Contents

List of Illustrations ix
A Prefatory Note and Acknowledgments xi

Introduction 1
The Title of the Text 4 / The Structure and Composition of the Text 5 / Anecdote and History 9 / Individualism and Typology 12 / The Shishuo and “Pure Conversation” 14 / Overview of Chapters 18

1 A Textual History of the Shishuo xinyu 21

2 On Social Networks 59
The Shishuo as Network 62 / Six Degrees of Separation, or a Walk through the Network 74 / First Degree: Xu Zhi and Chen Fan 77 / Second Degree: Chen Fan, Li Ying, and Cai Yong 80 / Third Degree: Cai Yong, Sun Chuo, and Wang Xizhi 83 / Fourth Degree: Wang Xizhi and Xie An 84 / Fifth Degree: Xie An, Wang Xianzhi, Liu Jin, and Huan Xuan 86 / Sixth Degree: Huan Xuan, Huan Xiu, and Madame Yu 87 / Conclusion: Network and Anecdote 88
Contents

3 On Gossip and Reputation
Defining Gossip and Reputation 91 / Gossip and Anecdote: Four Stories about Hua Xin 96 / Knowing Others and Being Known: Chu Pou’s Silence 107 / The Mingshi or “Gentlemen of Repute” 115 / Conclusion: The Anxiety of the Second-Rate 121

4 On Performance, Praise, and Insult

5 On Competition and Composure
Three Stories about Zhong Hui 160 / Conversation as Social Competition 166 / The Aesthetics of Composure 172 / Xie An: Calling Back the Recluse 180 / Xie An Keeps His Cool 183 / Conclusion: Wang Dun Goes to the Bathroom 188

6 On Ritual and Mourning
Mourning and Sincerity in the Li ji 193 / The Sincerity of Mourning 200 / Friendship and Mourning 209 / A Coda 216

Conclusion: The View from across the River 220

Appendix: Persons Appearing in the Shishuo xinyu 235
Bibliography 241
Index 267