

fate” (*mingxue* 命學) in late Qing and early Republican China, even though the practice of the mantic arts continued to flourish. They point out that defenders of traditional sciences “were hindered by their one-dimensional, ahistorical understanding of Western science” (p. 15), which might have been better informed by appeals to the humanities, including religious studies. Closing the section, Yong Hoon Jun adds a brief Korean account of the transmission of Ptolemaic astrology to East Asia by analyzing the manuscript of *Seongyo* 星要, which he identifies as the work of astronomer and mathematician Nam Byeong-cheol 南秉哲 (1817–1863).

6. *Reflections on Divinatory Techniques*. Opening the final section, Andrea Bréard analyzes the “quantification of chance” and seeks a mathematical reasoning behind mantic techniques where number is the main component. Using divination by dominoes in late Imperial China as a case study, she shows how “rationalist” approaches to combinatorial procedures—originally concerned with gambling techniques in the early writings on mathematics—lost out to numerological considerations before a theory of probability could be developed (p. 500). Matthias Hayek follows with an interesting study of “chronomancy” in early modern Japan, where temporal data was manipulated in a modular fashion to calculate a divination result. In each case under study, whether “eight-character/four-pillar” astrology, “eight-trigram” horoscopy, or “plum blossom” numerology, the left hand was used to count off cyclical or modular properties, essentially mimicking cosmographs. Closing part six and thus the book, Sanghak Oh analyzes the “physical shape” (*wuxing* 物形) theory of Form School *fengshui* commonly practiced in Korea but uncommon elsewhere. According to this concept, the ideal *fengshui* terrain should physically resemble an auspicious object, such as a lotus, a tortoise, or a dragon. Criticized by Confucian scholars for being “too mystical” (p. 569), it is popular in rural Korea today perhaps because it has “relatively low theoretical precision” and dispensed with “descriptive terms and directions” (p. 575).

In his introduction, Michael Lackner contemplates a number of oppositions that impact studies of divination: *Weltanschauung* (world view) vs. *Lebenswelt* (daily experience), official vs. private, rational vs. irrational, believing vs. disbelieving, etc. In traditional China, the elite class in general did not recognize an incongruity between these two views. That these dual perspectives on divination might seem contradictory is, according to Lackner, a product of Western thinking, which strictly separates science from superstition. Perhaps it is time, and this volume envisages its possibility, “to rehabilitate the study of mantic arts and to re-incorporate rejected knowledge into the research agenda of humanities” (p. 7). *Coping with the Future* is a landmark study of divination in East Asia, mainly for its depth and breadth of scholarship, but also for the impact it will have in elucidating an esoteric subject for a wider audience. The Käte Hamburger Center, under the auspices of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, is to be commended for funding the studies published herein and we applaud Michael Lackner for the years of effort he has dedicated to this project. With this groundbreaking work, if not before, he has distinguished himself as a leader in the field.

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Daily Life in Ancient China. By POO MU-CHOU. Cambridge: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. Pp. xviii + 258. £71.99 (cloth); £23.99 (paper).

This book follows two attempts that this reviewer has made to provide an account of daily life as it was lived during the two Han dynasties. When in 1968 the first of these was published (*Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*), some outstanding discoveries, as of rich furnishings or manuscripts, had yet to be made public. The author could not expect his readers to have acquired much knowledge of China’s early history, let alone of its archaeology. The second attempt of 2011 (*Bing: From Farmer’s Son to Magistrate in Han China*) was likewise addressed to the general, uninformed reader; by then it was thankfully possible to call both on the wealth of the discoveries of the preceding decades and on the reassessments of China’s imperial history of both Chinese and Western scholars.

In the early years of the People's Republic it was possible to draw on the splendid results achieved by China's archaeologists, but such attempts were hampered by the suspension of regular publication of their work from 1966 to 1971. Once this was resumed, again it became possible and indeed necessary to review our notions of China's past in the light of new recently discovered evidence, spectacular as some of this was. For the four centuries of Western and Eastern Han, the way lay open to correct and extend our appreciation of all types of the basic activities that characterized those periods, such as agricultural methods, the means of transport, the scale of manufacture, the circulation of utilities. These could be assessed in an ever-deepening historical context, and in the light of an advanced knowledge of China's intellectual developments and advances in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and technology. In particular, the newly found textual material was shedding a new light on the ways in which human beings had been allowed to live and had managed to do so. We could learn more about the handiwork of artists and craftsmen, the means whereby the farmers worked the lands, and the labors that marked the normal lives of the great majority of China's fifty million registered inhabitants. Archaeologists and textual scholars were set to work in cooperation, seeing their own discoveries and research as enriching that of their colleagues.

Poo Mu-chou writes for the uninformed reader and correctly provides the dynastic, political, social, and economic background to the conduct of daily life. In this short and valuable book he draws on historical and archaeological evidence to identify the conditions in which daily life was passed in Han times, subject as it may well have been to the impact of officials' supervision. His book gives a far more regular and comprehensive view of daily life than this reviewer's earlier attempts. Unavoidably, some of the author's statements will incur criticism as being of too general a nature, and specialists in certain aspects of China's history may well wish for some modification. They might well be grateful for an historical survey that places the fine details in their wider context.

These advances have necessarily raised the need to evaluate the newly found evidence and to review the conclusions of earlier works. Great advances have marked our understanding of many activities that were practiced, such as the making of bronze wares, but it would be difficult to show how they changed the lives of the majority of China's population—the countless men and women who toiled in the fields and rarely set foot in the towns.

In addressing these subjects Poo sets out the historical, social, and institutional contexts in which they developed. He concentrates on the Han period but may take his readers back to Shang times. Necessarily, in a short book such an overview can only be brief and will include a number of general observations to which specialists may not defer. He describes the institutional background against which daily lives were being led rather than the actual conditions, favorable or difficult, in which the great majority of the population passed their time, subject to the hazards of nature or the dispensations of mankind. But our knowledge is subject to several restrictions. Those who compiled our sources would have had little interest in recording the joys or sufferings of individuals, subjects of the emperor as they were, except when these resulted in actions that required punishment.

The book provides an easily readable summary of China's history prior to the creation of the empires, taking in geographical and economic considerations in an admirably simple way. Possibly some danger attaches to its treatment, in so far as unwary readers may not grasp the length of the periods of time with which it is concerned and may not place the achievement of Han's rulers in a full perspective.

Restricted in length as the book is, the author is obliged to treat complex questions with some fairly general statements or assumptions (e.g., pp. 44–51). He accepts a standing diversity between "Confucian" and "Legalist" outlooks as the background to political ideas and the construction of an empire. Despite some modification of such a view (p. 53) readers require a warning of the danger of accepting this as a clear division of thought on straight definable lines. They may be left with the impression of a steady adherence to a set of beliefs and practices that lasted with little change over four centuries. Some of the references to the "Confucian ideal" as existing from Chunqiu times (e.g., p. 171) may jar some readers.

Readers may sometimes need a reminder of the differences of time between some of the evidence that is cited—for example, where the views of Shang Yang (ca. 385–338 BCE), Han Fei (ca. 280–ca. 233 BCE), and Wang Fu (ca. 90–165 CE) are quoted (p. 146). Economic practice, a government's authority, and intellectual ideas were in few ways comparable, let alone uniform at the times when

these three persons lived; while the author does well to point out their differing attitudes, the readers may be left with the impression that a direct comparison is viable.

The book concentrates on the four centuries of Western and Eastern Han. At times it leaves a reader with the impression that little changed in those four centuries, and it takes little note of the differences such as those of climate and topography. The book may well stand as an introduction for those who are unacquainted with China and its history. They will, however, not appreciate that the farmers of Liaoning, in the northeast, would hardly have understood the difficulties that faced those of Shu in the southwest; or that those who grew silk in Shandong could hardly comprehend how a farm could be kept going in Dunhuang, or what was needed to raise cattle in Yunnan. Possibly the book may leave the reader with the false impression of a monolithic and all-effective government that operated with the same standard of efficiency over widely separated areas for some four centuries.

We may ponder the sources of our information and the basis upon which we draw conclusions. The scholars of Han times and later who compiled our histories were not particularly interested in the conditions in which the greater part of the population lived, except when they tried to do so independently, oblivious or defiant of official authority. Nor did those writers have any specific reason to describe everyday life of the multitude or to expect that their readers would be interested in such a subject. Critics of a government, however, might be tempted to seize on certain aspects by way of charging officials with a failure to reach standards that called for respect. So, while we must accept that those who wrote our primary sources lacked an interest in these matters, we may beware of some exaggeration on the part of some of those who could express an independent view. In neither case can we expect that these accounts were based on an orderly, proportionate, and personal comprehension of how the majority of the population passed their lives. Nor can we expect that our written sources were based on an acquaintance with the conditions that prevailed generally, up and down the empire. For example, possibly our informants had grown up in the icy conditions of the north and could have few ideas of how the farmer survived the blistering heat of the south.

We need also to bear in mind that while archaeology can be expected to enlighten us on the basic conditions of living, as much basic research has shown, it is with the relics and evidence of an exceptional rather than a normal nature that they have been mainly, and unavoidably, concerned. Attention may focus on the treasures buried in the tomb of a nobleman rather than on the simple and unadorned grave of a farmer, if such a site could be identified. Such artifacts may well illustrate the luxurious way of life of the few and they may reveal the handiwork of those who served them; they are not representative of daily life. Nor can we expect archaeology to provide evidence for some of the major changes that affected daily life. For example, it does not confirm a major change in agricultural practice from ca. 87 BCE, when, to accord with the more widespread use of oxen to pull the plough, the standard length of the furrow was lengthened from 100 to 240 paces. Nor can it tell us to what extent the system of conscripting males for labor was intensified or modified over the four centuries that are in question, or the extent to which private tenure of land was restricted or allowed to grow.

Certainly, and fortunately, the tombs of those who were highly privileged in Han times included pictorial representations, engraved on stone, of certain aspects of human activities. The greater part of these was intended to replicate the glories and pleasures that the deceased person might have enjoyed on earth and that would, as it was hoped, await him in the world to come. Or they may have been intended to show those who controlled that world the ways in which they should treat its new arrivals. But it is only rarely that such representations set out the travails and routines of the daily round, the pleasures and the pains that attended the lives of the great majority of the people who lived on earth. Rather were they intended to guide the soul of a deceased person in a search for pleasurable enjoyments. No more than a few notable exceptions show the farmer or the smith at his labors.

This book raises a fundamental question of the strength and ability of imperial government to impose a system and a series of commands that might involve individuals in hardship and arouse protest. The author is fortunate in being able to call on the evidence of the statutes and ordinances found at Zhangjiashan, which date from 186 BCE, and prescribe the permissible procedures for many of the activities of daily life. He does not raise the question of how far these orders were or could be implemented nor do we possess evidence with which to answer such a question. We are, however,

probably justified in believing that this could not have been achieved over four centuries on a uniform scale throughout the empire. Some officials were doubtless meticulous or ruthless in applying these orders, others may well have been lax or generous; and we may ponder how far it was possible, in actual practice, to operate the same system and rules over areas that were subject to basically different natural, climatic, and geographical conditions, and at times and in places where the authority of the officials might vary widely.

Possibly more may be learned regarding the conditions of daily life from two pieces of literature, one dated for Western and one for Eastern Han, to both of which the author refers. Both the *Yantie lun* and the *Qianfu lun* include long chapters in which the writer sets out to criticize the activities of his own time, contrasting the fine, simple ways of the past with the complex, modern ways of his own day. But in neither case could the authors have had a direct knowledge of the realities of life in the remote past. We may ponder whether they were in fact drawing attention to some of the inequities that were prevalent in their own times, as witnessed by the abundance of luxurious food and housing or the sale of rare, luxury goods, for some, as against the common and usual dependence by many on meager necessities, ancient equipment, and means of transport. By setting these contrasts in the remote past, as these writers did, they would not incur hatred or punishment from those who ruled in their own time.

Poo Mu-chou enriches his readers by quoting from some types of literature, such as poems (e.g., p. 192), that are rarely cited in historical writings. He correctly warns them (p. 185) that the scenes of activity that are depicted in some of the tombs are not to be taken as representative of daily life as enjoyed universally, but should rather be seen as an ideal to which some few persons might have aspired. He writes of material and technological developments in relation to their historical, social, and economic contexts; he correctly provides details of some subjects that archaeological work has revealed, such as the nature of the armory that was kept in Chang'an (p. 121).

He also writes about the creation, removal, abandonment, or restoration of some of the shrines of worship (p. 123), but he does not discuss the religious implications that were involved. His guarded use of the term "democratic," placed as it is within inverted commas, in this connection is perhaps somewhat questionable and may give rise to a false impression of activities that took place in what was a blatant autocracy.

Some negative statements would be of value by way of a warning to readers who are new to the history of China. They may well be misled by use of the term "citizen" (pp. 35, 93), which derives from Western concepts and applies to Western practice. A term such as *civis Romanus*, implying as it did the possession of certain rights and freedoms, could not be appropriate for an imperial autocracy of China. Readers may likewise require a warning to avoid an assumption that individuals of Han China had a right to form the means and methods of government or that public meetings were held to secure support for a particular policy.

We now turn to a few technical or specific matters.

In his treatment of the city as an educational center (pp. 118–21) the author may leave an impression that it was in the capital cities that the greatest advances took place in creating literature and promoting its study. However, the pursuit of learning and production of books was in no way limited to those cities; and we may safely assume the existence of similar centers in the Shandong peninsula and in particular the commandery of Donghai (to its south), from which a number of scholars and literary men arose. But at the same time it is perhaps necessary to stress that reading was the preserve of no more than a small proportion of the population of Chang'an and Luoyang, and the part that active bookshops played in daily life can hardly have been more than minimal. Readers may get the impression that literacy and a demand for books were greater than can be proved. They may need a gentle reminder that as yet multiple copies of a text were not available, and that inscription of certain carefully selected writings on stone from 175 CE may have done more to publicize them, in an approved version, than did opportunities for browsing in a bookshop. We have no means of knowing how far certain types of writing such as the rhapsodies (*fu*) or technical treatises, say on medicine or agriculture, were generally available, either in private hands or in the book markets that Poo mentions.

Readers might appreciate or need further clarity on a few points, e.g., the salient features of a city such as a protective wall, as the seat of a county's magistrate, and as the center of official control and

imposition of discipline. Chapter six might well call on the comparison of incomes from various types of activity that the *Shiji* and *Han shu* provide. That the treatment of funerals and burial customs (chap. ten) is concerned only with those for the very few, highly privileged members of Han society may well be unavoidable, but readers need a warning of this restriction. It is necessary to show how essential differences lay between some of the views of a life after death, which might range from a restitution of a life on earth to a form of existence in another realm; from a continuation of bodily comforts of this world to a style of life that was free of such enjoyments. And, as elsewhere our prime evidence concerns a mere minority of the population.

The figures that are cited for 1–2 CE are stated to be for the “total population” (p. 38). They are, however, the counts of households and individuals who were actively working the land and had been registered as such by the officials; they did not necessarily include persons who were otherwise engaged, perhaps as officials, artisans, or merchants; or those who lived in non-agricultural areas and found a living by other means than that of tilling the soil; or those who successfully evaded registration and its demands. The number of officials of the central government in Chang’an should be estimated at 30,000 rather than 3,000 (p. 40) (see M. Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China* [Leiden: Brill, 2019], 70).

Greater attention is needed in the treatment of the kingdoms, considerably varied as this was in the four centuries of Han. They included counties and are not to be classed as “county-level units” (p. 40). Attention duly fastens on the production of silks (pp. 130–32) and lacquer wares (pp. 132–34) with a fine description of some of China’s luxury goods; there is no mention of the hempen clothes in which the majority of the population were clad, or the crude vessels of clay that played their part in the conduct of daily life for most of the population. Wang Fu’s dates are usually taken as ca. 90–ca. 165 rather than 83–170 (p. 145) and those of Wang Chong as 27–ca. 100 rather than 20–98 CE (p. 219). Readers would appreciate identification of the third year of Yuanshi (p. 133) and dates for Sang Hongyang (p. 136).

In principle, and in all probability in practice, the disposal of land lay in the hands of officials and it was perhaps only from late in Eastern Han that it became more readily available for acquisition by purchase. Readers may be left with the impression that such transactions were a regular and permissible procedure throughout Han times (p. 140). They might also appreciate a direct reference to the comparisons that the *Han shu* provides of the profits to be made from different undertakings. That history sets out how it was possible to make a living that was equivalent to the income of a nobleman by, e.g., brewing liquor, supplying timber or brass utensils, or raising horses or cattle.

A passage in the *Shiji* (60.2110) is taken to be evidence for the presentation of maps of territory that the emperor ruled (pp. 163–64). Far from describing the ritual that attended the enthronement of an emperor, the passage that is quoted derived from deeds that defined or limited the lands over which the kings, i.e., the emperor’s relatives and inferiors, were granted authority to govern.

On a number of occasions officials of Han times drew attention to the temptation for some persons to abandon the hard work of tilling the fields and seek more lucrative opportunities by trade or in a workshop—the distinction between *ben* and *mo*. Poo duly draws attention to this problem (pp. 96–97). Officials decried such changes of enterprise as being detrimental to the interests of the empire, but they may well have been due to cogent reasons. In practical terms, with severe privations on the farm, it could often occur that, with the growth of its members, a family might find that its existing means of support from its allotted land was far from sufficient; in desperation, some of its members would seek a livelihood from other sources.

Those who are concerned with China’s early history, be they first year students or veteran scholars, will be grateful for this clear and concise account of the conditions that affected the conduct of life in China’s early empires. Enriched as they have been by the material finds of recent years, thanks to an overview such as this book, they may well be able to place these discoveries in their context, fully conscious of the need to accept both historical and archaeological evidence as aspects of one and the same situation.

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