements about rain.

If there are no clouds except clouds in the Northern Dipper (i.e., Ursa Major), there is sure to be rain after five days. And if the only clouds are above Han lands, three days of rain after three days. If there are red clouds in the east at dawn on a *jia* day, then it will rain that day. If there are black clouds in the north at dawn, the rains will immediately arrive. If clouds resembling flocks of sheep appear at dusk, the rains will immediately arrive, but if there is wind, the rain will be scant.

無雲獨北斗中有雲，後五日必有雨。又四方無雲漢地獨有者，三日絕後三日必雨。甲日之初出時，東方有赤雲者，即日雨。日初出時，北方有黑雲者，雨立至。日入時有雲如群羊，雨立至，有風者，雨少。<sup>144</sup>

Many of the colors, directions, and stem-branch designations mentioned in these if-then statements appear to operate according to Five Agent logic. In the fourth pronouncement, for example, both the color of the clouds (black) and the direction they are associated with (north) are conventionally associated with the agent water, suggesting at least one way to account for the immediacy of rain expressed in the oracle.

The title of the third text, *Zhanhou shieryue shengsi qifa* or *Methods for the Mantic Observation of Generative and Degenerative Qi in the Twelve Lunar*

<sup>143</sup> At least by 132 CE, when Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78-139 CE) seismoscope—widely considered to be the earliest example in world history—was completed. It was called ‘Instrument for Observing Movements in Wind and Earth’ (*houfeng didong yi* 候風地動儀). See *Hou Hanshu*, chap. 6, p. 260 (順帝紀), chap. 59, p. 1909 (張衡列傳). Wind was widely considered to be *qi* in motion, and imbalances of *qi* were thought to cause earthquakes. The instrument was not only used as an observational or measuring device, but also as an indicator or forecaster. For more on the history of earthquakes in China, see Tang (1988).

<sup>144</sup> P2610 (recto), col. 106-110.



Table 4. Generative and degenerative *qi* in the twelve lunar months

月	generative <i>qi</i>	degenerative <i>qi</i>	月	generative <i>qi</i>	degenerative <i>qi</i>
1	zi 子 (water)	wu 午 (fire)	7	wu 午 (fire)	zi 子 (water)
2	chou 丑 (soil)	wei 未 (soil)	8	wei 未 (soil)	chou 丑 (soil)
3	yin 寅 (wood)	shen 申 (metal)	9	shen 申 (metal)	yin 寅 (wood)
4	mao 卯 (wood)	you 酉 (metal)	10	you 酉 (metal)	mao 卯 (wood)
5	chen 辰 (soil)	xu 戌 (soil)	11	xu 戌 (soil)	chen 辰 (soil)
6	si 巳 (fire)	hai 亥 (water)	12	hai 亥 (water)	si 巳 (fire)

*Months*, refers to two basic types of *qi* operative in the active and passive production and overcoming cycles of the Five Agents. The text establishes correspondences between the lunar months, the terrestrial branches, the Five Agents, and good and bad *qi*, which can be used to prognosticate any activity that can be linked to at least one variable or factor in the system. For example, in the first lunar month of the year, everything corresponding to *zi* 子 (e.g., time, date, season, agent) indicates “generative *qi*” (*shengqi* 生氣), birth, and auspiciousness; while everything corresponding to *wu* 午 indicates “degenerative *qi*” (*siqi* 死氣), death, and inauspiciousness. For example, the midnight double hour (i.e., the *zi* double hour from 11 pm to 1 am) would – according to the table – be regarded as auspicious in the first lunar month, but inauspicious in the seventh. Additionally, if a sudden rain (water) from the north (*zi*; water) were to arrive in the first lunar month, one could see it as sign of generative *qi* (i.e., an auspicious omen). If, however, a sudden rain (water) from the north (*zi*; water) were to arrive in the sixth or seventh lunar month, it would be regarded as a sign of degenerative *qi* (i.e., an inauspicious omen).

The Five Agents might also provide the interpretive basis for the system featured in *Sigong zhanhou* (the last Dunhuang *zhanhou* text listed in Table 2, p. 108). The first line of the text provides a concise description of the practice: “Four-palaces aeromancy is based on the notion that by keeping close track of wind [currents from the four cardinal directions], one can immediately foretell their trajectories, so when winds emanating from baneful [*qi*] are set to inflict their commensurate bane and harm, one can swiftly protect oneself from them.”<sup>145</sup> The Five Agents are not as plainly depicted here as they are in the three previous examples. Five Agents techniques featuring wind from the four quarters are documented

<sup>145</sup> 凡四宮占候，隨風可稷言之，風從煞上來，必有相煞傷者，急防之。 P2610 (recto), col. 215-216.

in other occult miscellanea attached to the P2610 manuscript,<sup>146</sup> providing some reason to argue that the same – or a similar – system of interpretation is used in *Sigong zhanhou*.

The late tenth century *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Taiping [Period] Encyclopedia for Imperial View) cites passages from at least two different *zhanhou* texts.<sup>147</sup> The first is the *Zhanhou fengqi mijue* or *Secret Instructions for Aeromancy Based on Wind Qi*, attributed to Wu Fan 吳範 (d. 226).<sup>148</sup> The other, *Yueling zhanhou tu* or *Charts on the Divination of Seasonal Conditions According to the Monthly Ordinances* is cited three times in the *Taiping yulan*. All three entries are phenological in subject matter and are all based on the transformations of the Five Agents. The second and longest entry, originally one of what was likely a set of eight similar statements based on the trigrams (*gua* 卦) of the *Zhouyi* 周易 (Zhou [Dynasty Classic of] Changes), reads:

First day of autumn: Kun (earth trigram; SW) is in power; its spirit is Sheti;<sup>149</sup> Palace Two<sup>150</sup> and Jingzhou (central Hunan) are the apportioned [sites].<sup>151</sup> If, at the *shen* double hour (3-5 pm), a cool breeze arrives from the southwest and yellow clouds gather like a flock of sheep, then it is agreeable for cereals and grains. If clear and bright, but winds and clouds never arrive, the myriad

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, the *Wuyin houfeng fa* 五音候風法 (Method of Observing Wind Based on the Five Tones), in P2610 (verso), col. 131-142. For a brief description of this work, see Kalinowski (2003), p. 62.

<sup>147</sup> Two entries in the *Taiping yulan* feature collections of passages related to *zhanhou*: ‘Bingbu zhanhou’ 兵部占候 (Mantic Observation in the Military Section) and ‘Fangshu bu zhanhou’ 方術部占候 (Mantic Observation in the Formulas and Techniques Section). *Taiping yulan*, chap. 328, p. 3b4 (兵); chap. 732, p. 1a3 (方術). Curiously, none of the numerous titles cited in these sections include the term *zhanhou*.

<sup>148</sup> *Taiping yulan*, chap. 8, p. 8a7 (天/雲). The accompanying passage reads: “If green clouds resembling cocks or rabbits approach the city walls, garrisoned troops will disperse and go” (有青雲如雉兔臨城，營軍散走).

<sup>149</sup> See *Erya zhushu*, chap. 6, p. 2608a6 (天歲名); *Huainan honglie jijie* chap. 3, p. 118 (天文訓); *Shiji*, chap. 27, p. 1313 (天官書). All claim that the term Shetige 攝提格 refers the spirit of the Great Year-Star (*dasui* 大歲; *taisui* 太歲 [Jupiter]) when it is in *yin* 寅 (3/12). The constellation was thought to mark the beginning of spring. For more on Sheti, see Hawkes (1985), pp. 79-80.

<sup>150</sup> Southwest according to the Houtian 後天 (Latter Heaven) arrangement of the eight trigrams.

<sup>151</sup> All nine palace-site correlations are listed in the mid-Tang *Taiyi jingshi jing*, chap. 2, pp. 4a8-b7. Each palace in the nine-palace spatial-numeric grid correlates with a different prefecture in Tang China. The central palace (#5) is not named, but can be located in the capital region around Chang’an.

things will not mature. If you look southwest and see yellow-cloud *qi* above Kun, it is the proper *qi*, the start of autumn resonates with it like a tally, the myriad things all flourish, and the beans and grains ripen. If red *qi* emerges to the left (south), half of the myriad things will die, bean and grain harvest will be halved, there will be earthquakes, and the people will not be settled. If the *qi* of Kun declines (west), the myriad things will not mature, there will be repeated earthquakes, many ox and horses will fall ill, and the responses [to these signs] will occur in the twelfth month. If the *qi* of Kun appears on rivers and lakes, the rivers and lakes will dry up, but the quicker it comes, the quicker it goes. If the *qi* of Kun retreats, then the earth will fracture, and springs will sprout. If there is reddish-yellow *qi* in the southwest from 3-5 pm, or there is a white, moist, thick, and clean sheen, cereals will be big and will ripen.

立秋：坤卦用事，其神攝提，二宮荊州分也。晡時申，西南涼風至，黃雲如群羊，宜粟谷。若晴朗，風雲不至，萬物不成。望西南坤上有黃雲氣，是正氣，立秋應節，萬物皆榮，豆谷熟。赤氣出其右，萬物半死，豆谷半收，地動，人民不安。坤氣衰，萬物不成，地頻動，牛馬多病，應在十二月。坤氣見于江湖，江湖水必竭。乍存乍亡。坤氣退則地裂，泉涌。申時西南有赤黃氣，或白潤厚白澤者，粟大熟。<sup>152</sup>

All of these pronouncements depend on the observation of *qi* as it is manifested in seasonal, atmospheric, and meteorological conditions. They suggest that if one attentively watches the patterns and transformations of *qi* and has access to the kind of knowledge recorded here, then *zhanhou* can be learned and mastered.

The *zhanhou* texts introduced above advocate the watching for and interpretation of wind, rain, clouds, sun, moon, earthquakes, and seasons. The practices they promote rely on the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦), the Five Agents, *yin* and *yang*, the sexagenary cycle, seasonal markers, and geographic location to help encode correlative relationships between human and atmospheric or meteorological conditions in an inherently holistic, cyclical, and spiritual macrocosm full of *qi*.

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<sup>152</sup> *Taiping yulan*, chap. 25, pp. 6a10-b4 (時序/秋).

## Conclusion

Han and medieval Chinese *zhanhou* involved culturally constructed notions of divine power and methods of achieving human salvation and welfare. It was a form of applied cosmology that helped transmit the worldviews of its day. Heaven-and-earth was a dynamic text for the mantic observer, a constantly changing text written in the spontaneously generated yet predominantly patterned movement of *qi* in heaven and earth.

Early *zhanhou* techniques involved the watchful observation and interpretation of wind, clouds, mist, rain, glories, and earthquakes to predict human fortune, particularly disasters (e.g., flood; drought; famine; banditry). These techniques drew from astrological, hemerological, phenological, and aeromantic knowledge and methods, and were based on spatial-temporal systems of representation like *yinyang*, the Five Agents, the sexagenary cycle, and the Eight Trigrams. While *zhanhou* was an umbrella term for a variety of techniques involving the scrutinization of *qi*-based natural phenomena, it was also a distinct and named practice. It first appears in a late first century CE text, supported by a revisionist and decentralized Han imperial cosmology that elevates the place of human intelligence and spirit, distances Heaven from humanity, and regards man's ability to foresee good and bad as a way to personal welfare. *Zhanhou* was received in different ways through time, but the attentive watching for—and interpretation of—atmospheric *qi* phenomena and conditions remained core components.

Medieval Chinese texts commonly depict *zhanhou* as a widespread and pervasive method of forecasting practiced both within and far outside of state courts. Contemporary proponents of teachings associated with the Dao and the Buddha do not frame it as an activity that can help one attain ultimate spiritual goals on its own, but neither of these dynamic traditions proscribed or promoted it in a consistent manner.

Watchers for omens, mantic observers, aeromancers, and seers relied upon different degrees of learned textual knowledge, technical skill, and spiritual insight. And while communities of practitioners were bound together by common technologies, they often applied and explained *zhanhou* in different ways. Narrative accounts tell us that many adepts of *zhanhou* were respected, educated members of the elite who played an essential role in political decisions and military campaigns. Others depict them as individuals who withdrew from society at different stages of their lives, using this separation to elevate their technical expertise to a more intuitive and spiritual mastery of 'seeing'. And, other narratives describe skilled adepts as commoners who were trained by spirits or miraculously inspired by them.

The holistic and interconnected cosmos regularly assumed in early descriptions of *zhanhou* was informed by – and informed – theories on the human body underlying Chinese medical practices. Mantic observation and diagnostic methods employed in traditional Chinese medicine involve the same systems of interpretation and the same basic material-spiritual ‘stuff’ (i.e., *qi*). The explanatory power of body for cosmos and cosmos for body is pointed out in many ancient classics and by many late Han and medieval Chinese writers, including Wang Chong, Fan Ye, and Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581?-682?).<sup>153</sup>

As a late Han and medieval way of knowing in a spiritually charged macrocosm including heaven, humankind, and earth, *zhanhou* transcends traditional distinctions between astrology and divination, and between technical and inspired forms of the latter. Early and middle imperial Chinese aeromantic techniques involving the attentive watching for and interpretation of macrocosmic *qi* conditions are worthy of further study on their own terms and through those that we – with collectively constructed orientations to reality very different from their early practitioners and commemorators – must apply to them to ‘see’.

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<sup>153</sup> See note 107.

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### Abbreviations

BBCSJC: *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成, edited by Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 *et al.*; Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1965-1968.

DZ: *Zhengtong daoze* 正統道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign Period), eds. Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1361-1410) and Zhang Yuqing 張宇清 (d. 1426); edition Shanghai: Shanghai shangwu, 1923-1926; based on the Beijing Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Abbey) edition.

SBBY: *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要, Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1965.

SKQS: *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書; electronic edition of the imperially-commissioned 1776 edition now stored in Beijing's Forbidden City, the *Wenyuan ge* 文淵閣 (Abyss of Literature Library) edition.

SSJS: *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (The Thirteen Classics with Commentary and Explanation), edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) *et al.*, 1957; fifth printing, edition Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990.

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- Bianzhu* 編珠 (String of Pearls), compiled by Du Gongzhan 杜公瞻 (f. 611); SKQS edition.
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- Chenshu* 陳書 (Book of Chen), compiled by Yao Silian 姚思廉 (567-637) *et al.*; edition Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972.
- Chuxue ji* 初學記 (Records for Primary Studies), compiled by Xu Jian 徐堅 (659-729) *et al.*; edition Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962.
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