Abstract To promote historical research today, one needs to create a vigorous environment for historiographic criticism, to summarize the progress and state of all fields and topics of history, and to enhance the study of historiography. All these three aspects, which share similar characteristics, can be called “historiography.” Their essence is the basic method for deepening the study of historiography as a whole and refining its branches from the perspective of intellectual history. They can help us to form a healthy scholarly mechanism to review historical achievements, which would be crucial to the development of academic research.

Keywords intellectual history, history of scholarship, historiography, historical reviews

Introduction

The development of science is the process of interaction between microscopic and macroscopic research. Since the early twentieth century, fields have been broken up into finer and finer subfields, and now, we even have primary, secondary, and tertiary fields. It is urgent to prepare a general history of scientific research today because there has been rapid progress in every subject since the beginning of the twentieth century. However, it is more important that the development course of every subject be examined and summarized from the viewpoint of the history of scholarship. The study of the development course of history in this series can be called the “history of historical scholarship,” which should be an expansion and strengthening of historiography from the viewpoint of history of scholarship. The author will give some advice on the following topics in this article: rules and systems for research on the history of
scholarship, the construction of the history of historical scholarship, and the healthy development of history research. Comments on this article from other experts are welcomed.

The history of scholarship and specialized research

As the term suggests, the history of scholarship covers the whole development of scholarly research. As for so-called scholarship, it is the set of processes and results by which scholars seek accurate, profound, and creative knowledge in various scholarly fields and present it to the society in a rational and systematic form. The basic spirit of scholarly research is to seek truth and creativity and banish superstition, falsehood, and narrow-mindedness. Thus, the main task of the history of scholarship is to sum up the process by which rational knowledge is formed and describe the development of the scholarly system, to show the creative achievements of various periods, to analyze the direction of scholarly careers and their influence on society, and especially to correct the mistaken trends that undermine scholarly truth with superstition for the sake of immediate gain. The study of the history of scholarship should have a clear critical and summarizing nature.

The study of the general history of scholarship does not only summarize the scholarly achievements of the various specialties but also explores their internal connections with each other. Therefore, it has a wider and more complete scholarly view, and overcomes the limitations of individual specialties. The formation of scholarly classifications is gradually followed by the development of social culture. The formation of modern specialties powerfully improves scholarly development, and the methods of the various fields are closely connected, interacting with each other powerfully in the process of their development. However, the specialties would be in trouble if they had overlooked the scholarly connections with other fields. As for historical research, we should examine the materials and research achievements from the viewpoints of literature, philosophy, and archival studies, while other subjects should make use of the materials, achievements, and methods of history. For example, many works in the fields of the history of Chinese thought and the history of Chinese philosophy have discussed the skeptical attitudes to the Heaven during the early Western Zhou period, but none have been able to point out their origins in the “Yin Lessons” 殷鉴, in which the ideas of the Mandate of Heaven 天命, respect for virtue 敬德, and protecting the people 保民 are derived from historical lessons. The ideas of the “Yin Lessons” “have had a deep influence on the formation of the characteristics of Chinese culture, and have made a steady connection between the political culture and historical knowledge, and have formed an idea model for deriving experience from history” [1]. Sun Sheng 孙盛, a famous scholar in The East Jin dynasty, has been regarded as an atheist, just as described in his entry in the Encyclopedic Dictionary 辞海 today, because in one article titled Yu Luo Junzhang shu 与罗君章书 ([2], Vol. 5), he declared that “thought disappears just like form dissolves”, which means that he opposed the opinion that the God is eternal.” In fact, Sun Sheng is a famous historian with many works, most of which had been lost, such as Weishi chunqiu 魏氏春秋 and Jin yangqiu 晋阳秋, large parts of which have been cited in Sanguo zhi zhu 三国志注, Beitang shuchao 北堂书钞, Taiping Anthologies for the Emperor 太平御览, and elsewhere. In these fragments, there are many stories about ghosts and divinities. Therefore, Sun Sheng was quite superstitious, and he cannot have been an atheist since he merely denied the eternal