

Ancient Central China

Ancient Central China provides an up-to-date synthesis of archaeological discoveries in the Upper and Middle Yangzi River region of China, including the Three Gorges Dam reservoir zone. It focuses on the Late Neolithic (late third millennium B.C.) through the end of the Bronze Age (late first millennium B.C.) and considers regional and interregional cultural relationships in light of anthropological models of landscape. Rowan K. Flad and Pochan Chen show that centers and peripheries of political, economic, and ritual activities were not coincident and that politically peripheral regions, such as the Three Gorges reservoir zone, were crucial hubs in interregional economic networks, particularly related to prehistoric salt production. The book provides detailed discussions of recent archaeological discoveries and data from the Chengdu Plain, Three Gorges, and Hubei to illustrate how these various components of regional landscape were configured across Central China.

Rowan K. Flad is professor of anthropology at Harvard University. He has received grants from the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Luce Foundation, the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, and the American Philosophical Foundation, among others. He has been a traveling lecturer for the Archaeological Institute of America and has published extensively on archaeology in China in many edited volumes and journals, including *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *Current Anthropology*, *The Holocene*, *Antiquity*, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, *Journal of Field Archaeology*, *Asian Perspectives*, *Journal of East Asian Archaeology*, *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, *Kaogu*, and *Nanfang Minzu Kaogu*. He coedited a book on specialization in the series *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* and is the author of *Salt Production and Social Hierarchy in Ancient China: An Archaeological Investigation of Specialization in China's Three Gorges* (Cambridge, 2011).

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Centers and Peripheries Along the Yangzi River

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For Lothar, for his mentorship and guidance

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What began as an attempt to combine the more site-focused thesis of Flad and the more regionally focused work of Chen quickly began to expand, however, partly because of the flood of new data being produced in the Upper and Middle Yangzi regions in recent years and partly because of the helpful comments of two reviewers of our manuscript proposal to Cambridge University Press.

As the scope of the book expanded, the amount of our previous research that was being included gradually diminished. Ultimately, this led to a decision by one of us (Flad) to separately publish the bulk of his thesis, which Cambridge released in 2011 as *Salt Production and Social Hierarchy in Ancient China*. The present volume still contains some summary of findings reported in more detail in that publication as well as some of the principal theses of Chen's dissertation, yet it is a project that was created from whole-cloth for the Cambridge University Press Case Studies in Early Societies series.

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