

## Designing Boundaries in Early China

Ancient Chinese walls, such as the Great Wall of China, were not sovereign border lines. Instead, sovereign space was zonally exerted with monarchical powers expressed gradually over an area, based on possibilities for administrative action. The dynamically shifting, ritualized articulation of early Chinese sovereignty affects the interpretation of the spatial application of state force, including its cartographic representations. In *Designing Boundaries in Early China*, Garret Pagenstecher Olberding draws on a wide array of source materials concerning the territorialization of space to make a compelling case for how sovereign spaces were defined and regulated in this part of the ancient world. By considering the ways sovereignty extended itself across vast expanses in early China, Olberding informs our understanding of the ancient world and the nature of modern nation-states.

Garret Pagenstecher Olberding is Associate Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of *Dubious Facts: The Evidence of Early Chinese Historiography* (2012).

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Garret Pagenstecher Olberding  
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# Designing Boundaries in Early China

*The Composition of Sovereign Space*

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Garret Pagenstecher Olberding

*University of Oklahoma*



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To my beloved wife and daughter, by whose light I labor

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## Chronology

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Shang dynasty	ca. 1600–1050 BCE
Western Zhou period	ca. 1050–771 BCE
Eastern Zhou period	770–256 BCE
Warring States period	ca. 481–221 BCE
Qin dynasty	221–207 BCE
Han dynasty	207 BCE–220 CE
Jin dynasty	266–420 CE
Sui dynasty	589–618 CE
Tang dynasty	618–907 CE
Song dynasty	960–1276 CE
Yuan dynasty	1276–1368 CE
Ming dynasty	1368–1644 CE
Qing dynasty	1644–1911 CE