

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS*

Dal Martello, Rita. Ph.D. University College London, 2020.
Agricultural Trajectories in Yunnan, Southwest China: A Comparative Analysis of Archaeobotanical Remains from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age.

This dissertation investigates the emergence and development of agricultural practices in the southwest Chinese province of Yunnan, between the 3rd and 1st millennia c.e. Drawing from previously unstudied archaeobotanical remains from the sites of Baiyangcun, Haimenkou, and Dayingzhuang, this research analyses compositional and chronological changes in the crop assemblage from each site. These sites are located in the strategic region of sanjiang, at the crossroads of three main Asian rivers: Yangzi, Mekong, and Salween. Local and regional developments of agricultural systems are explored through the comparison of these new materials with other published datasets from Yunnan, the surrounding provinces of Sichuan, Tibet, Chongqing, Guangxi, and mainland Southeast Asian countries. The main research questions addressed in this dissertation are: What was the basis of early agriculture in Yunnan? Given that the first attested agricultural systems in Southwest China appear 3000 to 2000 years later than those associated with domestication centers in North China and along the Yangzi River, to what extent can agricultural practices in Yunnan be derived entirely from migrating farmers, or did adoption (acculturation) by local forager populations play a role? What role did native wild plants play in Yunnan Neolithic and Post-Neolithic subsistence, and were there any local processes of domestication underway? With regards to rice, what was the ecology of rice cultivation? Did this differ either from source regions along the Yangzi, or from the early systems in Southeast Asia, which have sometimes been suggested to have origins in Yunnan? The results contained in this thesis provide archaeological evidence that was until now lacking to evaluate the validity of the language/farming dispersal hypothesis in the context of the Austroasiatic languages dispersal, as well as laying an important archaeological and chronological framework for studying of the emergence of a settled agricultural lifestyle in Yunnan.

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Fu, Su. Ph.D. Princeton University, 2019.

When the South Matters: Imagination of Chu and Canonization of Chuci (Verses of Chu).

This dissertation investigates the construction of *Chuci* (a collection of poems purportedly written by the legendary figure Qu Yuan and his followers) as a southern anthology and literary tradition from Han (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) to Song (960–1279). It demonstrates that, rather than inherent in the text per se, the traits conventionally recognized as marks of the anthology's southernness were cultural and political constructs with an agenda to articulate a southern identity for both state and literati. To that end, the dissertation examines the anthologizing practices, together with a close reading of commentaries, prefaces, letters, and imitations. The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One examines the Han compilation and valorization of *Chuci* in relation with Qu Yuan's Chu identity. The trajectory of conception of *Chuci* through Six Dynasties (222–589) and Tang (618–907) are arranged thematically in three chapters. Each chapter probes one of the literary images of Chu—a symbol for displacement, a culture of lewd rites, and a fallen state—and its impact on the *Chuci* exegesis and assessment. The entire narrative ends in Chapter Five at the Song when previous proliferation of meaning and debates on the anthology's value were transformed into a new state-wide recognition of its canonical status, with Southern Song literati identification of Chu as a tragic predecessor. In particular, by defining *Chuci* as a style exclusively bound to the southland, Southern Song literati claimed their exclusive ownership of the cultural heritage of the anthology and further implicitly claimed for the Song court's cultural authority in the face of military threat from the northern nomads.

Grundmann, Joern Peter. Ph.D. University of Edinburgh, 2019.

Command and Commitment: Terms of Kingship in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions and in the Book of Documents.

What is usually referred to as Zhou kingship in early China studies are the symbolic forms of an enhanced politico-religious identity we find articulated in the Zhou grand narrative in numerous passages throughout transmitted and excavated literary sources. In other words, our understanding of the concept of Zhou kingship in the main mirrors the order of ideas which came to stand for the former in the early Chinese literary tradition (ca. 950–350 B.C.E.). How this order relates to historical forms and practices of political organization and their concerns in Western Zhou elite society has so far not been considered systematically. The present study sets out to analyze the development

of the model of Zhou kingship in literary sources from the context of the central issue of political organization addressed in elite Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, namely the conferral and the receipt of royal commands. Based on the analysis of the exchange of speech acts between king and appointee, it aims to show that kingship was first and foremost perceived in these sources as a relational framework within which the king and his allied elites defined their mutual dependency in terms of quasi patron-client relations. It argues that royal commands were not issued on the basis of pre-existent authority relations. Instead they called for the appointee's decision to assume a commitment on which the latter's participation in the institution of Zhou kingship ultimately relied. From this basic assumption, developed on the basis of texts from early to mid-Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, this study proceeds to analyze how the commemoration of the Zhou alliance's foundational origins as well as the elaboration of the ideology of the Heavenly Mandate in mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and in the transmitted Book of Documents ultimately built around this contractual element, the dynamics of command and commitment. At the core there always stands a delegation of authority or a perpetuation of authority relations. Yet as we proceed into the mid- and late Western Zhou period, the terms of kingship begin to transcend the implicitness and immediateness of the formulae used to seal the conferral of royal authority in early to mid-Western Zhou bronze inscriptions as they were rendered explicit within a rhetoric of crisis and of motives. The present study describes this process as a transformation of the terms of kingship from the level of the constitutive bond formula onto the level of cultural meta-reflection. Lastly I will demonstrate how the concept of Zhou kingship delineated in this study was inextricably linked to the idea of the autonomous or self-determined individual as the basic unit in the conception of the Zhou ruling organization. Kinship and marriage alliance, as most scholars suggest, may have constituted the main factor in the overall cohesion of Western Zhou elite society, but at least on the discursive level retained in texts from bronze inscriptions, the autonomous individual, defined through the ability to reach political decisions and to assume commitments, forms the basic unit in the fabric of Western Zhou kingship understood as the sum of proto-political bonds. This point will be illustrated based on a set of concepts centered on the image of the heart (*xin* 心), most prominent among them *de* 德, that entered the idea of Zhou kingship in form of a rhetoric of commitment. Together, these three points provide a framework to understand the literary construct of Zhou kingship from the perspective of its institutional context and its early historical development.

Ringard, Benjamin. Ph.D. École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2021.
Pratiques funéraires en Chine sous les Han (202 av. J.-C.—220 de notre ère) dans la région de Chang'an (Shaanxi) (Funerary Practices during Han Dynasty China (202 B.C.—220 A.D.) in the Chang'an Area (Shaanxi)).

À partir d'une base de données réunissant les résultats des 75 dernières années sur l'archéologie funéraire Han autour de Chang'an, nous voulons montrer l'ampleur des transformations qui ont eu lieu dans les tombes. Les quatre siècles de la dynastie Han ont été le théâtre d'une « révolution » funéraire chez la classe moyenne. L'utilisation de tombes à catacombe s'est ancrée définitivement dans la pratique et a permis la réouverture des sépultures pour y installer ensemble les couples de défunts dès la fin du II^e s. av. J.-C. Cette évolution est allée à rebours des usages antérieurs qui visaient à sceller la tombe pour l'éternité. La tendance s'est poursuivie avec la construction et l'adoption généralisée de véritables caveaux familiaux au début de notre ère. Ce rapprochement physique entre les vivants et morts répété à chaque réouverture a nécessité la création de rites ayant pour but de confiner la sépulture chaque fois que nécessaire pour séparer hermétiquement les vivants des morts.

This dissertation centers on the evolution of Han burials. Our database, gathering the results of the last seventy-five years of Han funerary archaeology around the Chang'an area, enable us to measure the extent of the transformations that took place in the tombs. The four centuries of the Han dynasty were the scene of a funerary “revolution” among the middle class. The use of catacomb tombs became definitively established and allowed the reopening of tombs to house the deceased couples together as early as the end of the second century B.C.E. This funerary evolution went against previous customs that aimed to seal the tomb for eternity. The tendency continued with the construction and the adoption of real family vaults at the beginning of our era. This physical proximity between the living and the dead repeated at each reopening necessitated the creation of rites aimed at confining the burial site whenever necessary to hermetically separate the living from the dead.

Sarafinas, Daniel. Ph.D. University of Macao, 2020.
A Zhuangzian Critique of Confucian Civilizational Identity.

This thesis is primarily oriented around the concept “civilization,” an idea that is becoming more popular in Chinese academia and pervasive in public life in China but has been considered a problematic and controversial concept in Western academia, particularly over the past two decades. The problematic element is described as revolving around the way in which the concept exhibits a Eurocentric and xenophobic attitude that portrays “others” as “inferior,” and in reaction to this toxic

element, the concept is increasingly expanded to include “others” to such an extent that it becomes meaningless and useless as an academic concept. This thesis proposes a potential solution to this problem inherent in the concept by critically analyzing the concept’s *function* within civilizational discourse as oriented around the construction of a specific type of collective identity, civilizational identity. The use of this concept insofar as it functions in the construction of identity is targeted toward investigating a type of social phenomena in which pathological tendencies characteristic of religious enthusiasm and fanaticism are formed around political notions and representations of socio-political order, that is, ways in which the political is made religious, or civil religion.

The first part of this thesis is an investigation of the concept of civilization as it emerged out of eighteenth-century Western Europe in order to isolate three primary elements according to which civilizational identity is constructed, including modern scholarship on notions of “civilizing” and “civilizations” and the development of the concept in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The second part utilizes this civilizational conceptual framework and applies it to the investigation of ancient and classical Chinese texts to construct an interpretation of ancient Chinese, or *huaxia* 華夏 civilizational identity, and the Confucian articulation of this identity more specifically. The third part creates an interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 as a critique of an over-commitment to Confucian civilizational identity. As with the first two sections, the notion of critique is maintained as the central interpretive concept, that is to say, the *Zhuangzi* is not interpreted as *criticizing* or dismissing the notion of civilizational identity or Confucianism, but rather is read as revealing the conditions for the possibility of civilizational identity as a method of therapeutizing pathological tendencies which emerge as a result of an enthusiastic over-commitment to it.

Shen, Dewei. Ph.D. Yale University, 2021.

The First Imperial Transition in China: A Microhistory of Jiangling (369–119 BCE). Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI (Publication No. 28321697).

This dissertation challenges the dominant historical narrative about the rise of early Chinese empires, the Qin (221–206 B.C.E.) and the Han (202–220 B.C.E.), which tends to fixate on the grand strategy and military power of the conquerors while neglecting the agency of the conquered populations. To counteract this one-sided narrative, I investigate the area of Jiangling 江陵 in the middle Yangzi River region, where the capital of Chu 楚—then the most powerful state in South China—was located. Qin’s invasion of the Chu capital area in 278 B.C.E. and Han’s

takeover of it in 202 B.C.E. make Jiangling an ideal case study for tracing how a former regional center responded to the rising imperial order from the mid-fourth through the second century B.C.E. Drawing on a wealth of new archaeological and manuscript evidence, this dissertation is among the first within early China studies to offer a locality-centered microhistory.

Chapter 1 analyzes the anatomy of this narrative, which I call the Great Unification—or *dayitong* 大一統—narrative. Chapter 2 examines settlement and architectural remains from Jinan Cheng 紀南城 and Yingcheng 郢城 to expose the reality of the Qin conquest. The available evidence suggests that the Qin invaders did not destroy indiscriminately but exercised violence strategically and relied on local know-how to fortify their colonial headquarters. Chapter 3 explores the changing mortuary landscape in Jiangling and the funeral workmen communities in particular. It argues that social change in postconquest Jiangling was the result of a series of negotiations between the native communities and the colonial governments, negotiations that were as constrained by local conditions as they were by imperial directives. Chapter 4 devises a funeral-organizers-centered perspective to trace cultural shifts in Jiangling. Through a statistical analysis of the burial objects arranged by funeral organizers and their changing mortuary representations in tombs, the chapter reveals that cultural perceptions related to food and drink, personal property, and government service were deeply affected by the intrusion of Qin and Han modes of social organization. Chapter 5 scales up to a more macro level to analyze the institutional development of three rank systems, i.e., Qin, Neo-Chu, and Han. It discovers an important phenomenon called “rank inflation” and argues that the different ways of controlling rank inflation had a profound effect on Jiangling denizens. Chapter 6 utilizes a group of mortuary documents called *gaodice* 告地策 (“notifications to underworld authorities”) to focus on the lived experience of three widows of top rankholders in Jiangling, whose tombs were interred with such documents. The chapter reveals the tensions within newly emergent and liminal rank-related identities in the wake of the Han imperial incursion in Jiangling. In a brief conclusion, the dissertation offers some reflections on how to write the first imperial transition free from the Great Unification mantra.

Tu, Dongdong. Ph.D. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2021.
Economic Adaptation, Ritual Activity and Social Organization: The Origin and Early Development of Food Production and Sedentary Life in Northeast China (c. 20,000–4,500BC).

This work focuses on the archeology of Northeast China and addresses the development of agriculture, a sedentary way of life, and social

complexity in this region. It addresses questions related to why and how food production and sedentism originated and developed in Northeast China. While the origins of agriculture is one of the most commonly discussed topics in Chinese archaeology, the trajectory from hunting-gathering groups to food producing sedentary communities has not been well documented in Northeast China. Archaeologists paid special attention to uncovering the earliest domesticated plants and animals, however, the motivations behind the transition to agriculture were not fully addressed and the consequences of this important process were not well explained.

My work explores the entire region of Northeast China, one of the centers of early development of sedentary life and of the domestication of plants and animals in China. Within this region I focus on the Fuxin area of west of Liaoning Province. The research not only examines the initial transition from food procurement to food production but also investigates the development of food production and sedentary life during the long period (c. 20,000–4,500 BC). Those periods preceded the better researched complex society known as the Hongshan period. My research takes the long-term approach and uses multifaceted data types. In it I analyze archaeological remains such as ceramics, stone artifacts, plant and animal remains, the makeup of structures and regional settlement patterns. I also pay attention to climatic changes and the ecological conditions in which the local trajectory evolved.

To sum up the long-term trajectory I have uncovered: By the end of the Pleistocene, because of climatic fluctuations, hunter-gatherers had to change their subsistence, and they intensified the procurement of food resources. This change was associated with the invention of pottery and microliths, as well as the utilization of plant foods and small animals which had not been utilized before. During the early Holocene, when the climate became more stable and resources were plentiful, the strategy of resource intensification became even stronger. Exploitation of the immediate environment of each community resulted in the reduction of mobility, increasing of sedentism and community size.

During the following periods, known archaeologically as the Xiaohexi (6,500?–5,700 cal. B.C.E.), the Xinglongwa (6,000–5,200 cal. B.C.E.) and the Zhaobaogou (5,200–4,500 cal. B.C.E.) food production and sedentism continued to develop. This was a period known for optimal climatic conditions and rich availability of resources. The domestication of millet and pig developed gradually but slowly, but the development of sedentism and village life was more rapid. On the community level, households probably containing nuclear family were the basic units of the community. Each of those households carried out a range of activities including craft production, ritual, preparing and consuming food etc.

The community was relative egalitarian and no paramount households having more wealth or prestige emerged. Each household was relatively independent and autonomous, public rituals including construction of the “monument,” feasts and mortuary practices played a significant role on integrating the community as a whole. On the region level, the socio-political organization was also egalitarian with no central community yet emerged.

My study contributes to an important field in the archaeology of China and the world. Northeast China is known as one of the regions where the transition to food production and sedentism occurred relatively early. Charting the long-term trajectory of economic, cultural, and social developments in this region can be used to compare with other regions where such developments occurred and to better understand the unique characteristics of this region as well as those which are more universal.