

the end of a statement and affirm that it is so, a somewhat untranslatable particle that (I was told) reflects the Sanskrit *iti*. This usage, which the unwary often take to be a connective word introducing the next sentence, is not listed, no doubt on the assumption that most tyros will steer clear of solid Buddhist doctrine. I cannot help feeling, however, that it deserves a place in some basic work of reference and not just in oral tradition. But there is plenty already here to gladden the heart: among the many concise and elegant definitions it was gratifying to find one covering the collocation 𠄎 *zha* A 𠄎 *zha* B, “no sooner A than B”, since Mathews among others makes no mention of this, and I have noticed that even experienced translators sometimes fumble it.

On top of all this, many helpful aids may be found appended to the main dictionary, such as the expected and indispensable presentation of calendrical terminology, and less predictably but most usefully the entire set of the sixty hexagrams of the *Yi Jing*. The sequence of reign names only runs to the end of the Tang dynasty, but reflects Paul Kroll’s admirable precision in such matters: exact dates in the Chinese and Western calendars are given for the start of each, and regimes like those of Wang Mang and the Empress Wu are clearly marked rather than subsumed under the names of the dynasties they replaced for what turned out to be the (relatively) short term. The transient regimes that sprang up in the fourth century and succeeded each other in rapid succession into the fifth are not given space, though unfortunately periods of political chaos are not necessarily to be ignored in the Chinese past, so perhaps a separate set of tables might have been provided.

On the other hand, of course, the need to keep the dictionary to a reasonable size and price is understandable – maybe there is room once the success of this work has been established for some entrepreneur to produce a “Companion to Kroll”. Only in one respect might the need for such supplementary aids be a little more urgent. There is no listing at the very end, as in Mathews, for “characters having obscure radicals”, no doubt on the assumption that looking up *xiang* 相 in what the beginner expects to be the most obvious place to no avail will soon inculcate the need to be a little more suspicious. Even so, the production of a list of such characters keyed to this work based on that provided by Mathews, or even on more modern pedagogy, might be worth producing in due course. For assuredly the volume under review is not simply one that will be safe from defenestration; rather, one can safely predict that it will become a firm favourite of future generations. The compiler, and the colleagues whose help he generously acknowledges on the title page, are to be congratulated on a major step forward in the practical lexicography of the written language of the Chinese tradition in one of its most beautiful, challenging – and still current – forms.

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KYLE STEINKE with DORA C.Y. CHING (eds):

Art and Archaeology of the Erligang Civilization.

(Publications of the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.) 238 pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. ISBN 978 0 691 15994 2.

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This is the first English-language book fully devoted to the Erligang Civilization. In the words of Steinke’s preface, it aims “to bring the Erligang civilization to the

attention of a wide audience”, highlighting its distinctive elite material culture as well as its unique position in archaeological research of Bronze Age China.

The book consists of nine chapters, organized into four sections: Introduction; Defining the Erligang civilization; Erligang and the south; and Parting thoughts. In chapter 1, Robert Bagley presents a detailed review of the history of Erligang bronzes and the discovery of Erligang culture. The tone he sets for this book is to “make a case for Erligang bronzes as deserving of attention in their own right”. In chapter 2, Zhang Changping offers a concise introduction to archaeological finds at Panlongcheng, and also discusses their significance in understanding Erligang culture.

There are four chapters under the section “Defining the Erligang civilization”. The two chapters by Wang Haicheng and John Baine respectively present studies of “cross-cultural comparison”, using cases from ancient Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and Egypt in order to throw light on the expansion of the Erligang state. In the other two chapters, Roderick Campbell tries to understand the appearance of Erligang as a civilization by examining a number of the most significant characteristics of the Erligang site, such as site size, production specialization and scale, the extent of material culture distribution, the scale of labour organization, and mortuary hierarchy; while Yung-ti Li highlights a set of hidden assumptions stemming from traditional Chinese historiography, which, he believes, have misled research on Bronze Age archaeology in China.

The focus of chapters 7 and 8 is “Erligang and the south”, which is crucial for understanding the so-called Erligang expansion. Kyle Steinke’s chapter draws a general picture of the relationship between Erligang and the rise of bronze industries in the south, with a focus on the bronzes found at Xingan Dayangzhou in Jiangxi province. Robin McNeal discusses early bronze finds in Hunan and their possible links with the Erligang expansion. In chapter 9, Maggie Bickford offers some thoughts on the contribution of the study of early Chinese bronzes to art history in general, especially from a methodological point of view.

In my opinion, this book will stand as a milestone in the study of early Chinese bronzes. One of its major arguments is the necessity of defining or interpreting Erligang on its own terms rather than jumping to conclusions about an affiliation with the Shang dynasty. As Steinke puts it, “Insisting on a connection with the Shang dynasty attested later at Anyang shifts attention to the more thoroughly explored Anyang site and obscures the role of Erligang in the rise of civilization in East Asia”. Such a strong attitude of suspicion regarding the transmitted texts as well as traditional Chinese historiography is also echoed in Yungti Li’s criticism of the so-called dynastic model. This argument clearly challenges current practices in archaeological research in China, in which the Erligang culture is widely seen as remains of the early Shang dynasty.

This book offers some interesting examples of approaching the Erligang material record without the aid of Shang Oracle Bones and later texts. In his discussion of “regional perspective”, Campbell proposes viewing Zhengzhou and other Central Plains Bronze Age centres as nodes in far-reaching and constantly changing networks of warfare, alliance, ritual, trade, tribute, marriage and other things. Similarly, based on his art historical readings of bronzes found at Xingan, Dayangzhou, Steinke points out Xingan’s connection with Erligang, and sees this connection as evidence for Erligang expansion. Yet he also emphasizes the contribution of southern cultures, as he states that “the Erligang expansion brought northern ideas into contact with southern cultures that were fully prepared to exploit them”.

What is highlighted repeatedly in this book is the so-called Erligang expansion. From a perspective of cross-cultural comparison, Wang Haicheng notes that the large-scale dissemination of a distinctive material culture is fairly common in the

initial stages of civilizations, with resource procurement and trade being its major motives. In interpreting the Erligang expansion, however, Wang proposes that ideological motives could have played a major role too. However, it remains to be explored how such ideological motives may have been integrated with other economic or military motives, and why ritual bronze vessels should have played such a symbolic or representative role in this expansion process.

In the eyes of many of the authors of this volume, the Erligang civilization deserves much more credit for its immense contribution to characteristics of early Chinese civilization, such as the bronze industry as well as the Chinese writing system. While the earliest appearance of the writing system in China is still an issue of debate, to credit Erligang foundries as “the starting point for the development of factory organization in China” could be somewhat misleading, as archaeological discoveries from the even earlier Erlitou site give clear evidence for the emergence of a bronze industry based on piece-mould casting technology. While the unique significance of the Erligang civilization receives full recognition here, the continuity or connection in the development of bronze technology from Erlitou to Erligang should not be overlooked.

Yung-ti Li’s chapter “The politics of maps, pottery, and archaeology” is worthy of special attention, as it specifically questions many practices in current archaeological research in China, such as drawing the cultural and political boundaries of the late Shang dynasty based on the distribution of archaeological remains. While Li’s acute and stimulating discussions of hidden assumptions in Chinese Bronze Age archaeology are fully appreciated, I wonder whether the heavily criticized dynastic model might better be seen as one alternative interpretation of archaeological discoveries in China, rather than being regarded as a totally distorted one which should be abandoned completely.

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LILY XIAO HONG LEE and SUE WILES (eds):

Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women, Tang through Ming, 618–1644.

(University of Hong Kong Libraries Publications.) xliii, 672 pp. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2014. ISBN 978 07656 4314 8.

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This book is the final volume of four giant *Biographical Dictionaries of Chinese Women* from the same publisher. The other three are: *Antiquity through Sui* (1600 B.C.E.–618 C.E.), published in 2007; *Twentieth Century (1912–2000)*, published in 2003, and *Qing Period*, published in 1998.

These labour-intensive works aim to “compile under one title biographies of Chinese women throughout history; to rescue from oblivion as many women as we could uncover information on; and to furnish more complete biographical date on individual Chinese women than presently exists in dictionaries published since the 1940s” (p. ix). There is no doubt that these works make a significant contribution to the field and serve as an invaluable resource for teaching and research on Chinese women.

At the beginning, this volume provides a helpful and detailed chronology of dynasties and major rulers from the Tang Dynasty (618–907) to the Southern Ming