

the ‘founding myth’ of mainstream nationalism. But nationalism not only unifies; it also diversifies by creating alternative identities: the partition of India in 1947, for example, was occasioned for reasons of religious nationalism. To this day Muslims comprise a significant proportion (around 14%) of the Indian population; and, but for the loss of Pakistan (including what is now Bangladesh) in mid-century, it would have been a third. They have a history that gives them a centrality in processes of state formation in India, as exemplified by the Mughal Empire. In China, by contrast, Muslims make up a relatively small minority of nineteen millions or just 1.5% of the total number of inhabitants. Muslims in Xinjiang might have been independent from Chinese empires for a very long time; but they have never taken over the centre. The situation is exacerbated in both China and India because Xinjiang and Kashmir respectively are majority-Muslim regions at the edge of national territory; and, once the state map has been established, there is a paramount desire to maintain its integrity.³

Overall, *The Modern Spirit of Asia* is at once reflective, informative, and penetrating. An insightful study written in accessible style, it remains a work of rich scholarship which will continue to yield its fruit for years to come. As the philosopher Professor Charles Taylor remarks (back cover), the book “gives us interactional history at its best”. <avmhorton@hotmail.com>

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CHARIOTS IN EARLY CHINA – ORIGINS, CULTURAL INTERACTION AND IDENTITY. By HSIAO-YUN WU. (BAR International Series 2457). pp. 135. Oxford, Archaeopress, 2013.
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The evolution and spread of chariots across Eurasia is a subject of enduring scholarly fascination and has been fuelled by the publication of notable archaeological discoveries made in the southern Urals and ancient China. The unearthing of complete chariots, however, is an exceptional occurrence in the Urals when compared to the considerable amount of materials recovered from early Chinese funerary contexts. The earliest evidence for Chinese chariots appears in the Bronze Age and derives from burials belonging to the Late Shang period *circa* 1200 BCE. So far there have been over 100 Shang chariots unearthed, while over 700 chariots have been found in burials relating to the subsequent Zhou period *circa* 1046–221 BCE. Thus, the monograph *Chariots in Early China* offers a timely review of these findings, while also providing a closer examination of the roles they played amongst the elites in Chinese society.

Chapter 1 starts off with outlining the background to the discovery of Late Shang and Zhou period chariots. It also summarises key points put forward in the scholarship of prominent researchers in the field of chariot archaeology including Stuart Piggott, Jessica Rawson and William Watson. Based on these foundations, the volume then sets out its research agenda which entails the exploration of the politics and hierarchies of chariot use in Shang and Zhou society by drawing upon Chinese archaeological reports and highlighting important anecdotes from translations of early Chinese texts.

The theories about the evolution of chariots in western Eurasia and how chariot technology arrived in Early China is re-examined in Chapter 2. The precursors to the Chinese chariot can be seen in a handful of burials associated with the Sintashta culture of the southern Urals (*circa* 2000–1750 BCE) and

³On Chinese cartographic sensitivities, see Timothy Brook, *Mr Selden's Map of China: The Spice Trade, a Lost Chart & the South China Sea* (London: Profile Books, pbk, 2015), particularly the first chapter.

there is circumstantial evidence of their continuity into the later Karasuk culture of southern Siberia (*circa* 1400–1000 BCE), though no chariots have been found as of yet. It is argued the Karasuk could have been the most likely source of influence upon the Shang of China as the introduction of chariots were, perhaps, the result of political and economic interactions between these two neighbouring regions.

In Chapter 2, the author also seeks to switch from the idea of the transmission of chariots to a more nuanced view that chariot manufacture was a specialised set of skills adopted by the Chinese, and coincided with the first appearance of horses in the late Shang period. The Shang embraced a Eurasian prototype that required carpentry and engineering skills which were hitherto unknown to them. It was taken on as a ‘flat pack’ of military technology without making any innovations to it; however, the Shang did embellish their chariots with ornaments created from their renowned bronze casting expertise. Additionally, during the final phase of the Shang period (late twelfth to eleventh century BCE) there was less weaponry found in chariot burials indicating the chariot had become a significant indicator of social status among the high-ranking elite as they ritually accompanied them into the afterlife.

Chapter 3 shifts its attention to the subsequent Zhou period where chariot technology moved further apace – new weapons and ornaments designed for chariot use materialised along with the appearance of four horse-drawn chariots. Moreover, chariots were increasingly an important means of conferring status in Zhou society as documented in texts describing appointment ceremonies. In contrast to the late Shang period where chariots were often buried in pits associated with the elite’s tomb or placed upon the entry ramp to the tomb, the Zhou period also saw the widespread funerary custom of placing horses and chariot fittings in the main chamber of higher ranking tombs.

Several case studies from the Zhou period are offered in Chapter 4 that provide detailed examinations of the various socio-political interactions revolving around chariots. Chariot burials at the sites of Liulihe and Baifu, for example, offer compelling evidence for the direct connection between the peoples of the northern frontier with the Zhou elite, while the tombs found at Beizhao display gender differences as male elites were buried with several chariots and high-ranking females were buried with a single, smaller-sized chariot. These fascinating vignettes, though, could have had some of their key ideas developed further – for example, a more comprehensive discussion on the dynamic aspects of gender and identity in society.

Chapter 5 discusses how the chariot became an idealised symbol in later Confucianism. The teachings of Confucius emerged during the time of the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE) and provided the basis of moral and political philosophy found in Confucian discourse. Confucians drew upon, in particular, one important early written source called the *Shi jing*, the Book of Poetry – a collection of folk prose dating from the early Western Zhou period to the Spring and Autumn times (*circa* 1000 to 600 BCE). Several *Shi jing* poems provide fascinating anecdotes, such as the *Zaijian* where the virtue of the king and the Zhou state is represented by an allegory involving the image of the king’s chariot. Another poem *Tingliao* describes the movement of virtuous Zhou elites to that of the sound of a jingling chariot bell. Thus, in later Confucian writings, the poetic image of the Zhou chariot was held as an idealised example of a ‘Golden Age’ where the elite carried themselves in a virtuous manner.

Overall, this volume provides a valuable topical summary of the theories about the evolution and dissemination of chariots between China and its northern borders. It also offers a fresh synthesis of old data and new interpretations, while importantly providing in English a broad survey of early Chinese chariot discoveries and early Chinese texts making reference to these vehicles. k.lymer@wessexarch.co.uk

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