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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 readily accepted 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.

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assumed out-of-date ideas about Sinicization and the tributary system.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 geopolitical and cultural relations between Ming China (1368-1644) and Dai Viet, the state that would go
on to become Vietnam. She highlights 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 classical culture
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.

From the Yangtze to the Yellow River, China is traversed by great waterways, which have defined its politics and ways of
life for centuries. Water has been so integral to China's culture, economy, and growth and development that it provides a
window on the whole sweep of Chinese history. In The Water Kingdom, renowned writer Philip Ball opens that window to
offer an epic and powerful new way of thinking about Chinese civilization. Water, Ball shows, is a key that unlocks much
of Chinese culture. In The Water Kingdom, he takes us on a grand journey through China's past and present, showing how the
complexity and energy of the country and its history repeatedly come back to the challenges, opportunities, and
inspiration provided by the waterways. 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, Ball explores how the
ubiquitous relationship of the Chinese people to water has made it an enduring metaphor for philosophical thought and
artistic expression. From the Han emperors to Mao, 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.

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 Circassia 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 Abdülhamid 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 the
posthumous battle over his fortune to recover the transnational dimensions of North African history. M'hamed Ouaildi
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. Ouaildi considers this part of the world not as a
colonial borderland but as a central space where overlapping imperial ambitions transformed dynamic societies. He
explores the construction of a transnational north African historical consciousness that felt in the dynamic histories of
North African Muslims, Christians, and Jews and how North Africans 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 and Russia are rising economic and political powers that share thousands of miles of border. Despite their proximity,
their interactions with each other - and with their third neighbour Mongolia - are rarely discussed. Although the three
countries share a boundary, their traditions, languages and worldviews are remarkably different. Frontier Encounters
presents a wide range of views on how the borders between these unique countries are enacted, produced, and crossed. It
sheds light on global uncertainties: China's search for energy resources and the employment of its huge population,
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Russia's fear of Chinese migration, and the precarious independence of Mongolia as its neighbours negotiate to extract its plentiful resources. Bringing together anthropologists, sociologists and economists, this timely collection of essays offers new perspectives on an area that is currently of enormous economic, strategic and geo-political relevance.

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 chronological terms (221 BCE to 220 CE for the Qin/Han empire, c. 200 BCE to 395 CE for the unified Roman empire). At the most basic level of resolution, the circumstances of their creation are 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 unifying civilization, Greek in this case, followed by the gradual formation of a handful of major warring states (the Hellenistic kingdoms in the east, Rome-Italy, Syracuse and Carthage in the west), and likewise eventual unification by the westernmost marcher state, the Roman-led 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 in the east (Rome) and south (China). These processes of initial convergence and subsequent divergence in Eurasian 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.

"Already in Greek and Roman antiquity a vibrant series of exchange relationships existed between the Mediterranean regions and China, including the Indian subcontinents along well-defined routes we call the Silk Roads. Among the many goods that found their way from East to West and vice versa were glass, wine, spices, metals like iron, precious stones as well as textile raw materials and fabrics and silk, a luxury item that was in great demand in the Roman Empire. These collected papers connect research from different areas and disciplines dealing with exchange along the Silk Roads. These historical, philological and archaeological contributions highlight silk as a commodity, gift and tribute, and as a status symbol in varying cultural and chronological contexts between East and West, including technological aspects of silk production. The main period concerns Rome and China in antiquity, ending in the late fifth century CE, with the Roman Empire being transformed into the Byzantine Empire, while the Chinese chronology covers the Han dynasty, the Three Kingdoms, the Western and Eastern Jin and Sixteen Kingdoms, ending in 420 CE. In addition, both earlier and later epochs are also considered in order to gather an understanding of developments and changes in long-distance and longer-term relations that involved silk."

Volumes Seven and Eight of The Cambridge History of China are devoted to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), providing the largest and most detailed account in any language. Summarizing all modern research, Volume Eight offers detailed studies of governmental structure, the fiscal and legal systems, international relations, social and economic history, transportation and communication networks, and the history of ideas and religion. Although written by specialists, these volumes intend to explain and describe the Ming period to general readers without a specialized knowledge of Chinese history, as well as scholars and students.

Inspired by the New Fiscal History, this book represents the first global survey of taxation in the premodern world. What emerges is a rich variety of institutions, including experiments with sophisticated instruments such as sovereign debt and fiduciary money, challenging the notion of a typical premodern stage of fiscal development. The studies also reveal patterns and correlations across widely dispersed societies that shed light on the basic factors driving the intensification, abatement, and innovation of fiscal regimes. Twenty scholars have contributed perspectives from a wide range of fields besides history, including anthropology, economics, political science and sociology. The volume’s coverage extends beyond Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Near East to East Asia and the Americas, thereby transcending the Eurocentric approach of most scholarship on fiscal history.

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

Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity offers an integrated picture of Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppes during a formative period of world history. In the half millennium between 250 and 750 CE, settled empires underwent deep structural changes, while 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 criss-crossed the Eurasian lands together with merchants and armies. 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.

After 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 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. 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 genteel 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 faiths of Daoism and Buddhism altered every aspect of life, including the state, kinship structures, and the economy. By the time China was reunited by the Sui dynasty in 589 CE, the old Han elder had been drawn into the state’s 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.

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, and a new class of scholar-officials—products of a meritocratic examination system—took up the task of reinvigorating 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 traders, 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 the Chinese scorned 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).

The Silk Roads are the symbol 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 religions, and even disease and immunity patterns. In words and images, Craig Benjamin explores the processes that allowed for the comingling of so many goods, ideas, and diseases 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.

A provocative, comparative study of the formation and expansion of the Aztec and Inca empires. Argues that prehistoric cultural development is largely determined by continual changes in traditional religion.

This book traces the evolving uses of writing to command assent and obedience in early China, an evolution that culminated in the establishment of a textual canon as the foundation of imperial authority. Its central theme is the emergence of this body of writings as the textual double of the state, and of the text-based sage as the double of the ruler. The book examines the full range of writings employed in early China, such as divinatory records, written communications with ancestors, government documents, the collective writings of philosophical and textual traditions, speeches attributed to historical figures, chronicles, verse anthologies, commentaries, and encyclopedic compendia. Lewis shows how these writings served to administer populations, control officials, form new social groups, invent new models of authority, and create an artificial language whose master generated power and whose graphs became potent objects.

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

*Includes pictures *Includes ancient accounts *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading Even before the first Chinese dynasty, complex societies inhabiting the area now known as China organized into settlements, and the most important settlements were protected by rammed earth walls. The first dynasty, the Shang (1600-1050 BCE), built large walls as early as around 1,550 BCE. Differing from later walls, which were built along a strategic defense line, these walls were built to enclose the settlements and areas. The Shang would eventually be conquered from the west by the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BCE), which developed a complex system of government. In fact, it was the Zhou system’s decline that Confucius (551-479 BCE) witnessed and drew from greatly for his political philosophy. The Zhou also created walled cities, and it was at this time that the first major conflicts with northern tribes, the Xianyun, were recorded. As the newly independent states vied for supremacy in a state of constant warfare, northern barbarians were also a constant menace. Eventually, the Chinese succeeded in eliminating many of those on their immediate northern border, but it was a bittersweet victory because it meant there was no longer a buffer between China and the even fiercer Mongols further north. This new proximity led to increased cultural exchange, as well as the Chinese adoption of nomadic fighting techniques. Ultimately, it was the wall of the state of Qi that was the first to earn the name great (literally: long) wall, because the state of Qin proved most adept at the new warfare and conquered all the others. It was this dynasty that unified the kingdoms under the name of China, but put simply, the Qin were a war machine. They defeated the Mongols north of the border and expanded their control there, while also fighting expansionary wars in all directions. The first Qin emperor died 11 years into his reign and was buried with the famous Terracotta warriors: These soldiers and equipment, all carved out of stone and other materials, formed an imperial army that would accompany the emperor into the afterlife. After the emperor’s death, rebellion and strife took hold of the empire, and soon a new dynasty, the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), was founded. The previous emperor, Meng Tian, was forced to commit suicide, and the Han dynasty became known for maintaining a long period of wealth and prosperity during which Confucianism and other major intellectual trends in China flourished. However, they had trouble with the nomads in the north too, and after suffering decisive military defeats, the Han decided that a policy of peace and reconciliation could they manage relations with the Xiongnu. They offered material goods and marriages, and the border was secured, but walls were also still obviously necessary. Ultimately, the massive investment in military expansion and conquest reaped great rewards for the Han, but all came at a very dear cost to the empire. As a result of their growing militarism, the trend of using diplomacy slowly fell out of favor around the start of the 1st century CE, but even when the old structure of peace and diplomacy with the
northerners was reinstated, the Xiongnu were asked to submit to a nominally inferior position in their relationship with China. It appeared to be a compromise that would benefit both sides, but soon afterward, a Han regent usurped power and the kingdom fell into civil war. The dynasty recovered at the time, but never fully, and it continued on the path of steady decline. The Han Dynasty: The History and Legacy of Ancient China’s Most Influential Empire examines how the Han dynasty took control of China and the impact of their reign over several centuries.

On the criticism of literature and art.

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. Not surprisingly 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 the consequent increased emphasis on civil values and de-militarization fundamentally transformed the attitude of the imperial state towards the northwestern frontiersmen, leaving them struggling to achieve high political and social status. From the ensuing tensions and resentment followed the capture of the imperial capital by a northwestern 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 northwest borderlands and the consequences of this for the early Chinese empires.

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. Looking at 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 conceptual framework inherited from a Confucian and dynastic past toward a nationalist vision that was deeply rooted in global ideologies of capitalist modernity. As producers and disseminators of knowledge about the nation, newspapers mediated perceptions of Korea’s precocious place amid Chinese and Japanese colonial ambitions and were vitally important to the rise of a nationalist movement in Korea.

The Tang dynasty is often called China’s “golden age,” a period of commercial, religious, and cultural connections from Korea and Japan 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 Bo, and Du Fu.

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 transcend, without eliminating, these regional differences: the invention of the emperor as the divine embodiment of the state; the establishment of a common script for communication and a state-sponsored canon for the propagation of Confucian ideals; the flourishing of the great families, whose domination of local society rested on wealth, landholding, and elaborate kinship structures; the demilitarization of the interior; and the impact of non-Chinese warrior-nomads in setting the boundaries of an emerging Chinese identity. The first of a six-volume series on the history of imperial China, The Early Chinese Empires illuminates many formative events in China’s long history of imperialism—events whose residual influence can still be discerned today.

In this major 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 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.

In this transnational history of World War II, Kelly A. Hammond places Sino-Muslims at the center of imperial Japan’s challenges to Chinese nation-building efforts. Revealing the little-known story of Japan’s interest in Islam 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-Muslims, a vital minority population. Offering programs that presented themselves as protectors of Islam, the Japanese aimed to provide Muslims with a viable alternative—and, at the same time, to create new Muslim consumer 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 reinstating 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 ethnoreligious identity of Muslims living on the Chinese mainland. Their wartime experience ultimately helped shape the formation of Sino-Muslims' 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.

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

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. Not surprisingly 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 ascendency of eastern-based scholar-officials and the consequent increased emphasis on civil values and de-militarization fundamentally transformed the attitude of the imperial state towards the northern frontiersmen, leaving them struggling to achieve high political and social status. From the ensuing tensions and resentment followed the capture of the imperial capital by a northwestern 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 northwest frontiers and the consequences of this for the early Chinese empires.

A deep and rigorous, yet eminently accessible introduction to the political, social, and cultural development of imperial Chinese civilisation, this volume develops a number of important themes -- such as the ethnic diversity of the early empires -- that other editions omit entirely or discuss only minimally. Includes a general introduction, chronology, bibliography, illustrations, maps, and an index.

The Mongol takeover in the 1270s changed the course of Chinese history. The Confucian empire became millennium and a half in the making and 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 Ming dynasty with yet another foreign occupation. The Troubled Empire explores what happened when China between these two dramatic invasions. If anything defined the complex dynamics of this period, it was changes in the weather. Asia, like Europe, experienced a Little Ice Age, and as temperatures fell in the thirteenth century, Kublai Khan moved south into China. His Yuan dynasty collapsed in less than a century, but Mongol values lived on in Ming institutions. A second blast of cold in the 1630s, combined with drought, was more than the dynasty could stand, and the Ming fell to Manchu invaders. Against this background the first coherent ecological history of China in this period. Timothy Brook explores the growth of autocraty, social complexity, and commercialization, paying special attention to China’s incorporation into the larger South China Sea economy. These changes not only shaped what China would become but contributed to the formation of the early modern world.

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.

From about 1600 to 1800, the Qing empire of China expanded to unprecedented size. Through astute diplomacy, economic investment, and a series of ambitious military campaigns into the heart of Central Eurasia, the Manchu rulers defeated the Zunghar Mongols, and brought all of modern Xinjiang and Mongolia under their control, while gaining dominant influence in Tibet. The China we know is a product of these vast conquests. Peter C. Perdue chronicles this little-known story of China’s expansion into the northwestern frontier. Unlike previous Chinese dynasties, the Qing achieved lasting domination over the eastern half of the Eurasian continent. Rulers used forcible repression when faced with resistance, but also aimed to win over subject peoples by peaceful means. They invested heavily in the economic and administrative development of the frontier, promoted trade networks, and adapted ceremonies to the distinct regional cultures. Perdue thus illuminates how China came to rule Central Eurasia and how it justifies that control, what holds the Chinese nation together, and how its relations with the Islamic world and Mongolia developed. He offers valuable comparisons to other colonial empires and discusses the legacy left by China’s frontier expansion. The Beijing government today faces unrest on its frontiers from peoples who reject its autocratic rule. At the same time, China has launched an ambitious development program in its interior that in many ways echoes the old Qing policies. China Marches West is a tour de force that will fundamentally alter the way we understand Central Eurasia.

How empires have used diversity to shape the world order for more than two millennia --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 departs 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 Caliphathe, and the short-lived Carolingians, 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.
In this major new study, Nicolas Tackett proposes that the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127) witnessed both the maturation of an East Asian inter-state system and the emergence of a new worldview and sense of Chinese identity among educated elites. These developments together had sweeping repercussions for the course of Chinese history, while also demonstrating that there has existed in world history a viable alternative to the modern system of nation-states. Utilising a wide array of historical, literary, and archaeological sources, chapters focus on diplomatic sociability, cosmopolitan travel, military strategy, border demarcation, ethnic consciousness, and the cultural geography of Northeast Asia. In this ground breaking new approach to the history of the East Asian inter-state system, Tackett argues for a concrete example of a pre-modern nationalism, explores the development of this nationalism, and treats modern nationalism as just one iteration of a phenomenon with a much longer history.

Empire’s Tracks boldly reframes the history of the transcontinental railroad from the perspectives of the Cheyenne, Lakota, and Pawnee Native American tribes, and the Chinese migrants who toiled on its path. In this meticulously researched book, Manu Karuka situates the railroad within the violent global histories of colonialism and capitalism. Through an examination of legislative, military, and business records, Karuka deftly explains the imperial foundations of U.S. political economy. Tracing the shared paths of Indigenous and Asian American histories, this multisited interdisciplinary study connects military occupation to exclusionary border policies, a linked chain spanning the heart of U.S. imperialism. This highly original and beautifully wrought book unveils how the transcontinental railroad laid the tracks of the U.S. Empire.

This book describes a lifetime devoted to creative chemistry in the service of all mankind.

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, Wittfogel’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.

Examines literary, geological, and archaeological evidence in an attempt to identify the true location of the island of Ithaca described in Homer’s “Odyssey.”

Relations between Inner Asian nomads and Chinese are a continuous theme throughout 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 through the first millennium BC. 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.

"[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 far more recently by a small group of intellectuals. In this compelling account, Hayton shows how China’s present-day geopolitical problems--the fates 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, nationhood, 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.