

Readers will find much to appreciate here, although more rigorous or precise contextualization might have bolstered the general argument in certain places. For example, the author notes that the Imperial Household Department and its various bureaus frequently “intervened in many financial and manufacturing affairs crucial to the state” (6). Indeed, the Yongzheng emperor, as part of his broader effort at fiscal reform and centralization, began in the late 1720s to appoint bondservants from the Imperial Household Department as customs superintendents and salt commissioners throughout the empire. Upon ascending the throne, the Qianlong emperor continued this precedent throughout the 1730s, 1740s, and 1750s. Thus was the throne able to gradually strengthen its control over major revenue streams—namely the salt *gabelle*, and maritime and inland customs duties—which were growing in tandem with the commercial economy of the eighteenth century. Chen only hints, however, at the extent to which these broader developments might be related to the appointment of bannermen technocrats like Nian Xiyao and Tang Ying—both as superintendents of the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory in Jingdezhen and (sometimes concurrently) as customs superintendents in Huai’an and Jiujiang. The relation of fiscal control to the employment of bannermen rather than civil officials remains a potentially fruitful avenue for future research. Khubilai Khan’s patronage and regulation of ceramic production as well as the influence of Mongol rule upon developments in popular theater (as discussed by Morris Rossabi in *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, 1988) offer additional points of historical comparison.

Porcelain for the Emperor is a truly admirable example of interdisciplinary scholarship. Drawing upon concepts and methods from the fields of science and technology studies, literary criticism, and art history, it illuminates the heretofore neglected contributions of bannermen technocrats to the Qing imperial project. This compact and handsomely produced monograph will interest not only art historians, porcelain connoisseurs, and museum curators, but also students of early modern material and political cultures, court history, and imperial state-formations.

A Narrative of Cultural Encounter in Southern China: Wu Xing Fights the ‘Jiao’

By Hugh R. Clark. New York: Anthem Press, 2022. 106 pp. \$24.95 (paper)

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This short monograph is Hugh Clark’s third foray into the topic of the Sinitic conquest and colonization of the lands south of the Yangtze that occurred over the first into the second millennium CE, and his second monograph dealing specifically with the

southeast coast region that is now Fujian province. Only ninety pages long, the book is only half the length of his 2015 monograph *The Sinitic Encounter in Southeast China Through the First Millennium CE* and has a more specific geographical focus, namely the Putian district in central Fujian. Clark follows the transformation of the area from an indigenous frontier region into a Chinese county over the Tang and Song periods, the titular Wu Xing being a semi-legendary bureaucrat of the Tang period whose story is symbolic of that transformation process. Wu was remembered not only for his fight against the *jiao* (a local water creature), but also for constructing a dam that drained a large wetland, thereby converting it to rice cultivation and Sinitic settlement. At the same time, agricultural settlement marginalized the indigenous inhabitants of the area (known in Chinese texts as the *Quanlang*), who were either assimilated or driven to nearby offshore islands by the newcomers. In contrast, in the second half of the book, Clark makes a convincing argument for a reversal of the traditional unidirectional civilizing project of Sinification embodied in the Wu Xing legend by revealing how a significant cultural practice of the “Chinese” inhabitants of the Fujian coast in later centuries (the worship of the sea goddess Mazu) was no less than the continuation of a local indigenous *Quanlang* tradition.

Teasing out the indigenous pre-Sinitic elements of Chinese culture in Southern China is not an entirely new approach in Sinological research, being first pioneered by scholars such as Wolfram Eberhard and Princeton Hsu (Xu Songshi) as early as the 1940s, but only in the last two decades has such research been applied on a granular level to discussion of local history. Clark is one of the masters of this approach in English language scholarship. The fact that he has chosen south-central Fujian as the topic of this work is especially welcome, as the early history of the region has not received much scholarly attention in English. Early Fujian has always presented difficulties for the historian due to its late incorporation into the Sinitic cultural world and the consequent paucity of primary sources. Common go-to source materials for the pre-Tang period in southern China, such as Li Daoyuan’s *Commentary on the River Classic* (500 CE), skip over the area altogether. To fill in these gaps in the primary sources, Professor Clark has employed textual analysis, environmental history, ethnology, and archaeology to bring the story of the region to life.

I was particularly pleased at the mention of the absence of indigenous voices in the Chinese sources, and appreciated the author’s attempts throughout the book to bring indigenous cultures to the fore whether by discussion of folklore preserved in Chinese texts or features of indigenous material culture such as petroglyphs and bamboo rafts. However, I couldn’t help feeling that indigenous peoples were somehow still “missing” from the story, and that still more could be gleaned about them from local toponyms, the substrate vocabulary of local dialects, historical anthropology, local genealogies, and archaeological remains. What kind of societies did these people inhabit? What languages did they speak beyond simply “Austronesian” (itself a highly debatable assertion)? How might their leaders have viewed or chosen to deal with the outsiders who believed it was their role to “tame and civilize” them? I also came away feeling that an opportunity had been missed for more critical evaluation of what it meant to be “ethnically or culturally Sinitic” in Tang-Song Fujian. Was it really possible that northern émigré lineages continued to feel distinct from the indigenous peoples they lived among even after centuries of intermarriage and residence alongside them? At one point the author expresses skepticism regarding the northern ancestry of the Huang clan of Putian, and there is certainly evidence that those of the same surname in neighboring Jianzhou were indigenous Southerners, as Yue Shi’s *Universal Geography of the Taiping Period* cites a Tang work

that states them to be “of the snake race” (the indigenous Fujianese were associated with snakes). There is also textual and genetic evidence to suggest that male migrants from the north married local indigenous women, and it would have been good to see both the subjects of intermarriage and indigenous assimilation given more attention, as these surely have been two of the major vectors of indigenous-to-Sinitic cultural transmission at this time. I also had a minor criticism related to the occasional use of evidence from other regions that were not directly relevant to what was going on in Fujian. Although such examples are important for laying out background context of the larger, centuries-long colonization of the lands south of the Yangtze and the general tropes used by Chinese writers to describe it, I felt these were sometimes less useful as illustrations of goings-on in central Fujian. For instance, Liu Zongyuan’s observations of the environment in distant Yongzhou (65–67), and Sun En’s uprising in Hangzhou Bay in the late fourth century (48–50) were carried out in very different environmental and linguistic contexts from Putian, and I feel it may have been better to stick to using examples from districts closer by. These are very minor criticisms, however, and do not detract from the main argument.

In summary, Clark has successfully demonstrated in a short and very readable work how, despite the overwhelming technological and numerical superiority of the northern colonizers, the indigenous peoples of Fujian were not merely assimilated to the incoming culture but instead played a significant and vital role in its transformation, resulting in the creation of a local iteration of Sinitic culture that incorporated major elements of their own religious and cultural practices. Clark’s book is not merely commendable as a groundbreaking study on an understudied region, it also stands as a useful guide for other scholars who might wish to conduct research on how indigenous encounters played out elsewhere south of the Yangtze. This truly presents a rich field of research, as such stories are waiting to be told in almost every locality of Southern China.

The Collapse of Nationalist China: How Chiang Kai-shek Lost China’s Civil War

By Parks M. Coble. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. x + 290 pp. \$39.99 (cloth).

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The Collapse of Nationalist China: How Chiang Kai-shek Lost China’s Civil War by Parks Coble addresses how and why the Nationalist government, triumphant after World War II, lost the country to Communist forces only a few years later. Coble attributes this momentous defeat to the inability of the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) to establish sound fiscal policies to control hyperinflation during and after the war against Japan. This volume is perhaps the only English-language monograph