

different times. A separate chapter or a section to address the issues of calligraphy and orthography in the early medieval *muzhiming* would have helped to amplify the picture of the development of *muzhiming*. Especially, in discussing *muzhiming* from the Northern Dynasties (Chapter 5) and the canonization of *muzhiming* (Chapter 6), the execution of calligraphy could also serve as important evidence to strengthen the author's arguments. Other physical features, such as the blank spot or starting a new line when encountering certain esteemed terms, are also worth consideration in connection with the formal nature of *muzhiming*. Although the rule of "leveling and leaving blanks" (*pingqueshi* 平阙式) was formally established in the subsequent Tang dynasty, is there any trace of it in the early medieval period?

Second, in each chapter Davis provides at least one case of close reading, complete with the transcriptions of the text, full annotated translation, and in most cases, an image of the original rubbing. The inclusion of the rubbing is especially welcome since scholars can use it to re-examine the original text. Translation of these texts is not an easy task due to the fact that *muzhiming* not only were often composed in a highly poetic, literary way, but even the preface part was also often written in the style of parallel prose and contains various historical allusions, some apparently fabricated.

Last but not least, this book is not just about *muzhiming* as a particular literary genre, but is also about commemorative culture in general. Not only are various other commemorative genres appearing in the transmitted literature discussed, but more importantly, many other types of memorial inscriptions and entombed texts are examined, most of which are known only through archaeological discoveries. With both transmitted texts and discovered types presented together, this book can serve as a starting point for anyone who is interested in early and medieval Chinese commemorative culture. The book demonstrates Davis's vast knowledge and deep understanding in the history and literature of early and medieval Chinese.

In sum, *Entombed Epigraphy and Commemorative Culture in Early Medieval China: A History of Early Muzhiming* is an exemplary interdisciplinary study which successfully brings together archaeology, history, literature, and textual studies.

Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Gazetteers in Imperial China, 1100–1700. By JOSEPH DENNIS. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015. xvi + 390 pp. \$49.95, £39.95, €45.00 (cloth).

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The past two to three decades have seen a series of pioneering studies published on the history of books and publishing in late imperial China. Previously, the predominant concern of Chinese book history had been the history of printing technology, or rather the Chinese invention of woodblock and then moveable-type printing and the supposed transmission of both technologies over Eurasia to a pre-Gutenberg Germany. Since the publications of Oki Yasushi and Inoue Susumu in the 1990s and then Lucille Chia's 2002 study of Jianyang publications from the Song through the Ming dynasties, we

have seen the benefits of asking new questions on the social and cultural history of Chinese books and printing. With this change of interest from the invention of a piece of technology to the long-term history of this invention and its products and consumers, that is, from a unresearchable moment in time to more than a millennium of book production, distribution, collection, and reading, the historian of the Chinese book won release from a Chinese obsession with demonstrating Gutenberg's undeserved reputation for primacy of invention. Freed from the constraints of this essentially nationalist mission, the historian of the Chinese book has begun to engage in a far wider and more interesting set of questions. So wide ranging have been the repercussions of this basic change in research focus that subjects once considered abstruse, such as calligraphic carving styles and reading methods, have become vital to the study of Chinese cultural history. Research into the history of the Chinese book has become popular enough to support the regular publication of two new specially dedicated journals, *East Asian Printing and Book Culture* and its Chinese counterpart *Zhongguo chuban shi yanjiu* 中国出版史研究 (*Research on the History of Publishing in China*). Chinese and non-Chinese book historians have gone on to create a research field of common interest that demonstrates the benefits of a shared research culture and agenda.

One of the more popular approaches taken up in this new wave of book history has been to adopt a local focus on book production and especially printing. By concentrating on the publishing history of a particular place, the place being a Chinese county or prefecture, or a region, or one particular publishing house over a limited period of time, scholars have provided fine English and French language accounts on publishing centers like Huizhou, Jianyang, Nanjing, Sibao, and even a wide publishing area like the lower Yangzi delta, or on a single publishing house (the Huangduzhai) in Qing dynasty Hangzhou. This local or area focus has been productive, as the study of publishing details within a wider if still limited social and economic context has shed much light on issues common to book history and local history in general, such as purchase prices, the affordability of books to the reading public and thus their accessibility, local artisan carving and printing traditions, marketing and collecting practices, and the role of book stores as publishers, book sellers, and storehouses of woodblocks. As a result, in some recent general surveys of Song, Yuan, or Ming history, the topic of book history has become an enlightening chapter rather than just an afterthought in a section dedicated to cultural history. In some quarters Chinese book publishing is seen as a fruitful avenue of research on early Chinese forms of capitalism.

Joseph Dennis's volume consciously counters this localist trend essentially by addressing these social and economic questions of the new book history to not one place but to one genre during mainly one dynasty. He has written an informative empire-wide study of the composition and printing of a particular book genre, the local gazetteer (*difang zhi* 地方志), mainly during the Ming dynasty. And even if the most original and, to my mind, interesting section deals with how both the contents and form of a county's gazetteer might be heavily based on the genealogies of its self-anointed elite, his book overall makes an important contribution to the study of Ming books in general and to gazetteers in particular. All late imperial historians should read and learn from his work, if only to be aware of the context from which one of their most commonly used sources has emerged.

His choice of the local gazetteer as the focus of an empire-wide approach is of course paradoxical, but the near universality of this genre by the mid-Ming allows him to show us a mature genre in operation throughout late imperial China. Regional differences are intelligently considered in a discussion of border areas' gazetteers. But they are not the main interest of a book that instead shows us how over two and a half centuries Chinese local groups and local governments produced a total of 3,470 gazetteers (of which just 1,024 survive), how they were compiled usually by the locale's educated men or its lower government officials (e.g. county school teachers) on the basis of funds acquired through private local donations or local government and officials' contributions. Not surprisingly, county magistrates and prefects often played a vital role in initiating and administering the project, sometimes with local gentry backing, as both private and public sources (often including extant earlier gazetteers) were accessed for their data and other information. Self-consciously based on earlier transcribed and published materials as well as sometimes on oral reports by educated and uneducated locals, these local gazetteers increasingly were serious pieces of footnoted scholarship that rescued a great amount of information that otherwise would have perished (nonetheless, of the known Ming gazetteers, more than two and a half times as many more of them have disappeared than have survived, but for snippets found in later editions). Over time, as the rules and categories for the types of materials judged suitable for inclusion expanded, so did the social backgrounds of the individuals included and the types of local literary compositions. While government employees or degree holders were almost invariably involved in the project's editorial work (doubtless, one reason for the gazetteer's normal omission of contemporary political criticism), publication was often done by either public or private publishers in a yamen or other government space (publication of a gazetteer manuscript became the norm, Dennis believes, in the Southern Song). Carvers and actual printers were hired craftsmen, sometimes local and sometimes itinerant, who worked under yamen or local parties' supervision. Woodblocks (moveable-type imprints were rare) were stored in government schools, and printers were usually natives of the place. In short, despite the court's empire-wide decrees for the compilation of new local gazetteers, the publishing process of a local gazetteer, from compiling and composing to production and storage, was commonly a decidedly local project. In fact, despite mention of the operation of print craftsmen centres like Beijing, the focus here on the role of a wide swathe of Ming China's yamens in publishing gazetteers provides the useful insight that publishing craftsmen lived and operated in many regions usually considered peripheral to Ming China's publishing industry.

Dennis has also collected in Chapter 5 a considerable amount of economic data on prices, salaries, and expenses, that both book historians and Ming specialists will find useful. But, as he recognizes, its disparate origin from throughout a vast empire makes scholarly use of it for broad-ranging conclusions inopportune at this stage of research (e.g., good quality woodblocks in Guangdong in 1552 cost per block a fortieth of the cost of higher quality blocks used in a government imprint's production in Beijing in 1590). Frankly, I suspect that progress along this economic front of book history will come far more quickly by working backwards from Qing data than by searching other genres of Ming book production for similar data.,

These then are some of the useful insights that Dennis's book provides, thanks to his combining the new book history's questions with the traditional empire-wide focus

during a particular dynasty. Inevitably, this approach, however adroitly undertaken, brings with it certain disadvantages, notably a loose piling up of similar examples and a certain hesitation in pursuing an argument, due to the difficulty of linking up certain interesting comments or conclusions persuasively to make a larger point. As a result, a degree of blandness takes over a few sections of the later chapters. Nonetheless, one finishes this book grateful for its careful scholarship, intelligent readings, novel findings, and the sense of a demanding job well done.

Middle Kingdom and Empire of the Rising Sun: Sino-Japanese Relations, Past and Present. By JUNE TEUFEL DREYER. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 472 pp. \$34.95, £22.99 (cloth), \$23.99 (ebook).

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China and Japan, the two biggest powerhouses in Asia, have in modern times gone through so much turbulence, including two wars, numerous iterations of political conflict and, more recently, even an arms race and military face-off, that they exhibit traits of what political scientists call “enduring rivalry.” Today, more than seventy years after their last war, they have arguably one of the most volatile major-power relationships in the world.

June Dreyer’s new book traces the origin of this rivalry to the inception of their interactions at least as long ago as the sixth century, and narrates its evolution into the present day. The main proposition is that throughout history each of the two nations has refused to accept the other as an equal, nor would either concede a position of superiority to the other. When they were separated by natural barriers, and when power was asymmetrically distributed between the two, chances for tension were low; at other times, there was a high risk of conflict. While the idea conforms to some realist theories of international relations, Dreyer adds an important cultural-psychological dimension that has complicated the superiority/inferiority complex between the two Asian nations.

The first part of the book is devoted to a chronological account of Sino-Japanese relations. From premodern days, says Dreyer, the Middle Kingdom took a condescending attitude toward Japan, treating it as a lower, barbarian vassal state in a Sinocentric tributary system, a role that Japanese rulers persistently rejected. The two nations escaped direct conflicts earlier on only because the ocean between them made military conquest difficult and because Japanese power was not nearly sufficient for Japan to qualify as a worthy rival to China. From the late nineteenth century, however, the balance of power shifted dramatically to favor Japan, which emerged as a western-style imperialist power after the Meiji Restoration, over the Middle Kingdom, which disintegrated under the dual pressure of imperialist aggression and domestic turmoil. Now it was Japan’s turn to handle China with contempt and, in their war of 1937–45, brutal oppression.

Direct confrontation was again muted during the Cold War because the two countries were divided by their alignment with the communist and capitalist camps respectively, and both were weak in international power politics—China was an economically third-class country and Japan was strategically insignificant. Friction nevertheless