

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Our field is flourishing and this issue of *Early China* (41) is unusually full. It includes research articles on a range of topics, by Thies Staack, Kuan-yun Huang, Monica Zipki, Armin Selbitschka, Andrej Fecz, Tobias Zürn, Piotr Gibas, and Trevor Mckay. It also includes a review article of a book series of research works on Qin Dynasty bamboo and wood documents produced by Chen Wei 陳偉 and his team of scholars at Wuhan University, written by Christopher Foster. This complements the review last year by Olivier Venture of the *Qin jiandu heji* 秦簡牘合集. The study of Early China in China is much too large a field for *Early China* to include systematic book reviews, but reviews of works of major importance that our readers would like to know about are welcome.

Early China 41 also includes two innovations. One is a research note responding to an article in the previous issue and a rejoinder by the original author. This lively debate between Jonathan Smith and Adam Smith—on the evolution of the graph *shun* 舜—is ostensibly about technical issues, but the argument goes beyond the immediate question and helps to clarify methodological problems in analyzing graphic change that will be of interest to anyone who uses excavated texts. We hope that this practice will continue. The other innovation is an exhibition review by Martin Powers of the *Mirroring China's Past* exhibition curated by Tao Wang at the Art Institute of Chicago (February 25–May 13, 2018). This exhibition took the role of bronzes in the Chinese imagination throughout history as its theme. It focused primarily on bronzes in historic collections but included related materials up to contemporary times. Most importantly, it included many the most famous bronzes from historic collections that are now in the Imperial Palace and the Shanghai Museum collections. These are rarely exhibited and this was an exceptional event; but there are many exhibitions of early Chinese art and archaeology in the West, and we invite reviews of future exhibitions.

As the “Annual Bibliography,” compiled by Wen-Yi Huang, attests, there is an ever-increasing number of publications in our field. One reason is the increasing number of English-language journals and books published as collaborations between Chinese institutions and Western publishing houses. For about a decade, Brill has been publishing a series of journals with titles including “Frontiers of [academic discipline] in China” that include primarily articles translated from Chinese. Those devoted to History, Philosophy, and Literary Studies sometimes have articles of relevance to Early China studies. Recently, Brill has added two new titles,

published in collaboration with established Chinese journals: the well-known *Journal of Chinese Humanities* (*Wenshizhe* 文史哲, Shandong University, <https://brill.com/view/journals/joch/joch-overview.xml>) and *Bamboo and Silk* (*Jianbo* 簡帛, Center of Bamboo and Silk Manuscripts of Wuhan University, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/24689246>).

SAGE has also recently launched the *Journal of Chinese Writing Systems* (*Zhongguo wenzi* 中國文字), an entirely new journal, in collaboration with the Center for the Study and Application of Chinese Characters, East China Normal University. This journal will publish both English and Chinese language articles (in separate issues) and invites original submissions. Although it will include articles on early writing, its range is defined more broadly as: “Chinese writing systems, which include modern Chinese characters, ancient scripts, Dongba scripts, and Shui scripts, etc., as well as the comparative studies on hieroglyphs of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The journal is dedicated to the studies of morphology, i.e., the structure, formation and function of the scripts, symbols; the studies of interrelation between writing systems and the language, as well as the cognition and acquisition of Chinese characters” (<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/cws>).

Unfortunately, during the past year, we have lost some exceptional scholars who, in their different ways, did much to inspire our field.

Jao Tsung-I (Rao Zongyi) 饒宗頤 (1917–2018) was a polymath of remarkable scope and depth. D.C. Lau (1921–2010), himself one of the finest sinologists of the last century, once told me that Jao was the scholar he most admired. As Chen Zhi and Adam Schwartz make clear in their obituary, much of his academic career was devoted to Dunhuang studies, but, through eight decades of research, his scholarship extended to nearly every field of traditional Chinese culture, including oracle-bone studies, early literature, and the Chu silk manuscript. He was also well-known as a painter and calligrapher.

The Peking University archeologist, Su Bai 宿白 (1922–2018), died at the age of 96. His primary research field was Buddhist archaeology, not Early China, but he trained generations of archaeologists. One such student was Zhang Zhongpei 張忠培 (1934–2017), a field archaeologist who founded the Archaeology Department at Jilin University and became Director of the Palace Museum. As Katheryn Linduff’s obituary of Zhang explains, his early collaborative field projects have been important in opening Chinese archaeology to Western scholars.

Gerhard Schmitt (1933–2017) was an unusual German scholar. He went East rather than West at the end of World War II, and his scholarship was not well-known in the English-speaking world. Fortunately, his obituary by Wolfgang Behr includes a bibliography of his writings.

Behr notes that his preoccupations included “the reconstruction of Old Chinese myth, ritual, and religious history on the basis of an etymology driven textual philology, coupled with archaeological and ethnographic data, as well as the study of lexical contacts since antiquity between Chinese and the Northeast Asian neighboring languages.”

Gao Ming 高明 (1926–2018) taught paleography in the Archaeology Department (originally a specialization in the History Department) at Peking University. In the 1980s, he was a visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and he sometimes had Western students in his classes, so many Western scholars knew and admired him. Li Ling 李零 put it simply:

學問高明，人也高明。我們這個時代，做好人不容易，高老師是好人。

His scholarship is brilliant, and his character is also brilliant. For us, in this era, to be a good person is not easy. Teacher Gao is a good person.

(Beijing Daxue Kaogu Wenbo Xueyuan 北京大學考古文博學院, *Gao Ming Xiansheng jiuzhi huadan qingshou wenji* 高明先生九秩華誕慶壽文集 (Beijing: Kexue, 2016), iii).

An obituary, written by Lai Guolong, will be included in *Early China* 42 (2019).

What these scholars had in common was their true devotion to learning. May we long remember them.

Sarah Allan