Papers from the Columbia University archaeological week at Jilin University

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1 Introduction

Two articles in the current issue by Terence N. D’Altroy and Severin Fowles are selected from a series of ten papers that were delivered in the “Columbia University Week at Jilin University (Archaeology),” Changchun, October 13–25, 2016. On invitation from Jilin University, Columbia University dispatched a delegation that was composed of its field archaeologists (including Terence N. D’Altroy, Zoë Crossland, Francesco de Angelis, Severin Fowles, Brian Boyd, and Li Feng) on an official visit to China. To facilitate exchanges, Columbia also dispatched its Dean of Humanities, Sharon Marcus, to be the head of the delegation, spearheading the visit. The visit was an important milestone in the history of both universities: to Columbia, it was the first ever full presentation of Columbia’s archaeological research and first organized faculty tour to archaeological sites in China; to Jilin University, it afforded the longest lecture series in world archaeology ever given in the university by leading archaeologists of regions including the Near East, Mediterranean, East Africa, North America,

and Andean South America. In accordance with the agenda, each member of the delegation delivered two papers at the Research Center for Chinese Frontier Archaeology, one of which addresses archaeological theory and the other discusses a specific fieldwork project in his/her region, straddling over a week during which the delegation visited important archaeological sites in Shaanxi and Henan and gave lectures also in the Shaanxi Academy of Archaeology in Xi’an, and the Institute of Archaeology, Chinese Academy of Social Science, in Beijing. The visit provided a suitable testimony of the interest and ability of Chinese and Western archaeologists to understand each other’s work and share their field experiences, through the lectures and seminars in Jilin University and elsewhere. It served as an important stepping stone to further exchange and collaboration between Chinese and Western archaeologists in our common goal to understand the past of our world better. The two articles presented here are thus a reminder of this historical visit and a tribute to Jilin University.

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