

Premodern Korea Lecture Series

From Restricted Access to Published
Archive: The Circulation of Official Histories
of Koryŏ in Chosŏn (1392–1910).

With Graeme Reynolds



Institute for
Korean Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

GW 한국학연구소

*“From Restricted Access to Published Archive:
The Circulation of Official Histories of Koryŏ in Chosŏn (1392–1910)”*

Graeme Reynolds

Instructor in History, The University of Chicago

Wednesday, November 29th, 2023

10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Virtual Event via Zoom

◇ Event Description

This presentation explores the publication and circulation of two official court histories of Koryŏ (918–1392) compiled in early Chosŏn (1392–1910): the *History of Koryŏ* (Koryŏsa) and the *Essentials of Koryŏ History* (Koryŏsa chŏryo). While the two works are important historical sources today, the motives and means for printing and circulating each history varied over the course of the Chosŏn dynasty. Initially, court policy dictated that circulation of the two histories was to be restricted, resulting in a limited number of movable type imprints of both histories that tended to be accessible only to central officialdom throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Eventually, the court relaxed its attitude and permitted the publication of a new woodblock edition of the *History of Koryŏ* in the seventeenth century, drastically broadening its readership. This uneven temporal and geographical distribution impacted how Chosŏn literati read and wrote histories outside of the court. In particular, the widespread publication of a previously restricted source in the form of the *History of Koryŏ* spurred new ventures in private history writing in late Chosŏn.

◇ Speaker



Graeme Reynolds is a cultural and intellectual historian of early modern Korea with interests in the production and circulation of knowledge, the history of the book, and historiography. His book manuscript, *Material Historiography: The Official Histories of Koryŏ from Their Compilation to the Present*, examines the production, circulation, reception of two court histories treating the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), the *History of Koryŏ* and the *Essentials of Koryŏ History*, from their contested compilation in the early Chosŏn period (1392–1910) to their effective canonization in a plethora of modern editions and databases in our digital present. Drawing on material bibliography, he has examined over one hundred call numbers of Chosŏn-era copies of the *History* and the *Essentials* held in institutions in Korea and Japan, and analyzed their physical features, track ownership marks and seals, and studied marginal notes left by readers to uncover the material history of these two historical works. His second project has been an investigation into Chosŏn Korea's state-dominated and heavily non-commercial publishing economy, where woodblock, movable type, and handwriting were all viable methods of making books. He received his B.A. in Asian Area Studies from the University of British Columbia and holds an M.A. in Korean History from the Academy of Korean Studies and a Ph.D. in History and East Asian Languages from Harvard University. Prior to coming to the University of Chicago, Reynolds was a Korea Foundation postdoctoral fellow at Yale University.

◇ Moderator



Jisoo M. Kim is Korea Foundation Associate Professor of History, International Affairs, and East Asian Languages and Literatures at George Washington University. She is Founding Director of the GW Institute for Korean Studies (2017-Present) and Founding Co-Director of the East Asia National Resource Center (2018-Present). She also serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Korean Studies*. She specializes in gender, sexuality, law, emotions, and affect in Korean history. She is the author of *The Emotions of Justice: Gender, Status, and Legal Performance in Chosŏn Korea* (University of Washington Press, 2016), which was awarded the 2017 James Palais Prize of the Association for Asian Studies. She is also the co-editor of *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation* by JaHyun Kim Haboush (Columbia University Press, 2016). She is currently working on a book project tentatively entitled *Criminalization of Intimacy: Adultery Law and the Making of Monogamous Marriage in Korea*. She received her M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. in East Asian Languages and Cultures from Columbia University.

This event is on the record and open to the public.