

PART III

Image and Impact of Qin

Introduction

The First Emperor and His Image

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Of manifold controversial figures in Chinese history, the First Emperor of Qin occupies pride of place. He is depicted alternatively as a hero or a villain—the proud creator of an empire that lasted for two millennia or the savage destroyer of China’s traditional civilization, a model universal ruler or a reviled tyrant. The controversy about his role and that of his short-lived dynasty in the history of Chinese civilization has continued unabated since the fall of the Qin, and it will no doubt continue for the foreseeable future, as it is fueled less by disagreement about basic facts of Qin imperial history than by conflicting moral and ideological evaluations of the First Emperor’s grand enterprise. As such, the ongoing debate over the Qin Empire concerns not just the past, but, primarily, the present: it is the debate about how China is to be governed, how much autonomy is to be accorded to each of its parts, what role intellectuals should have in society, and what means are legitimate in restoring China’s glorious position as a powerful and awe-inspiring polity.

Three major events from the history of the Qin Empire shaped its image in the eyes of subsequent generations. The first is its extraordinarily successful establishment. The First Emperor’s campaigns of 233–221 succeeded in putting an end to the political fragmentation that had plagued the “Chinese” world for more than five centuries. Moreover, in the early years of his reign the Emperor and his aides established an effective system of centralized control over their huge realm; they took credit for unifying the written script, the weights and measures, coinage, laws and administrative regulations, and even the pantheon, laying thereby a solid foundation for the lasting unity of China proper. These achievements were a source of immense pride for the First Emperor, who duly used them in his self-propaganda: by claiming to have brought peace,

stability and orderly rule, he could justify posing as the long-awaited savior who had realized the generations-long dreams of earlier statesmen and thinkers (Pines, chapter 8 in this volume). The magnitude of these achievements could not be ignored even by the Emperor's harshest critics.

The second event that influenced tremendously the posthumous image of the First Emperor was his assault on private learning. According to Sima Qian's *Historical Records*, in 213 a court discussion about the desirability of replacing a centralized administrative system of the Qin with the more dispersed model that had prevailed during the Western Zhou prompted a harsh reaction from the chief chancellor, Li Si 李斯 (d. 208). Accusing the proponents of the latter alternative of "using the past to reject the present," Li Si identified adherents of "private learning" (*si xue 私學*) as undesirable remnants of the bygone age of political fragmentation, whose divisiveness was undermining the recently won unity and who were threatening to subvert imperial power. He suggested to destroy historical writings of the vanquished Warring States, and to eliminate copies of the *Book of Poems*, the *Venerated Documents*, and *Speeches of the Hundred Schools* (*baijia yu* 百家語) from private collections, explicitly excluding, however, the possessions of the court erudites (*boshi* 博士). The Emperor approved Li Si's memorial, initiating thereby the infamous "biblioclasm" of 213.¹

The biblioclasm became a turning point in the relations between the intellectuals and the throne in China's history. Until then, in the polycentric world of the Warring States, members of the educated elite had been able to choose their employer from among the competing courts, which allowed them a considerable degree of occupational and ideological autonomy (Pines 2009: 163–180). In the unified empire, however, new rules of engagement emerged, and Li Si did not hesitate to employ the coercive power of the imperial apparatus to subjugate the intellectuals. Leaving aside for the time being conflicting interpretations of this event (for which see below), it is clear that it caused deep enmity among segments of the educated elite toward the Qin. Indeed, soon thereafter several eminent followers of Confucius, including his descendant in the eighth generation, Kong Fu 孔鮒 (*style* Jia 甲), decided to throw their lot with the rebellious peasant Chen She 陳涉 (d. 208); Kong Fu eventually died in Chen's service (*Shiji* 121: 3116). This first-ever instance of members of the respected intellectual elite joining the ranks of rebels suggests a deep aversion on the part of at least some of the intellectuals toward the oppressive Qin regime. Eventually, the image of Qin was irreparably tarnished in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the imperial literati.

The third event that shaped the later image of Qin was its rapid collapse. Sima Qian narrates in detail how the Second Emperor, who ascended the throne in a coup d'état in the immediate aftermath of the founder's death in 210, proved an intemperate and inept ruler, whose misrule, combined with the general oppressiveness of the Qin regime, led to an outburst of popular rebellions led by Chen She and his followers. Within two years, the formidable Qin armies, which less than one generation before had conquered the entire East Asian subcontinent, were crushed, and the first imperial dynasty was toppled. The success of Chen She, "a servant of peasants, an exile among exiles" (*Shiji* 48: 1964–1965; Watson 1993: 80), was an astounding event. For the first time in China's history, the warning by Xunzi 荀子 (c. 310–230) that the people could "capsize the [ruler's] boat" had materialized.² In a marked distinction from earlier dynastic polities, the lifespan of the imperial Qin was measured not in centuries but just in years. The dynasty had barely outlived its founder.

From the first generations in the aftermath of Qin's collapse, statesmen and scholars sought explanations to its peculiar trajectory, which seemingly defied the rules of history as they had been conceptualized by preimperial and early imperial thinkers. According to the traditional view, which can be traced back to the Western Zhou period, every major dynasty had to be founded by a virtuous leader, whose superb moral and intellectual qualities supposedly ensured him unequivocal support of both Heaven and men; while the leader under whom the dynasty collapsed was assumed to be either a monster or at least an extraordinarily benighted individual.³ The latter depiction could fit well the Second Emperor, but how were historians to treat his father, the Qin's founder? Should he be lauded for his successful unification of the realm, or reviled for the oppressiveness of his rule and his inability to ensure the dynasty's survival? What was wrong with Qin, which had its life cut short so abruptly, in contrast to the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties? And what lessons could be drawn from its failure?

The assessment of Qin's place in history was not just a matter of historical curiosity. The Han dynasty inherited the fundamental parameters of the Qin imperial polity, including the institution of emperors, the basic administrative arrangements, the legal and ritual systems, and much of the imperial lexicon and imperial ideology. While the early Han leaders were less assertive and more prone to compromise than the Qin emperors, most notably by allowing establishment of autonomous princedoms in the eastern half of their realm, the overall impact of the Qin legacy on the Han is undeniable (see, e.g., Loewe 1987; Hsing and

Yates, chapters 4 and 6 in this volume, respectively). Yet the Han founder, Liu Bang 劉邦 (d. 195), came from the ranks of anti-Qin rebels, which precluded uncritical acceptance of the Qin legacy in toto. It was essential, therefore, for the very legitimacy of the Han dynastic enterprise to present a balanced evaluation of the Qin that would allow the continuation of the bulk of Qin policies, while also highlighting the faults that had justified the Qin's overthrow.

A masterfully balanced assessment of the Qin, which set the tone for many subsequent discussions, and which is widely cited throughout this volume, was presented by an influential early Han thinker, Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168). In his *Faulting the Qin* (*Guo Qin lun* 過秦論), Jia Yi is careful to recognize Qin's achievements while criticizing the First Emperor for his excessive harshness and for his inability to seek advice from meritorious aides, as well as faulting the Second Emperor for his overall ineptitude. Jia Yi carefully distinguishes between a fundamentally positive assessment of the Qin dynastic enterprise—and by extension of the imperial polity—and a criticism of individual wrongdoings by the Qin leaders. Yet while these leaders are disparaged, they are not demonized in a same fashion as the paradigmatic tyrants of the past, such as the last Shang ruler Zhouxin 紂辛 (for whom see, e.g., Pines 2008b). A similarly careful synthesis of positive and negative assessments of the First Emperor is arguably evident also in Sima Qian's *Historical Records* (see Puett 2001: 188–191; for an alternative view, see van Ess, chapter 7 in this volume), and it may well reflect the dominant approach of the early Han thinkers.

Against this balanced view, from the early Han dynasty on we can distinguish a much more radical critique of the Qin. It is possible that the propagators of uncompromising anti-Qin views initially came from within the ranks of the aristocracy of the defeated Warring States, for whom the Qin unification had brought personal humiliation and a sharp decline in their fortunes;⁴ and one can distinguish certain continuity in anti-Qin rhetoric of the Warring States period and that of the early Han age (see, e.g., Zang Zhifei 2002). Yet much more significant was the anti-Qin backlash which began about the middle of the Former Han dynasty. By then, those elite members who opposed the economic, administrative, and military activism initiated by Emperor Wu 漢武帝 (r. 141–87) began routinely to employ Qin as a foil against which the proper Han rule should be defined. Since the Han rulers consistently tried to distance themselves from the First Emperor, it was much safer for the opponents of imperial activism to focus on Qin's misdeeds than to criticize Emperor

Wu and his successors directly. Extremely negative views of Qin were fully vented, for example, during the famous “Salt and Iron” debates held in 81 BCE, shortly after Emperor Wu’s death (e.g., *Yantie lun*, “Fei Yang” 非鞅 7: 93–97; “Zhou Qin” 周秦 57: 586); thereafter, the critics became increasingly vociferous. It was not incidentally under Emperor Wu that a leading Han thinker, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 195–115), proposed to expurgate the Qin from the sequence of legitimate dynasties (Arbuckle 1995). Countless literati from then on adopted a view of Qin as a disaster to civilization, an aberration in China’s history, a “redundant” (*run* 潤) dynasty that had perpetrated heinous crimes and gained little if any merit worth remembering (for debates over Qin legitimacy, see, e.g., Rao Zongyi 1996).

The anti-Qin tide became stronger in the second century of the Former Han dynasty as opposition to government activism gained further momentum, paralleling the government’s gradual abandonment of what Loewe (1974, 1987) dubs a “modernist” (i.e., Qin-inspired) model in favor of a looser one, which drew inspiration from the imagined Zhou past.⁵ While influential statesmen and thinkers would at times endorse the Qin model, as was demonstrated by Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊 (152–80), one of the architects of Emperor Wu’s economic policies, during the “Salt and Iron” debates, their voices were clearly outnumbered among the literati. By the time of Wang Mang 王莽 (r. 9–23 CE), the negative view of Qin became overwhelming: while historians continued to acknowledge the Han indebtedness to Qin precedents, in the mainstream political discourse the first imperial dynasty became associated primarily with misdeeds and failures rather than with the successful establishment of the imperial polity.⁶

Throughout the two millennia of imperial China, Qin became, to the majority of literati, an emblem of all those aspects of the imperial polity that they detested: a state ruled by a haughty and hyperactive monarch who would mistreat his aides and punish his critics; an intrusive bureaucracy that would disrupt the normal life of rural communities; excessive military activity and the proliferation of construction projects that depleted the people’s resources; and, worst of all, the court’s senseless and brutal suppression of (real or imagined) intellectual opposition. Qin was accused of a variety of crimes, sometimes real but more often imagined. It was blamed, for example, for having destroyed the semi-legendary “well-field system,” which had supposedly ensured relative equality among peasants in the past; it was also alleged to have annihilated the so-called *fengjian* 封建 system, which late imperial theorists incorrectly imagined

to have assured the autonomous self-rule of rural communities; moreover, it was accused of having committed woeful atrocities toward all social strata, with the First Emperor recast as the ultimate bloodthirsty villain, on a par with Zhouxin and similar legendary and semi-legendary monsters (Zhang Fentian 2005: 657–677).

One of the clearest examples of how the demonization of Qin proceeded is the story of the First Emperor's supposedly "burying Confucians alive" (*keng ru* 坑儒). Sima Qian tells of the First Emperor's decision, in 212 BCE, to execute 460 scholars (*sheng* 生) who were critical of him. In all likelihood this action was directed primarily or exclusively against the so-called technical masters (*fang shi* 方士), who were wasting precious state resources in attempts to procure the Emperor the pill of immortality, which of course they failed to deliver (*Shiji* 6: 258). Initially, this atrocity (which was not entirely unprecedented) was barely noticed by early critics of Qin such as Jia Yi, yet by the end of the Former Han it became linked with the biblioclasm that took place just a year before, and both events were interpreted as being directed against the followers of Confucius (*Ru* 儒). This allowed the literati in turn to interpret the First Emperor's assault on private learning—a step which had clear parallels in the attempts of later emperors, such as Emperor Wu, to ensure intellectuals' subservience to the throne (Ge Quan 2003, Pines 2012a: 85–89)—as an ideological suppression of Confucianism, an exceptional event that turned the First Emperor from a normal autocrat into a monster. The resultant "Legalist" and "anti-Confucian" image of Qin remains popular even today despite manifold indications that Qin culture was by no means "anti-Confucian" (Kern 2000), and despite numerous studies that expose the fallacy of the notion of an anti-Confucian oppression by the First Emperor (e.g., Zhang Shilong 1988; Zhang Zixia 1991; Zhou Fang 2013; cf. Neining 1983).⁷

To be sure, not every traditional Chinese scholar subscribed to this anti-Qin propaganda. Sensitive historians, such as Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1160 CE) and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682 CE), pointed out obvious distortions; supporters of political centralization and of strong imperial power—from Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819 CE) to Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582 CE) and Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692 CE)—hailed Qin's lasting contribution to the empire's prowess; and we find even such unexpected personalities as the great Tang poet Li Bai 李白 (also known as Li Bo) (701–762 CE) and the controversial individualist Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602 CE) among the First Emperor's sympathizers.⁸ But while the views

of these individuals have proved important to modern scholars' quest to reassess the First Emperor, they were a minority opinion in their time. Insofar as Qin remained an emblem of oppressiveness and tyranny, and insofar as its founder was being portrayed as Confucius's antipode, negative views of the dynasty prevailed. Thus even the severely authoritarian-minded Ming founder, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398, r. 1368–1398), opted to distance himself from the Qin and to use it as an unequivocally negative historical example rather than seeking inspiration from it.⁹ For a monarch eager to improve his image among the members of the educated elite, to denigrate, or at least to distance himself from, the First Emperor was as politically expedient as it was to extol Confucius.

China's entrance into the modern age was accompanied by a profound reassessment of the First Emperor's historical role. With the end of the intellectual hegemony of the imperial brand of "Confucianism," the supposedly "Legalist" inclinations of the empire's founder were no longer necessarily considered a fault. To the contrary, his ability to put an end to domestic turmoil and to turn "China" into a superpower was now hailed by many eminent thinkers, as was his perceived disdain of the Tradition and his preference of the "present" to the "past." That the fiercely nationalistic anti-Qing revolutionary Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868–1936 CE) hailed the Qin emperor as one whose achievements had "almost" crowned those of the paragon rulers of antiquity is perhaps not very surprising.¹⁰ More interestingly, even such a liberal thinker as Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962 CE) became fascinated with the Qin and went so far as to laud the biblioclasm of 213 BCE as an example of a liberation of the mind. Hu wrote:

Political dictatorship is surely frightening, but the dictatorship of adoring the past is even more frightening . . . After two thousand years, having been fed up with two millennia of "narrating the past to harm the present and adorning empty words to harm the substance," we cannot but admit that Han Fei[zi] and Li Si were the greatest statesmen in Chinese history. Although we cannot completely endorse their methods, we should never let their brave spirit of opposing those who "do not make the present into their teacher but learn from the past" fall into oblivion: it deserves our utmost admiration!¹¹

Hu Shi's surprising endorsement of what hitherto had been considered the First Emperor's single most unforgivable anti-intellectual atrocity is revealing, but it should not be interpreted as representative of mainstream historical thought during the Republican era. On the contrary,

soon enough the pendulum shifted again toward criticism of the Qin, as conservative thinkers, eager to restore the paramount position of Confucius as the national sage, decried Qin's cultural barbarism, while liberal and leftist scholars, most notably the eminent Marxist historian Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978 CE) bitterly attacked the First Emperor's despotism, hinting thereby at the dictatorial tendencies of Chiang Kai-shek's (Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石, 1887–1975 CE) rule.¹² In general, the negative image of the First Emperor continued to dominate historical discourse until the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949.

In the first decades of the People's Republic the pendulum shifted again in the First Emperor's favor. While initially historians were hesitant about possibly endorsing a "representative of the exploitive classes," whose dynasty had been swept away by the first historically verifiable "peasant rebellion," soon enough the personal preferences of Chairman Mao (Mao Zedong 毛澤東, 1893–1976 CE) determined a new course. Mao's self-identification with the First Emperor can be traced already to the time of composition of his famous poem "Snow" (*Xue* 雪), in 1936; it became ever more pronounced as time passed, most notably during the last years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976 CE). With Mao's blessing, the First Emperor was elevated to the position of an admirable historical figure, the representative of the "progressive feudal class" that put an end to the "reactionary slave-owner society."¹³ Although this brief period of adoration ended shortly after Mao's death, it was indicative of the First Emperor's strong appeal after millennia of a predominantly negative image.

In the relaxed scholarly atmosphere of the post-Mao decades, the debates over the image of the First Emperor and his historical role have been renewed, and the divergence of opinion is now greater than ever. Especially in recent years, as the Internet has come to provide an additional forum for expressing individual opinions, one has been able to find a plethora of contrasting evaluations: for some he is the proud founder of the "Chinese nation," a glorious leader, "one in a thousand"; for others a reviled tyrant, a "fascist ruler," a person responsible for a "cultural Holocaust."¹⁴ The dividing lines among the proponents of such opposite views are not clearly defined and surely cannot be reduced to two camps that might label one another as "nationalistic historians" or "petty Confucian doctrinaires," respectively. To complicate matters further, recently the First Emperor gained additional local popularity in his native Shaanxi province, which capitalizes on the tourist revenues from pilgrimages to his mausoleum. The multiplicity of assessments of this

towering figure continues to bewilder scholars, textbook writers, and film directors alike and explains to a certain extent the avalanche of Qin-related publications and different media representations in recent years.¹⁵

Given the range of opinions regarding the historical role of the First Emperor, there are surprisingly few controversies about the factual basis of our evaluations. Indeed, in evaluating the history of the Qin Empire—especially that of its ruling elite—our dependence on the *Historical Records* remains overwhelming. Even when there are controversies on such issues as the degree of centralization under the Qin, the supposed execution of “Confucians,” or the nature of the anti-Qin rebellions in 209–208, these revolve primarily around conflicting interpretations of Sima Qian’s account.¹⁶ While the amount of the new materials related to the history of the Qin empire is impressive (suffice it to mention the First Emperor’s mausoleum, the Shuihudi slips, and the Liye Well 1 hoard, which rank among the major archaeological discoveries in China in recent decades), they are insufficient to verify, refute, or replace the bulk of Sima Qian’s narrative insofar as the First Emperor’s activities are concerned.

This overwhelming dependence on a single historical work in discussing one of the crucial periods and one of the most important personalities in Chinese history leaves many of us uncomfortable. It requires major efforts in assessing the reliability of the *Historical Records* and of the dominant interpretations of this work. In this respect, participants of the workshop took different positions. In chapter 7, Hans van Ess proposes a radically revisionist reading of the *Historical Records*. After meticulously comparing suspicious similarities between Sima Qian’s accounts of the First Emperor and those that deal with Sima Qian’s own imperial master, Emperor Wu, van Ess concludes that “it is quite plausible that the tale of the First Emperor of the Qin that we find in the *Shiji* was actually written as a warning to Emperor Wu of the Han.” If this is correct, it follows that the entire foundation of our knowledge about the Qin is extremely shaky. While few of us would go as far as doubting the fundamental reliability of the *Historical Records*, van Ess’s chapter cautions us against uncritical reliance on it, especially when it cannot be supported by additional independent sources.

In my treatment of the First Emperor in chapter 8, I adopt a different approach from van Ess. Following the lead of Martin Kern (2000), I accept the texts of the imperial steles, erected by the order of the First Emperor, as a major reliable source for the Emperor’s ideology and his self-image. Analyzing Qin self-propaganda as seen in the stele inscriptions from the perspective of the Warring States period discourse, I demonstrate that far

from being anti-traditional, the First Emperor actually synthesized and appropriated the legacy of the Warring States-period thinkers. I further argue that the notion of emperorship established by the First Emperor, and particularly the concept of the ruler as a reigning sage, became his major legacy for the Han and subsequent dynasties. At the same time, I suggest that the First Emperor himself was partly responsible for his subsequent image as a historical "aberration." Eager to bolster his power, he adopted a peculiar (I use the term "messianic") posture as an exceptional ruler, dwarfing the former paragons, declaring (as it were) the "end of history," and claiming to have realized utopia on earth. Thus, the First Emperor distinguished himself from both predecessors and successors, inadvertently contributing to the view that the Qin dynasty constituted a rupture in China's historical development.

Van Ess and I differ with regard to our understanding of details of the Qin imperial history and with regard of the degree to which we trust the sources; but beyond these disagreements, it is important to notice the common ground between us, and indeed among all the contributors. None of us subscribes to a view of the Qin dynasty as anti-traditional and anti-Confucian; none accepts the Han as the Qin antipode; and despite our differences, all of us agree that there was fundamental continuity from the Qin into the Han. As parts I and II have shown, the material and paleographic evidence overwhelmingly lend support to such a view. With regard to these points, we should emphasize the difference between the current scholarly consensus as crystallized here and the dominant narrative of the Qin as the Legalist other of Chinese civilization that still pervades popular accounts and, regrettably, some of the textbooks (e.g., Hardy and Kinney, 2005). We hope that our discussion here will contribute toward a major revision of this flawed narrative, based as it is on the uncritical acceptance of the Later Han and post-Han misreadings of the *Historical Records*.

Many other questions concerning Qin history await further research. What was the real degree of administrative centralization and uniformity in the unified empire given the little time the Qin had to impose its political agenda before it collapsed?¹⁷ Which segments of the elites of the former Six Eastern States were incorporated into the Qin imperial government, and which were suppressed? Were there regional and temporal differences in the populace's acceptance of the Qin rule? How did different social strata react to the Qin conquest? While some of these questions may perhaps be answered after the publication of more of the

Liye and Yuelu Academy materials, others will have to wait until further discoveries and new approaches.

Qin history should not be treated as an isolated phenomenon. Rather, its peculiar historical trajectory from a minor polity to a superpower and then to a “universal” empire; its evolution from aristocratic to bureaucratic polity; its complex cultural interaction with members of the Zhou *oikoumenē* and with the non-Zhou periphery; and its administrative, intellectual, and cultural dynamics all call for comparison with similar developments elsewhere. Of particular interest would be analyzing similarities and differences between the Qin imperial enterprise and other early imperial polities. Why did the Chinese empire—at least insofar as its fundamental political structure is concerned—last longer than its counterparts elsewhere? How did the peculiar background of the empire’s creation, in particular Qin’s historical experience, contribute toward the empire’s longevity? Which aspects of Qin’s imperial polity are akin to those in other empires worldwide and which are peculiar to Qin?

Intriguing as they are, these questions remained by and large beyond the scope of the present volume. This was done not only because some of them had been already raised in several recent studies to which a few of us had contributed (Alcock 2001; Mutschler and Mittag 2008; Scheidel 2009), but primarily because we came to the conclusion that to allow a meaningful comparison, we should first present in a comprehensive and systematic form our understanding of Qin history proper.¹⁸ And yet we did not want to sacrifice the comparative perspective altogether. Hence, as a suggestion for a possible line of future research, we decided to end our volume with an essay by Alexander Yakobson that focuses on the Roman Emperor Augustus rather than on the First Emperor of Qin (chapter 9).

Our selection of Augustus is not casual. Few figures in world history can be compared to the First Emperor as meaningfully as can Augustus. Both were exceptionally successful leaders who immensely influenced the historical course of their respective realms, both founded lasting empires, and both were well aware of the importance of public opinion—including the opinion of posterity—and did their best to project their desired image to their subjects. Yet these similarities aside, both leaders also differed tremendously. Augustus, even at the very end of his eventful life, tried to adopt the posture of protector of the Roman republican past, of magistrate rather than monarch, of a servant of the people and not just their leader. In contrast, the First Emperor emphasized his super-

human qualities as an absolute monarch, projecting himself as the one who was incomparably superior to the rest of the humankind. From the very inception, the Roman Empire appears to have been rooted deeply in its republican past, while the Chinese tends to further strengthen the monarchical foundation of Chinese political culture, which long predates the Qin unification (Liu Zehua 2000; Pines 2009).

These differences may have been highly significant in determining the future course of both empires. In Rome, as Yakobson observes, the concept of an emperor as a magistrate and not just the monarch eventually allowed the simultaneous establishment of two or more emperors—what would be as abnormal in the Chinese case as the simultaneous election of two popes for the Catholic Church. Does this mean that the stronger monarchic tendencies of the Chinese empire, which the First Emperor bequeathed on his successors, proved a more viable means of preserving the imperial enterprise intact? Did the more strongly pronounced super-human quality of the imperial office in China contribute to the empire's longevity? Or should the roots of China's imperial success be looked for elsewhere? To what extent was the greater longevity of the Chinese empire, as compared to Rome, a "success"? The answers to these questions will have to wait for future systematic comparative work, which the present volume hopes however modestly to inform.