



# The Art of Medicine in Early China: The Ancient and Medieval Origins of a Modern Archive

By *Miranda Brown*

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In this book, Miranda Brown investigates the myths that acupuncturists and herbalists have told about the birth of the healing arts. Moving from the Han (206 BC-AD 220) and Song (960-1279) dynasties to the twentieth century, Brown traces the rich history of Chinese medical historiography and the gradual emergence of the archive of medical tradition. She exposes the historical circumstances that shaped the current image of medical progenitors: the ancient bibliographers, medieval editors, and modern reformers and defenders of Chinese medicine who contributed to the contemporary shape of the archive. Brown demonstrates how ancient and medieval ways of knowing live on in popular narratives of medical history, both in modern Asia and in the West. She also reveals the surprising and often unacknowledged debt that contemporary scholars owe to their pre-modern forbearers for the categories, frameworks, and analytic tools with which to study the distant past.

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'The great strength of this book lies in its deep examination and unearthing of the key method of historiography of Chinese medicine ... The book also greatly contributes to our understanding of the modern retelling of Chinese medical history since the early twentieth century. Brown argues that this narrative was not a European invention, as historian of science Joseph Needham (1900-1995) interpreted it to be. The book also urges scholars to examine a fundamental question concerning the origins and evolution of the historiography of traditional Chinese medicine in post-1949 China. All in all, this book will be of great interest to scholars in the fields of Chinese history, Chinese medical history, Chinese historiography, and the history of science and medicine in general.' Xiaoping Fang, *The American Historical Review*

#### **About the Author**

Miranda Brown is an associate professor of Asian languages and cultures at the University of Michigan. She has published numerous articles on various aspects of Chinese medical and cultural history in both English and Chinese. She is the author of *The Politics of Mourning in Early China* (2007) and the coauthor of *A Brief History of Chinese Civilization* (2012, with Conrad Schirokauer). She is the editor of *Fragnments: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Ancient and Medieval Pasts*, a journal that she founded with leading US scholars.

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