Dynasties History Of Imperial China

The Troubled Empire

The Iron Road are the symbolic of the interconnectedness of ancient Eurasian civilizations. Using challenging land and maritime routes, merchants and adventurers, diplomats and missionaries, sailors and soldiers, and camels, horses and ships, carried their commodities, ideas, languages and pathogens enormous distances across Eurasia. The result was an underlying unity that traveled the length of the routes, and which is preserved to this day, expressed in common technologies, artistic styles, cultures, and even disease and immunity patterns. In words and images, Craig R. Smith explores the processes that allowed for the comingling of so many ideas, and draws around a geographical hub deep in central Eurasia. He argues that the first Silk Roads era was the catalyst for an extraordinary increase in the complexity of human relationships and collective learning, a complexity that helped drive our species inexorably along a path towards modernity.

Empires in World History

Empires and Exchanges in Eurasia, 500 BCE - 600 CE, offers an integrated picture of Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppes during a formative period of world history. In the half millennium between 300 BCE and 600 CE, empires underwent deep structural changes, and various nomadic peoples of the steppes (Huns, Avars, Turks, and others) experienced significant interactions and movements that changed their societies, cultures, and economies. This was a transformational era, a time when Roman, Persian, and Chinese monarchs were mutually aware of court practices, and when Christians and Buddhists crossed the Eurasian lands together. It was a time of greater circulation of ideas as well as material goods. This volume provides a conceptual frame for locating these developments in the same space and time. Without arguing for uniformity, it illuminates the interconnections and networks that tied countless local cultural expressions to far-reaching inter-regional ones.

The Cambridge History of China

A far the collapse of the Han dynasty in the third century CE, China divided along a north-south line. Mark Lewis traces the changes that both underlay and resulted from this split in a period that saw China's rapid economic growth, the emergence of Buddhism in China, and more engagement with the outside world, significant changes to family life, developments in the literary and social arenas, and the introduction of new religions. The Yangzi River valley arose as the rice-producing center of the country. Literature moved beyond the court and capital to depict local culture, and newly emerging social spaces included the garden, temple, salon, and country villa. The growth of self-defined gentry families expanded the notion of the elite, moving it away from the traditional great Han families identified mostly by material wealth. Trailing the rebel movements that toppled the Han, the new faths of Daoism and Buddhism altered every aspect of life, including the state, kinship structures, and the economy. By the time China was unified by the Sui dynasty in 589 CE, the elite had been drawn into the state order, and imperial power had assumed a more transcendent nature. The Chinese were incorporated into a new world system in which they exchanged goods and ideas with states that shared a common Buddhist religion. The centuries between the Han and the Tang thus had a profound and permanent impact on the Chinese world.

China's Cosopolitan Empire

The World between Empires: A Picture Album presents an introduction to the art and culture of the Middle East in the years 100 B.C.-A.D. 250, a time marked by the struggle for control by the Roman and Parthian Empires. Adapted from the exhibition catalogue, this picture album illustrates the cultural histories of the cities along the great incense and silk routes that connected southwestern Arabia, Nabataea, Jordan, Syria, and Mesopotamia. Twenty-eight carefully selected objects and an informative text provide a fascinning prime to the themes discussed in the catalogue and exhibition. This beautifully illustrated album will inspire reflection about ancient empires long after the reader has visited the galleries. p.p. (margin: 0.0cm 0.0cm 0.0cm 0.0cm; font: 14.0pt verdana)

The Early Chinese Empires

As the twenty-first century dawns, China stands at a crossroads. The largest and most populous country on earth and currently the world's second biggest economy, China has recently reclaimed its historic place at the center of global affairs after decades of internal chaos and disastrous foreign relations. But even as China tentatively reengages with the outside world, the contradictions of its development risks pushing it back into an era of insularity and instability—a regression that, as China's recent history shows, would have serious implications for all other nations. In Restless Empire, award-winning historian Odd Arne Westad traces China's complex trajectory over the past 250 years, identifying the forces that will determine the country's path in the decades to come. Drawing on four decades of research in Chinese and Western archives, he presents a new and comprehensive understanding of the Qing Empire in the eighteenth century—and confrontations with foreign powers that have caused its worldwide to fluctuate wildly between extremes of dominance and subjugation, emulation and defiance. From the invasion of Buma in the 1760s to the Boxer Rebellion in the early 20th century to the standoff of a superpower U. S. spy plane, many of these encounters have left Chinese with a lingering sense of humiliation and resentment, and inflamed their notions of justice, hierarchy, and Chinese centrality in world affairs. Recently, China's rising influence on the world stage has shown what the country stands to gain from international cooperation and openness. But as we postshow, the nation's success will ultimately hinge on its ability to engage with potential international partners while simultaneously safeguarding its own strength and stability. An in-depth study by one of our most respected authorities on international relations and contemporary East Asian history, Restless Empire is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the recent past and probable future of this dynamic and complex nation.

China's Muslims and Japan's Empire

In 221 bc the First Emperor of Qin unified the lands that would become the heart of a Chinese empire. Though forged by conquest, this vast domain depended for its political survival on a fundamental reshaping of Chinese culture. With this informative book, we are present at the creation of an ancient imperial order whose major features would endure for two millennia. The Qin and Han constitute the "classical period" of Chinese history--a role played by the Greeks and Romans in the West. Mark Edward Lewis highlights the key challenges faced by the court officials and scholars who set about governing an empire of such scale and diversity of peoples. He traces the drastic measures taken to transform, without eliminating, these regional differences: the invention of expressions to far-reaching inter-regional ones.

The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783

Transcending ethnic, linguistic, and religious boundaries, early empires shaped thousands of years of world history. Yet despite the global prominence of empire, individual cases are often studied in isolation. This series seeks to change the terms of the debate by promoting cross-cultural, comparative, and transdisciplinary perspectives on imperial state formation prior to the European colonial expansion. Two thousand years ago, up to one-half of the human species was contained within two political systems, the Roman empire in western Eurasia (centered on the Mediterranean Sea) and the Han empire in eastern Eurasia (centered on the great North China Plain). Both empires were broadly comparable in terms of size and population, and even largely coextensive in chronology. For centuries, E.E. for the Qin and Rome (221 BC to 195 AD). The two empires were linked by a core of similar institutions and traditions, but they were not very different in the East, the Shang and Western Zhou periods created a shared cultural framework for the Warring States, with the gradual consolidation of numerous small polities into a handful of large kingdoms which were finally united by the westernmost marcher state of Qin. In the Mediterranean, we can observe comparable political fragmentation and gradual expansion of a unified Greece, this case, followed by the gradual formation of a handful of major warring states (the Hellenistic kingdoms in the east, Rome, Italy, Syria, and Carthage in the west, and likewise eventual unification by the westernmost marcher state, the Roman-Latin Italian confederation. Subsequent destabilization occurred again in strikingly similar ways: both empires came to be divided into two halves, one that contained the original core but was more exposed to the main barbarian periphery (the west in the Roman case, the north in China), and a traditionalist half that remained intact (Rome and south China). These processes of initial convergence and subsequent divergence in eastern and western European state formation have never been the object of systematic comparative analysis. This volume, which brings together experts in the history of the ancient Mediterranean and early China, makes a first step in this direction, by presenting a series of comparative case studies on clearly defined aspects of state formation in early eastern and western Eurasia, focusing on the process of initial developmental convergence. It includes a general introduction that makes the case for a comparative approach; a broad sketch of the character of state formation in western and eastern Eurasia during the final millennium of antiquity; and six thematically connected case studies of particularly salient aspects of this process.

From the Ruins of the Empire

"[A] smart take on modern Chinese nationalism" (Foreign Policy), this provocative account shows that "China"—and its 5,000 years of unified history—is a national myth, created only a century ago with a political agenda that persists to this day.China's current leadership lays claim to a 5,000-year-old civilization, but "China" as a unified country and people, Bill Hayton argues, was created by..."
far more recently by a small group of intellectuals. In this compelling account, Hayton shows how China's present-day geopolitical problems—the fate of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, and the South China Sea—were born in the struggle to create a modern nation-state. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reformers and revolutionaries adopted foreign ideas to "invent" a new vision of China. By asserting a particular, politicized version of the past the government bolstered its claim to a vast territory stretching from the Pacific to Central Asia. Ranging across history, nationality, language, and territory, Hayton shows how the Republic's reworking of its past not only helped it to justify its right to rule a century ago—but continues to motivate and direct policy today.

Restless Empire

This volume explores the history of China between the Mongol reunification of China in 1279 under the Yuan dynasty and the Manchu invasion four centuries later, explaining how climate changes profoundly affected the empire during this period. The Mongol takeover in the 1270s changed the course of Chinese history. The Confucian empire, a millennium and a half in the making, was suddenly thrust under foreign occupation. What China had been before its reunification as the Yuan dynasty in 1279 was no longer what it would be in the future. Four centuries later, another wave of steppe invaders would replace the Mongol dynasty with yet another foreign occupation.

The Age of Confucian Rule

A critical new interpretation of the early history of Chinese civilization based on the most recent scholarship and archaeological discoveries.

Ming China and Vietnam

A fateful collapse of the Han dynasty. China divided along a north-south line. Lewis traces the changes that underlay and resulted from this split in a period that saw China's geographic realignment, more engagement with the outside world, significant changes to family life, literacy and social developments, and the introduction of new religions.

Ancient China and Its Enemies

In this transnational history of World War II, Kelly A. Hammond places Sino-Mongol relations at the center of imperial Japan's challenges to Chinese nation-building efforts. Revealing the little-known story of Japan's interest in Manchuria during its occupation of North China, Hammond shows how imperial Japanese aimed to defeat the Chinese Nationalists in winning the hearts and minds of Sino-Mongol minorities, a vital minority population. Offering programs that presented themselves as protectors of Islam, the Japanese aimed to provide a viable alternative—and, at the same time, to create new Muslim consumers markets that would, the Japanese hoped, act to subvert the existing global capitalist world order and destabilize the Soviets. This history can be told only by reinventing agency to Muslims in China who became active participants in the brokering and political jockeying between the Chinese Nationalists and the Japanese empire. Hammond argues that the competition for their loyalty was central to the creation of the ethnic-religious identity of Muslims living on the Chinese mainland. Their wartime experience ultimately helped shape the formation of Sino-Muslim religious identities within global Islamic networks, as well as their incorporation into the Chinese state, where the conditions of that incorporation remain unstable and contested to this day.

The Everlasting Empire

Relations between Inner Asian nomads and Chinese are a continuous theme of Chinese history. By investigating the formation of nomadic cultures, by analyzing the evolution of patterns of interaction along China's northern frontiers, and by exploring how this interaction was recorded in early Chinese historiography, this book explores the origins of the cultural and political tensions between these two civilizations from the first millennium B.C. The main purpose of the book is to analyze ethnic, cultural, and political frontiers between nomads and Chinese in the historical contexts that led to their formation, and to look at cultural perceptions of "others" as a function of the same historical process. Based on both archaeological and textual sources, this book also introduces a new methodological approach to Chinese frontier history, which combines extensive factual data with a careful scrutiny of the motives, methods, and general conception of history that informed the Chinese historian-Ssu-ma Ch'ien.

The Road to the Throne

International scholars and sinologists discuss culture, economic growth, social change, political processes, and foreign influences in China since the earliest pre-dynastic period.

Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919

A fascinating history of the intricate web of trade routes connecting ancient Rome to Eastern civilizations, including its powerful rival, the Han Empire. The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes investigates the trade routes between Rome and the powerful empires of Inner Asia, including the Parthian Empire of ancient Persia, and the Kuswan Empire which seized power in Bactria (Afghanistan), laying claim to the Indus Kingdoms. Further chapters examine the development of Palmyra as a leading caravan city on the edge of Roman Syria. Raoul McLaughlin also delves deeply into Rome's trade ventures through the Tarim territories, which led its merchants to the Han Empire of ancient China. Having established a system of Central Asian trade routes known as the Silk Road, the Han carried eastern goods as far as Persia and the frontiers of the Roman Empire. Though they were matched in scale, the Han surpassed its European rival in military technology. The first book to address these subjects in a single comprehensive study, The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes explores Rome's impact on the ancient world economy and reveals what the Chinese and Romans knew about their rival Empires.

Honor and Shame in Early China

This deeply informed and beautifully written book provides a comprehensive and comprehensible history of China from prehistory to the present. Focusing on the interaction of humans and their environment, Robert B. Marks traces changes in the physical and cultural world that is home to a quarter of humankind. Through both word and image, this work illuminates the chaos and paradox inherent in China's environmental narrative, demonstrating how historically sustainable practices can, in fact, be profoundly ecologically sound. The author also reevaluates China's traditional "he.

Rome, China, and the Barbarians

A leading scholar in the United States on Chinese archaeology challenges long-standing conceptions of the rise of political authority in ancient China. Questioning Marx's concept of an "Asiatic" mode of production, Wachtel's "hydraulic hypothesis," and cultural-materialist theories on the importance of technology, K. C. Chang builds an impressive counterargument, one which ranges widely from recent archaeological discoveries to studies of mythology, ancient Chinese poetry, and the iconography of Shang food vessels.

A Slave Between Empires

Comprehensive account of the intense biological, commercial, and cultural exchanges, and the creation of global connections, between 1400 and 1800.

The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes

This book addresses a largely untouched historical problem: the fourth to fifth centuries AD witnessed remarkably similar patterns of foreign invasion, conquest, and political fragmentation in Roman and China. Yet while the western Roman empire was never re-established, China was reunified at the end of the sixth century. Taking a comparative approach to the study of the broader historiographical and ethnographic traditions in the classical Greco-Roman and Chinese worlds, the book turns to the late antique/early medieval period, when the western Roman Empire fell, and China was re-constituted as a unified empire after centuries of foreign conquest and political division. Analyzing the discourse of ethnicity in the original texts, with translations by Dr Font, it explores the extent to which notions of Self and Other, of ‘barbarian’ and ‘civilized’, help us understand both the transformation of the Roman world as well as the reformation of a unified imperial China.

China during the Tang-Song Interregnum, 878-978

Today, war is more complicated than it has ever been. When considering military strategy, a commander must be aware of several theaters of war. There's ground strength, air power, naval combat and even cyber warfare. In the late 19th century, however, the true military might of a nation rested primarily on the strength of its navy. In 1890, United States Navy Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan published a book titled "The Influence of Sea Power Upon History." The monumental text addressed the importance of both military and commercial fleets in the success of a nation in war and peace-time. Mahan begins with a discussion of the elements he considers to be the key to a nation's success on the seas. He theorizes that a ground force could not sustain the pressure of a naval blockade. Mahan then applies his principles to wars of the past. He analyzes the use of a navy in various engagements and considers the resulting influence on the outcome of the wars. The book was widely read by commanders and tacticians all over the world and his principles and theories were utilized throughout the 20th century. His arguments, along with technological advances, were influential in the strengthening of the United States Navy. Presently, Mahan's work is considered the most important work on naval strategy in history.

Rome and China

At the heart of the empire was peace but was war as Manchuria, a puppet state created in Northeast China in 1932. Not unlike India for the British, Manchuria was the crucible and symbol of empire for the Japanese. In this book, the first social and cultural history of Japan's construction of Manchuria, Louise Young studies how people at home imagined...
China

Established in 221 B.C.E., the Chinese empire lasted for 2,132 years before being replaced by the Republic of China in 1912. During its two millennia, the empire endured internal wars, foreign invasions, alien occupations, and devastating rebellions—yet fundamental institutional, sociopolitical, and cultural features of the empire remained intact. The 2,132 years of China's imperial history spanned a tremendous arc of time that included an extraordinary variety of political, economic, social, and cultural developments.

Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity

In June 1887, a man known as General Husayn, a manumitted slave turned dignitary in the Ottoman province of Tunis, passed away in Florence after a life crossing empires. As a youth, Husayn was brought from Cincarska to Turkey, where he was sold as a slave. In Tunis, he ascended to the rank of general before French conquest forced his exile to the northern shores of the Mediterranean. His death was followed by wrangling over his estate that spanned a surprising array of actors: Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamit II and his viziers; the Tunisian, French, and Italian governments; and representatives of Muslim and Jewish diasporic communities. A Slave Between Empires investigates Husayn's transimperial life and theposthumous battle over his fortune to recover the transnational dimensions of North African history. M. Hamed Oualdi places Husayn within the international context of the struggle between Ottoman and French forces for control of the Mediterranean amid social and intellectual ferment that crossed empires. Oualdi considers this period of the world not as a colonial borderland but as a central space where overlapping imperial ambitions transformed dynamic societies. He explores how the transition between Ottoman rule and European colonial domination was felt in the daily lives of North African Muslims, Christians, and Jews and how North Africa conceived of and acted upon this shift. Drawing on a wide range of Arabic, French, Italian, and English sources, A Slave Between Empires is a groundbreaking transimperial microhistory that demands a major analytical shift in the conceptualization of North African history.

China's Golden Age

In a brisk revisionist history, William Rowe challenges the standard narrative of Qing China as a decadent, inward-looking state that failed to keep pace with the modern West. This original, thought-provoking history of China's last empire is a must-read for understanding the challenges facing China today.

The Water Kingdom

In this fascinating and detailed profile, Benn presents a vivid picture of life in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), traditionally regarded as the golden age of China. 40 line illustrations.

Japan's Total Empire

The Victorian period, viewed in the West as a time of self-confidence and progress, was experienced by the Chinese as a catastrophe. As the British gunned down the last heirs to the Ming dynasty, burned down the Summer Palace in Beijing, or humiliated the bankrupt rulers of the Ottoman Empire, it was clear that for Asia to recover a vast intellectual effort would be required. Panicked intellectuals, fascinations, and, increasingly, entering the book tells the story of a remarkable group of men from across the continent who met the challenge of the West. Incessantly travelling, questioning and agonising, they both hated and loved the West and recognised that an Asian renaissance needed to be fuelled in part by engagement with the enemy. Through many setbacks and wrong turns, a powerful, contradictory and ultimately unstoppable series of ideas were created that led to the strides behind every beginning from the Chinese Communist Party to AI Qaida, from Indian nationalism to the Muslim Brotherhood. M. Chiara allows the reader to see the events of two centuries anew, through the eyes of the journalists, poets, radicals and charismatics who crossed-crisis between East and Asia and created the ideas which lie behind the powerful Asian nations of the twentieth century.

Empires of Ancient Eurasia

The stories of the great empires reflect the ancient Chinese philosophy, ideology, their wisdom and their ways of administration. Liu Bang is an outstanding example. Rising from a peasant background to become an emperor, he founded the Han Dynasty which lasted for about four hundred years and essentially laid the foundations of China as we know it. Liu Bang (256 BC-195 BC), posthumously called Emperor Gaozu, was a low-ranking functionary in an obscure corner of the realm when he caught the wave of the great uprisings against the Qin Dynasty. First as leader of a general and then as general of larger and larger armies, he eventually overthrew the despotic Qin emperor. Today, the Han are the majority ethnic identity in China. This is the story of the rise of Emperor Gaozu, his alliances and his rivals, and the priceless partnership provided by his chief military strategist Zhang Liang, who planned victorious campaigns from a distance of 1,000 miles. Xie He, who stabilized the state, pacified the people, and assured the supply to the army; and General Han Xin, who commanded the Han army in its conquest of the State of Wei, the State of Zhao, the State of Yan and the State of Qi and played a great role in the defeat of Xiang Yu.

ART MYTH AND RITUAL

Studies of Sino-Viet relations have traditionally focused on Chinese aggression and Vietnamese resistance, or have assumed out-of-date ideas about Sinicization and the tributary system. They have limited themselves to national historical traditions, doing little to reach beyond the border. Ming China and Vietnam, by contrast, relies on sources and viewpoints from both sides of the border, for a truly transnational history of Sino-Viet relations. Kathlene Baldanza offers a detailed examination of geographical and cultural relations between Ming China (1368-1644) and Dai Viet, the state that later came to do so become Vietnam. She hinges on the internal debates and external alliances that characterized their diplomatic and military relations in the pre-modern period, showing especially that Vietnamese patronage of East Asian cultural achievement posed an ideological threat to Chinese states. Baldanza presents an analysis of seven linked biographies of Chinese and Vietnamese border-crossers whose lives illustrate the entangled histories of those countries.

China's Northern Wei Dynasty, 386-535

Korea Between Empires chronicles the development of a Korean national consciousness. It focuses on two critical periods in Korean history and asks how key concepts and symbols were created and integrated into political programs to create an original Korean understanding of national identity, the nation-state, and nationalism. Laying the often-ignored questions of representation, narrative, and rhetoric in the construction of public sentiment, Andre Schmid traces the genealogies of cultural assumptions and linguistic turns evident in Korea's major newspapers during the social and political upheavals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Newspapers were the primary location for the re-imagining of the nation, enabling readers to move away from the nationalist narrative, and rhetoric in the construction of public sentiment. The author explores the historical context within which newspapers were produced and integrated into the political programs of Korea's leaders, showing how the complexity and energy of the country and its history repeatedly came back to the challenges, opportunities, and inspiration provided by the waters. Drawing on stories from travelers and explorers, poets and painters, bureaucrats and activists, all of whom have been influenced by an environment shaped and permeated by water, Baldanza explores how the ubiquitous relationship of the Chinese people to water has made an enduring metaphor for philosophical thought and artistic expression. From the Han emperors to the Mings, the ability to manage the waters to provide irrigation and defend against floods was a barometer of political legitimacy, often resulting in engineering works on a gigantic scale. It is a struggle that continues today, as the strain of economic growth on water resources may be the greatest threat to China's future. The Water Kingdom offers an unusual and fascinating history, uncovering just how much of China's art, politics, and outlook have been defined by the links between humanity and nature.

The Cambridge World History

In the Later Han period the region covering the modern provinces of Gansu, southern Ningxia, eastern Qinghai, northern Sichuan, and western Shaanxi, was a porous frontier zone between the Chinese regimes and their Central Asian neighbours, not fully incorporated into the Chinese realm until the first century BCE. N. B. on the other hand, the region had a large concentration of men of martial background, from which a regional culture characterized by warrior spirit and skills prevailed. This military elite was generally honoured by the imperial centre, but during the Later Han period the ascendancy of eastern-based scholar-officials and de-militarization fundamentalist EMERGENT EMPEROR EMPEROR moved the imperial state towards the northern frontiersmen, leaving them struggling to maintain high political and social status. From the ensuing tensions and resentment followed the capture of the imperial capital by a northeasterm military force, the deposing of the emperor and the installation of a new one, which triggered the disintegration of the empire. Based on extensive original research, and combining cultural, military and political history, this book examines fully the forging of military regional identity in the northwestern borderlands and the consequences of this for the early Chinese empire.
How empires have used diversity to shape the world order for more than two millennia—Empires—vast states of territories and peoples united by force and ambition—have dominated the political landscape for more than two millennia. Empires in World History depart from conventional European and nation-centered perspectives to take a remarkable look at how empires relied on diversity to shape the global order. Beginning with ancient Rome and China and continuing across Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Africa, Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper examine empires' conquests, rivalries, and strategies of domination—with an emphasis on how empires accommodated, created, and manipulated differences among populations. Burbank and Cooper examine Rome and China from the third century BCE, empires that sustained state power for centuries. They delve into the militant monotheism of Byzantium, the Islamic Caliphates, and the short-lived Carolingian empires, as well as the pragmatically tolerant rule of the Mongols and Ottomans, who combined religious protection with the politics of loyalty. Burbank and Cooper discuss the influence of empire on capitalism and popular sovereignty, the limitations and instability of Europe's colonial projects, Russia's repertoire of exploitation and differentiation, as well as the "empire of liberty"—devised by American revolutionaries and later extended across a continent and beyond. With its investigation into the relationship between diversity and imperial states, Empires in World History offers a fresh approach to understanding the impact of empires on the past and present.

The World between Empires

A focal point of the Han dynasty in the third century CE, China divided along a north-south line. This book traces the changes that both underlay and resulted from this split in a period that saw the geographic redefinition of China, more engagement with the outside world, significant changes to family life, developments in the literary and social arenas, and the introduction of new religions.

Early China

Examines the Han empire from political, geographical, material, and cultural perspectives.

China between Empires

Just over a thousand years ago, the Song dynasty emerged as the most advanced civilization on earth. Within two centuries, China was home to nearly half of all humankind. In this concise history, we learn why the inventiveness of this era has been favorably compared with the European Renaissance, which in many ways the Song transformation surpassed. With the chaotic dissolution of the Tang dynasty, the old aristocratic families vanished. A new class of scholar-officials—products of a meritocratic examination system— took up the task of reshaping Chinese tradition by adapting the precepts of Confucianism to a rapidly changing world. Through fiscal reforms, these elites liberalized the economy, eased the tax burden, and put paper money into circulation. Their redesigned capitals buzzed with trade, while the education system offered advancement to talented men of modest means. Their rationalist approach led to inventions in printing, shipbuilding, weaving, ceramics manufacture, mining, and agriculture. With a realist's eye, they studied the natural world and applied their observations in art and science. And with the souls of diplomats, they chose peace over war with the aggressors on their borders. Yet persistent military threats from these nomadic tribes—which China's emperors felt as their cultural inferiors—redefined China's understanding of its place in the world and solidified a sense of what it meant to be Chinese. The Age of Confucian Rule is an essential introduction to this transformative era. "A scholar should congratulate himself that he has been born in such a time" (Zhao Ruyu, 1194).

China between Empires

The Northern Wei was a dynasty which originated outside China and ruled northern China when the south of China was ruled by a series of dynasties which originated inside China. Both during the time that the Northern Wei dynasty was in power and over many centuries subsequently, the legitimacy of the Northern Wei dynasty has been questioned. This book outlines the history of the Northern Wei dynasty, including its origins and the history of its southern rivals; considers the practices adopted by both the Northern Wei dynasty and its rivals to establish legitimacy; and examines the debates which preoccupied Chinese scholars subsequently. The book casts light on traditional ideas about legitimate rule in China, ideas which have enduring relevance as tradition continues to be very significant in contemporary China.

The Establishment of the Han Empire and Imperial China

Shows how the emerging Chinese empire purposely reconceived but was also constrained by basic spatial units such as the body, the household, the region, and the world.

Construction of Space in Early China

In this new study, Mark Edward Lewis traces how the changing language of honor and shame helped to articulate and justify transformations in Chinese society between the Warring States and the end of the Han dynasty. Through careful examination of a wide variety of texts, he demonstrates how honor-shame discourse justified the actions of diverse and potentially rival groups. Over centuries, the formally recognized political order came to be intertwined with groups articulating alternative models of honor. These groups both participated in the existing order and, through their own visions of what was truly honourable, paved the way for subsequent political structures. Filling a major lacuna in the study of early China, Lewis presents ways in which the early Chinese empires can be fruitfully considered in comparative context and develops a more systematic understanding of the fundamental role of honor/shame in shaping states and societies.

The Collapse of China's Later Han Dynasty, 25-220 CE

This book challenges the long-established structure of Chinese history around dynasties, adopting a more "organic" approach which emphasises cultural and economic trends that transcend arbitrary dynastic boundaries. It argues that with the collapse of the Tang court and northern control over the holiest empire in the last decades of the ninth century, the now-autonomous kingdoms that filled the political void in the south resonated with a burst of innovative energy that helped set the stage for the economic and cultural transformations of the following Song dynasty. Moreover, it argues that these transformations and this economic and cultural innovation deeply affected the subsequent model of holistic empire which continues right up to the present and that therefore the interregnum century of division left a critically important legacy.

The Invention of China

The Tang dynasty is often called China's "golden age," a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea to Japan and to the Persian Gulf, and a time of unsurpassed literary creativity. Mark Lewis captures a dynamic era in which the empire reached its greatest geographical extent under Chinese rule, painting and ceramic arts flourished, women played a major role both as rulers and in the economy, and China produced its finest lyric poets in Wang Wei, Li Bai, and Du Fu.

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