

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue, *Early China* 37 (2014), is the first issue to be published by Cambridge University Press and the first to be published online as well as in print. *Early China* was founded by David N. Keightley in 1975. In the inaugural issue, he described it as “a newsletter devoted to the dissemination of information and the testing of new ideas in the fields of pre-historic, Shang, [Z]hou, and Han China. It is the newsletter of the Society for the Study of Early China....” Though our goals remain essentially the same, we are now a multi-disciplinary journal that publishes articles on all aspects of China before roughly 220 C.E. This includes such fields as history, archaeology, art history, paleography, philosophy, literature, linguistics, textual criticism, and philology.

The particular circumstances of the founding of *Early China* were fortuitous. David Keightley (b. 1932) had recently begun teaching at the University of California at Berkeley.¹ Keightley is an historian and specialist in Shang Dynasty oracle bone inscriptions. Han Dynasty silk manuscripts had also recently been discovered at Changsha Mawangdui 長沙馬王堆 in Hunan Province. So, research on ancient inscriptions, excavated texts, and other archaeological discoveries has played an important role in *Early China* since its inception. At that time, China was also just opening to the West—the early issues of the newsletter are full of the excitement of first visits to China, delegations traveling to and from China, and news of archaeological finds. In the intervening years, an astonishing array of new discoveries have invigorated the study of ancient China from multiple perspectives. Intellectual exchange between scholars working in China and Western countries has also become the norm. The field and the journal have flourished in tandem.

With the move to Cambridge Journals, the Society for the Study of Early China wishes to acknowledge the dedicated staff of the Institute of East Asian Studies of the University of California, Berkeley, for their support and help publishing and distributing issues of *Early China* since the “newsletter” became a “journal” in 1980. We are very grateful to the Institute for their many years of assistance and would particularly like to thank Martin Backstrom and Kate Chouta, who have been responsible for the journal in recent years. The Society also

1. Keightley began teaching in the History Department at U.C., Berkeley, in 1969. In 1971, as a doctoral student in the Oriental Languages Department, I audited his first seminar on reading oracle bone and bronze inscriptions.

owes a particular debt to David Goodrich of Birdtrack Press, who has typeset the journal through the decades as editors have come and gone, providing not only his exceptional technical skills but also much-needed continuity and, frequently, the contribution of his considerable erudition as a scholar. The journal could not have developed to its current level of professionalism without his fine work and generosity.

In recent years, we have faced rising costs and practical issues inherent in the traditional method of production and distribution. Moreover, as *Early China* developed into the representative journal of our field, it became increasingly difficult for scholar/editors with full-time teaching and research commitments to edit and manage the journal without support, much less to produce it annually. Since the Society for the Study of Early China does not have any endowment or institutional funding, we have also had to depend upon the funds acquired from membership subscriptions and sales of the journal and monographs to fund each publication. With a print volume only, a limited distribution system, and rising costs, the situation had been rapidly becoming unsustainable. With Cambridge Journals, we now have a secure future, a more manageable production system, online as well as print publication, and access to their unrivalled distribution network. We look forward to a long and fruitful cooperation.

Early China 37 (2014) includes a bumper crop of eleven regular research articles. It also includes three articles from the Third International Conference on Excavated Manuscripts, organized by Xing Wen, and held at Mount Holyoke College in 2004. These articles were previously to be included in a monograph, to be coedited by Xing Wen and Robin Yates, and published in the Society's Special Monograph Series. However, too much time had elapsed to publish the volume in its original form and so, not wishing to delay further, we are publishing updated versions of these articles in this special section of *Early China* 37. This issue also includes two review articles. One, by Lee-moi Pham and Kevin Huang, provides an overview of the major digital resources and websites currently available for research on excavated texts. The other, by Magnus Fiskesjö, discusses two books by the journal's founder, David Keightley. The Review Forum focuses on Wai-ye Li's book, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*.

We also continue to include book reviews, *Dissertation Abstracts*, and an *Annual Bibliography*. Because publication in recent years has been irregular and included several double-year issues, the dates of the dissertation abstracts and the publications listed in the bibliography have not always been consistent with the year printed on the journal. With this issue, we have done our best to bring the listings up-to-date and

included some earlier materials that had been missed in earlier volumes. In the future, we expect to maintain an annual schedule with up-to-date entries, but please inform us if we have missed your publication and we will include it in the next issue.

Besides the publication of the journal, the Society for the Study of Early China maintains its own website (earlychina.org), with Charles Sanft now as webmaster taking over from Yuri Pines. In 2015, we will also have the third annual Early China Conference held in conjunction with the annual Association for Asian Studies Conference. Special thanks go to Charles Sanft, Andrew Meyer, and Janice Kam, whose work over the last two years has made these conferences possible. We hope that we will be able to begin publishing new monographs in the Society's Special Monograph Series soon. For the Society for the Study of Early China to flourish, your support is needed; that is, *we need your membership subscriptions, your libraries' subscriptions, and any voluntary donations you care to make*. Just follow the link: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/memServHome?name=SSECHome>.

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