



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

Gender and Economic Productivity in Han China

Tamara Chin
Brown University

“Women’s work” (*nü gong* 女工; 女功; 女紅) in early China has generally been approached in two related ways: first, women’s work is a moral concept in classical texts that tacitly acknowledged women’s contribution to economic production (men plow, women weave), but that primarily--unlike the unmarked work of men--represented her work in noneconomic terms of wifely household duty. Second, scholars have placed women’s work center stage in reconstructing the empirical economic history of textile production. The Former Han dynasty plays an important role in both accounts for yielding evidence of a sharp increase both in classicist moral strictures and in actual textile production. This talk reexamines representations of women’s work, work ethic, and consumptive habits in received and excavated Han texts. It reconstructs a debate over the expansion of market commerce, and proposes that concerns over women’s productivity were not paralleled in discussions of men’s work.

April 14th, 2017 (Friday) 4:30-6:30pm

**403 Kent Hall
1140 Amsterdam Avenue
Columbia University**

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Jue Guo, Barnard College, Columbia University

Roderick Campbell, Institute for the Study of Ancient World, New York University