Cult and Calendars in the Ancient Empires of Qin, Han, and Rome

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Abstract

Cult and Calendars in the Ancient Empires of Qin, Han, and Rome is a comparison of reforms made to imperial cult and calendar during the formative years of empire. As distinct from ruler cult, I define imperial cult as cult activity worshiped both by the emperor and on his authority. The early years of the Qin Han and Roman empires saw imperially-sponsored cult increase dramatically, and saw the positioning of the person of the emperor at the centre of all cult activity. In both empires, reforms to state cult and calendars were initiated as part of a larger program of consolidating power around the person of the emperor. Despite the very different challenges facing the emperors of Han and Rome, there is a remarkable similarity in the areas in which they chose to consolidate their power, as well as the methods through which they carried out their reforms. In both empires, the rulers sought the advice of advisors from outside of the traditional elite, incorporating astronomical and religious knowledge from diverse regions and peoples. This outside knowledge and practices were then incorporated into state cult, reshaping the way that the emperors and their subordinates worshipped. I argue that these reforms to cult, and the incorporation of outside knowledge, was fundamental to the consolidation of power in the person of the emperor.

Examining the expansion of cult practices, calendrical reforms, and spectacular performances, the dissertation uncovers the processes in the transformation of imperial cult to fit the changing needs of empire. Rather than seeking parallels in belief systems or cult practice, the dissertation compares the ways in which religious institutions both shaped and communicated a new imperial order. The juxtaposition of the two societies reveals not only the similarities and differences in these processes, but also the biases of historical sources and subsequent scholarship in both fields.

Resumé

Culte et Calendriers dans les empires de Qin, Han et Rome est une comparaison des réformes apportées au culte impérial et au calendrier au cours des années de la formation de ces empires. Je fais une distinction entre culte du souverain et culte impérial. Je définis ce dernier comme étant un culte pratiqué par l'empereur et au nom de son autorité. Les premières années des empires Qin, Han et romain connurent une augmentation marquée des cultes commandités par le pouvoir impérial ainsi que le positionnement de la personne de l'empereur au centre de toute activité cultuelle. Dans les deux empires, des réformes apportées au culte d'état et au calendrier furent lancées dans le cadre d'un programme de consolidation du pouvoir autour de la personne de l'empereur. En dépit des défis forts différents auxquels les empereurs de Han et de Rome eurent à faire face, il existe une similitude remarquable quant au domaine dans lequel ils choisirent de consolider leur pouvoir, ainsi que dans les méthodes à travers lesquelles ils menèrent à bien leurs réformes. Dans les deux empires, les souverains firent appel à des conseillers qui ne provenaient pas des élites traditionnelles, incorporant le savoir astronomique et religieux de divers peuples et régions. Ce savoir et ces pratiques extérieurs furent ensuite intégrés dans le culte d'état, changeant la façon dont les empereurs et leurs sujets pratiquaient ce culte. Je propose que ces réformes cultuelles et l'incorporation de savoir extérieur s'avérèrent fondamentales pour la consolidation du pouvoir dans la personne de l'empereur.

En examinant l'expansion des pratiques de culte, des réformes du calendrier et les représentations spectaculaires, cette thèse explore les processus de transformation du culte impérial dans son adaptation aux divers besoins impériaux. Plutôt que de rechercher des parallèles dans les systèmes de croyance ou les pratiques de culte, cette thèse compare les manières par lesquelles les institutions religieuses façonnèrent et communiquèrent un nouvel ordre impérial. La juxtaposition des deux sociétés met en lumière non seulement les similitudes et les différences dans ces processus, mais aussi les biais des sources historiques et de la littérature scientifique dans les deux domaines.

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Now, everybody ---

Chapter One: Introduction

In the *Shiji,* (*Historical Records,* 史記), written at the court of the Western Han Emperor Wu 漢武帝 (r. 141 - 87 BCE), and completed in ca. 91 BCE, the Director of Astrology (*Taishi* 太史), Sima Qian 司馬遷 wrote of the First Emperor, Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (r. 221 – 210 BCE), one hundred twenty-years after his death, that having unified the empire:

> 改年始，朝賀皆自十月朔。衣服旄旌節旗皆上黑。數以六為紀，符、法冠皆六寸，而輿六尺，六尺為步，乘六馬。
>
> He changed the beginning of the year, and the court celebrations all started from the new moon of the tenth month. Clothing, flags, and pennants all exalted the colour black. Among the numbers, six was made the standard, and tallies and official caps were all 6 *cun*, carriages were six *chi*, and six *chi* were taken to make one *bu*, and carriages were drawn by six horses.[1]

In the *Hanshu* (*History of Han*, 漢書), a book of history written during the Eastern Han dynasty, completed in ca. 96 CE, Ban Gu 班固 wrote of Emperor Wu, about two hundred years after his death:

> 夏五月，正曆，以正月為歲首。色上黃，數用五，定官名，協音律
>
> In the summer, fifth month, (104 BCE), [Emperor Wu] regulated the calendar, and started the year by means of the first month. The colour that was exalted

[1] *Shiji* 6.237-8. Translations from the Chinese, unless otherwise indicated, are my own, and chapter and page references are given to the Zhonghua shuju editions. Translations from Greek and Roman sources are taken from the Loeb Classical Library editions, unless otherwise indicated.

> was yellow, the number in use was five. He fixed the names of the ministers, and harmonized the tones of the pitch-pipes.[2]

Eight thousand kilometers and only ten years away, in 121 CE, the biographer Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus wrote of the first order of business Julius Caesar (100 – 44 BCE) undertook in 46 BCE, towards the end of the civil war, in his capacity as dictator of the Roman Republic and high priest of the pontifical college (*pontifex maximus*):

> *Conversus hinc ad ordinandum rei publicae statum fastos correxit iam pridem vitio pontificum per intercalandi licentiam adeo turbatos, ut neque messium feriae aestate neque vindemiarum autumno conpeterent.*
>
> Then turning his attention to the reorganization of the state, he reformed the calendar, which the negligence of the pontiffs had long since so disordered, through their privilege of adding months or days at pleasure, that the harvest festivals did not come in summer nor those of the vintage in the autumn.[3]

However, the reform was misinterpreted, inserting a leap year every three years instead of every four, and so the task of reform was once again left to his heir, Augustus (63 BCE – 14 CE),[4] who included this calendrical fix in a broader programme of reforms shortly after he took the office of *pontifex maximus* in the year 12 BCE, also recorded in Suetonius:[5]

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[2] *Hanshu* 6.199.
[3] Suet. *Lives Caes*. I.40.
[4] For the sake of clarity, I use the name Augustus throughout, even for events prior to his adoption of the name in 27 BCE.
[5] As is well known, despite politically defeating Lepidus, Augustus was unwilling to strip him of the title of Pontifex Maximus (priesthoods were traditionally held for life), and instead rendered all of its tasks useless. Upon Lepidus' death in 12 BCE, Augustus was able to take up the office. Hence, the calendar (and other affairs) could likely have been rectified long before, had the office of Pontifex Maximus (and the Pontifical college in general) not been rendered impotent.

> *Annum a Divo Iulio ordinatum, sed postea neglegentia conturbatum atque confusum, rursus ad pristinam rationem redegit; in cuius ordinatione Sextilem mensem e suo cognomine nuncupavit (....) Sacerdotum et numerum et dignitatem sed et commoda auxit (...) Nonnulla etiam ex antiquis caerimoniis paulatim abolita restituit.*
>
> Inasmuch as the calendar, which had been set in order by the Deified Julius, had later been confused and disordered through negligence, he restored it to its former system; and in making this arrangement he called the month Sextilis by his own surname (…) He increased the number and importance of the priests, and also their allowances and privileges (…) He also revived some of the ancient rites which had gradually fallen into disuse…[6]

These four statements, taken from the biographies of the Qin, Han and Roman rulers are presented by the authors without much further comment. Although both Han histories go on to elaborate about the nature of these reforms in their treatise sections, with regard to the biographies of the rulers, they are presented as important, but not unusual events. What should be remarkable, however, is the nature of the reforms, as well as the fact that these reforms were initiated by several of our early rulers, east and west. Caesar, Augustus, Qin Shi Huang, and Emperor Wu all made these changes during a formative period of their nascent states: for Caesar and Qin Shi Huang, these reforms were amongst the first they undertook upon shaping their respective states. For Augustus and Emperor Wu, the reforms waited until other affairs of state had been resolved, until the emperors had more

[6] Suet. *Lives Aug.* II.31.

time to consider imperial ideology. While these reforms are remarkably different, as we shall see, the parallels are striking. In both the early Chinese and Roman empires, these early rulers considered it to be not only their prerogative to reform the ways in which cult was practiced and time was calculated, but necessary to their respective imperial projects.

These four biographical statements provide the starting point for this dissertation, and open up a number of different, but connected, questions. Why did the early rulers prioritize reforms to cult and calendar during their reigns? What can these parallel reforms tell us about the exercise of imperial power in the ancient world? How have the sources, and the choices of the ancient writers, influenced our interpretations of these reforms? And, given that these reforms to calendars and cult have been studied extensively in scholarship on both early China and Rome (separately), can a comparative approach allow us to look at the material with fresh eyes, and to ask different questions? These are the themes that will be explored in the chapters which follow. While the early Chinese and Roman institutions and belief systems bear little to no resemblance to each other, the ways in which the early rulers shaped these systems yield several points of comparison, and I will thus focus on the processes of reform and recording these reforms, rather than on structural parallels between the two regimes.

Chapter Two provides a discussion of some of the methodological concerns inherent in comparative history, especially when comparing two civilizations that, while bearing striking resemblance to each other in some aspects, differ in fundamental ways. Any attempt to make a direct comparison between the religious and calendrical institutions of the two empires would be a fruitless endeavor. Rather, by accepting that these institutions were fundamentally different, it becomes possible to explore the processes through which

they were transformed, and the actors involved in the transformation. I suggest that by placing these processes in parallel, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the decisions made by the early rulers when reforming their religious and calendrical institutions during a period of consolidation of power. The remainder of Chapter Two is devoted to a discussion of the convergences and divergences of the Qin, Han, and Roman empires, in order to understand the historical contexts created by their different trajectories to empire. The chapter concludes with an overview of the sources used in the dissertation, as well as a brief comparison of the two literary traditions.

Chapter Three, "Imperial Cult in the Qin and Han," re-examines the expansion of cult under the First Emperor and Emperor Wu. I place this expansion of cult within the longer history of imperial inspection tours and cult practice from the legendary sage kings of antiquity and the early Qin state. Rather than viewing the expansion of cult, in terms of both geographical expansion and the sheer number of sacrifices offered that took place under these two emperors as anomalous, I argue that the expansion of cult was based on traditional practice, and while the well-known quests for immortality of both Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu were closely related to this cult practice, immortality was not the sole goal of their cult. Rather, the expansion of cult throughout the empire was likely intended to, in part, strengthen imperial unity, and in employing the knowledge of the *fangshi* 方士, the "masters of methods," the rulers, particularly Emperor Wu, also sought to consolidate their own *imperium*.[7]

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[7] On the *fangshi* in Qin and Han, see Chen Pan 陳槃 "Zhanguo Qin Han jian fangshi kao lun" 戰國秦漢間方士考論, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院, 歷史語言研究所集刊: 17 (1948); Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "*Fangshi* 方士 'Masters of Methods," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, Fabrizio Pregadio, ed. (London, Routledge, 2008); Harold D. Roth, "Fang-shih," in *Encyclopedia of Religion* Vol. 5, Mircea Eliade,

Chapter Four turns to look at the comparable reforms to religious institutions in the late Republic and early Empire in Rome. While Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu took their cult reforms outwards, establishing cult sites across the empire, the transformation of religious institutions in Rome took place within the city of Rome itself. Under the pretext of restoring traditional cult practices that had fallen into disuse, Augustus quietly shifted the balance of religious power across the four major colleges, and placed himself at the centre of all religious life in Rome. As the religious institutions at Rome were closely linked to high level politics, this provided him the opportunity to be a part of what had once been closed-door discussions among the priests, as well as access to the secret knowledge that these priestly colleges may have possessed.

After having described the broader context of reforms to religious institutions in both early China and Rome, Chapters Five and Six present two comparative cases studies. Chapter Five, "Comparing Calendars," places in comparison the calendrical reforms in Han and Rome. While the types of calendars produced by each society are completely different, the processes of reform; the ways in which they were initiated, the actors employed, and the connections made with foundational legends, were remarkably similar. In both cases, the calendrical reforms were undertaken by the rulers in order to consolidate their authority and to insert themselves into the flow of cosmic time: the Caesars, through the insertion of

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ed. (New York, Macmillan, 1987); Van Xuyet Ngo, *Divination, magie et politique dans la chine ancienne* (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1976); On the magical arts that they specialized in, Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu zhengkao* 中國方術政考 (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 2006). The biographies of the *fangshi* in the *Hou Hanshu* have been translated into English by Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of* Fang-shih (New York, Columbia University Press, 1983) and French by Ngo (1976), but there are no comprehensive studies of the *fangshi* in a western language.

celebrations of the imperial family into the civil year, and Emperor Wu, by declaring the beginning of a new era, the *Taichu* 太初, "Grand Inception." While in both the Han and Rome, there were established bodies of men who were responsible for calendrical affairs, both Julius Caesar and Emperor Wu turned to the advice of experts who were outside of the traditional circle of elites. Finally, the rhetoric surrounding both calendrical reforms established the reforms, and the rulers responsible, within a longer tradition of calendar-creation, drawing parallels between the founding rulers of Rome, Romulus and Numa with Julius Caesar and Augustus, and between the sage kings of antiquity, Zhuanxu 顓頊, Yao 堯, and Shun 舜, with Emperor Wu.

Chapter Six, "Spectacular and Communicative Power: The *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices of Emperor Wu, and the *Ludi Saeculares* of Augustus," examines the two most important religious ceremonies that took place in the period under investigation: the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices of Emperor Wu (first performed in 110 BCE), and the *ludi saeculares* of Augustus (performed in 17 BCE). These two ceremonies were both "epoch-making" events. The *ludi saeculares*, as their name implies, were to be carried out only once per *saeculum*, a period of ca. one hundred years. Although there was no stipulated frequency at which the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices could be performed, their performance was a rare event, and very few rulers had received sufficient omens from heaven to be able to carry them out. In this chapter I examine the nature of religious spectacle in the two societies, arguing that, while very few people would have been in attendance at the Han sacrifices, the role of the audience as participants in the spectacle was similar in the Han and Rome. In both cases, these ceremonies demonstrated the power of the emperor, and brought about

the tacit submission of the elites (and commoners, in the Roman case) to the new ruling order.

After the discussion of these parallels between the reforms to religious institutions, the conclusion turns to the question of divergence. The Julian and Augustan reforms lasted long into the Roman empire, whereas the religious institutions shaped by the Qin and early Han emperors did not outlast the Western Han, being subjected to major reversions in the late Western Han and ultimately being replaced by a very different system of imperial cult in the Eastern Han. However, while the shape of these institutions may have changed in the Han, in many respects the traditions established by Emperor Wu were maintained in this new cult system, and in both Han and Rome, state religion, following the reforms of Emperor Wu and Augustus, was firmly centered on the emperor.

Chapter Two: Comparative Perspectives

2.1 Comparative Ancient History

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the study of the ancient world from a comparative perspective. The reasons for this are manifold, but stem in part from a desire to broaden the field of the study of the ancient world due to China's emergence as a world power in the twentieth century, and its subsequent popularity as a field of study. It seems natural, therefore, to compare the civilizations of the west and east to which our intellectual, political, and cultural legacies are most indebted. And indeed, this is where studies of comparative history have been focused: beginning with Geoffrey Lloyd's pioneering work on Greek and Chinese science, historians have compared various elements of Ancient Greek and Chinese societies, including art and aesthetics, historiography, philosophy, divination, ethnicity, and literary traditions.[8]

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[8] Science and knowledge: Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities: Investigations into Ancient Greek and Chinese Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996); *The Ambitions of Curiosity: Understanding the World in Ancient Greece and China* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002); *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections: Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Principles and Practices in Ancient Greek and Chinese* Science (Aldershot, Ashgate/Variorum, 2006); Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the World: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002); art, aesthetics, and philosophy: Francois Jullien, *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece* (New York, Zone Books, 2000); *A Treatise on Efficacy: Between Western and Chinese Thinking* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); *The Impossible Nude: Chinese Art and Western Aesthetics* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007); philosophy: David L. Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking through Confucius* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1987); *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1998); historiography: Thomas R. Martin, *Herodotus and Sima Qian: The First Great Historians of Greece and China, a Brief History with Documents* (Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010); Robert Bonnaud, *Victoires sur le temps. Essais Comparatistes. Polybe le Grec et Sima Qian le Chinois* (Paris, La ligne d'ombre, 2007); Fritz-Heiner Mutschler, "Tacite (et Tite-Live) et Sima Qian: la vision politique d'historiens latins et chinois." *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 2 (2008): 123-155: Fritz-Heiner

These initial forays into comparative studies between the ancient Mediterranean and China predominantly focused on comparisons between Greece and China, particularly with regard to their scientific, philosophical, and literary traditions. These studies aim to understand the differences between the development of science, philosophy, or literature and rhetoric in the two societies, while simultaneously exploring comparison itself: "to find a way of gaining from the joint study of two cultures understandings about each that would be unattainable if they were studied alone."[9] These works take as their starting point the fact that there are fundamental similarities between the early China and ancient Greece; according to Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, both societies evolved "comparatively elaborate cultures, with languages and abstract conceptual structures that could be used to explore every aspect of individual and collective experience."[10] People in both societies also saw the need to inquire into the nature of the cosmos, the human body, or plants, animals, and the environment, and believed that the study of these diverse natural phenomena was essential to understanding man's place within the universe.[11] These studies of scientific inquiry, philosophy, and rhetoric discuss the ways in which thinkers in each society understood and theorized their world, and how these inquiries and

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Mutschler and Achim Mittag, eds., *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008); rhetoric: Xing Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China, Fifth to Third Century BCE: A Comparison with Classical Greek Rhetoric* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1998); Michael Puett, *To Become A God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-divinization in Early China* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002); military, Hsing, I-tien, "Rome and China: The Role of the Armies in the Imperial Succession. A Comparative Study." PhD Diss. University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1980. For a detailed overview of the different approaches in Sino-Hellenic studies, see Jeremy Tanner, "Ancient Greece, Early China; Sino-Hellenic Studies and Comparative Approaches to the Classical World, A Review Article," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 129 (2009): 89-109.

[9] Lloyd and Sivin, xi.

[10] Ibid., 1-2.

[11] Ibid., 2.

understandings were shaped by their cultural traditions. Scholarly interest in comparison has heretofore been primarily focused on the Sino-Greek comparison, with recent monographs on gender relations, divination, and ethnicity published in the last several years.[12] However, there has recently been an "imperial turn" in comparative work, turning to the study of empire and statecraft in Rome and China.

Edited volumes comparing Rome and China have directed their focus towards topics related to empire: statecraft, infrastructure, and historiography to name but a few.[13] Some edited volumes on early China have included chapters by Romanists to provide a comparative perspective and place the early Chinese empires within a global context.[14] The comparison of imperial institutions in Rome and China has been the focus of Walter Scheidel, who, in recent volumes, has brought together scholars of Rome and China to compare facets of empire, such as bureaucracy, monetary systems, trade, imperial courts,

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[12] On divination, Lisa Ann Raphals, *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013); literature and gender, literature, Yiqun Zhou, *Festivals, Feasts, and Gender Relations in Ancient China and Greece* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010); ethnicity, Hyun Jin Kim, *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China* (London, Duckworth, 2009), Ryan Russel Abrecht, "My Neighbor the Barbarian: Immigrant Neighborhoods in Classical Athens, Imperial Rome, and Tang Chang'an." PhD. Diss. University of California, Santa Barbara, 2014.

[13] Hans Beck and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds., *Citizens and Commoners in Greece, Rome, and China* (forthcoming); Walter Scheidel, ed., *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009); *State Power in Ancient China and Rome* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015); on statecraft.

[14] See, for example, Alexander Yakobson "The First Emperors: Image and Memory," in *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited*. Yuri Pines, et. al., eds., (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014); and Carlos Noreña, "Chang'an and Rome: Structural Parallels and the Logics of Urban Form," in Michael Nylan and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds., *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*. (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2015), 75-98.

law, urban spaces, and gift circulation.[15] The chapters in these volumes, in an attempt to move away from the intellectual history orientation of the Sino-Greek studies,[16] examine the day-to-day operation of the empires, drawing conclusions about structural similarities and differences. Other volumes pair chapters on empire by scholars of Rome and China, and allow the reader to make draw the comparisons for themselves.[17] Recently, research groups have begun to focus on thematic approaches to comparative history, such as the *Global Antiquities* network at McGill, which proposes to develop a methodology for comparative history through the three clusters of people, places, and performance.[18] A recent series of workshops hosted by the Department of Humanities at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and UCLA's Center for the Study of Religion turned to the theme of politics and religion in early empires.[19]

There are few monograph-length studies comparing Rome and China, and the topic of religion, and its relationship to empire, is quite neglected, even in article-length studies. The one exception to this is Michael Puett's recent chapter, "Ghosts, Gods, and the Coming Apocalypse," which examines the concept of divine kingship alongside the rise of millenarian movements in Rome and China.[20] And yet, religion, especially the religious

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[15] Scheidel, *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*; *State Power in Ancient China and Rome*.
[16] Scheidel, "Introduction," in *State Power in Ancient China and Rome*, 6.
[17] Mutschler and Mittag, *Conceiving the Empire,* 2008; pairs chapters focused on historiography; Marc Kalinowski, Deng Wenkuan, and Marianne Bujard, eds., *Gu Luoma he Qin Han Zhongguo – fengma jian bu xiang jihu* 古羅馬和秦漢中國風馬不相及乎. (*Rome-Han comparer l'incomparable* (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 2009), pairs various articles on Rome and China by French and Chinese scholars (in Chinese).
[18] http://www.globalantiquities.org/about2/
[19] Workshops held in 2014, 2015, and 2016
[20] Michael Puett, "Ghosts, Gods, and the Coming Apocalypse: Empire and Religion in Early China and Ancient Rome," in *State Power in Ancient China and Rome*, Walter Scheidel, ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

practice of the emperors, was a fundamental part of rulership. Religion, like empire, was not unchanging, and the religious institutions and cult practices of the early emperors were shaped by the changing political landscape, just as the empire was shaped by religious practice.[21] This relationship between religious institutions and the political transformation of empire is explored in this dissertation.

While comparative studies can attempt to answer large questions about human behaviour, civilization and state-formation, and cultural change,[22] the comparison of similarities and differences between civilizations also provides a new perspective on familiar material, and the comparative model can help scholars break out of the strictures imposed by centuries of historiographical traditions. As Walter Scheidel has put it, "comparison defamiliarizes the deceptively familiar,"[23] forcing historians to confront their sources with new questions and identifying important lacunae in the ancient records, as well as in more recent scholarship. The comparative project thus has two related goals: first, to seek to uncover similar processes in human behaviour under similar conditions from beneath the culturally specific characteristics and modes of knowledge and action. Second, to destabilize what we already know of these ancient civilizations, from both the ancient sources and the subsequent historical traditions that each field has engendered, by bringing the two civilizations into conversation. Comparative history is most useful insofar as it permits us to formulate new understandings of these civilizations, rather than to reinforce established understandings.

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[21] This is the argument of Jörg Rüpke's recent monograph, *From Jupiter to Christ: On the History of Religion in the Roman Imperial Period* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014).
[22] See, for example, Bruce Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[23] Scheidel, *State Power in Ancient China and Rome,* 2015, 3.

Following Walter Scheidel (2009; 2015) this dissertation investigates what Jack Goldstone has termed "robust processes." A robust process is a causal explanation of events, given similar initial conditions, "a sequence of events that has unfolded in similar (but neither identical nor fully predictable) fashion in a variety of different historical contexts."[24] Goldstone, in his comparative study of the English and French revolutions with the Ottoman Crisis and the Ming-Qing transition, argues that big events, such as state breakdown, can be explained in part due to fundamental orientations in human behaviour; "knowing that, in a given situation, most people will react in some consistent fashion."[25] The focus on processes, rather than attempting to identify identical, or universal, structures in the ancient world allows for more flexibility in comparison. It allows the historian to navigate the space between the overly general and the culturally specific. By seeking to understand the processes through which the early rulers consolidated their authority, the differences between the culturally specific characteristics of religious institutions become less important than the ways in which the rulers navigated them. We shall see that the strategies employed by the early rulers in transforming their respective religious institutions have many parallels, as the rulers adapted to challenges, and sought outside knowledges. The goal is not to create a historical law, but rather to understand the parallels; thus,

> a robust process is less than a law but more than a limited historical generalization or analogy. It is a causal statement, asserting that a particular kind of historical

[24] Jack Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991), 57.
[25] Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 55.

> sequence unfolds because individuals responded to particular, specified, salient characteristics in their respective historical situations.[26]

Beginning with the initial comments from the historians about the reforms made to calendar and cult in the Qin, Han, and Roman empires, this dissertation examines how these changes took place, and to what conditions they responded. It matters little that the calendars and cult practices of the early rulers were dramatically different; the processes through which they were transformed are remarkably similar. This first goal of the comparative project is closely related to the second, and a thorough illumination of these parallel processes is only possible through a willingness to reinterpret established interpretations of historical events.

The second goal of comparative history is thus to destabilize what we know and think of the ancient world, particularly with regard to our sources and how they present the civilizations from which they emanate. The historical and archaeological records from early China and Rome differ dramatically in terms of both content and quantity. The written records from the Qin, Han, and Rome contain such different content that it quickly becomes obvious that the authors and archivists of these records; historians, religious specialists, statesmen, and others; of each civilization were concerned with radically different questions. The biases of these sources, have, understandably, influenced their respective historical traditions, and the two fields diverge substantially in terms of what they discuss. Rather than being an obstacle, this incongruity rather presents itself as an opportunity: by interrogating the Roman sources with questions asked by both the Qin and Han sources and the major discussions in the field of early Chinese history, we gain a

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[26] Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 57.

different perspective on the ways in which the Romans wrote about their history, and how these sources have subsequently been written about. At the same time, reading the Qin and Han sources through the eyes of a Romanist generates a wide range of questions about early Chinese culture and statecraft. To make a very broad generalization, we can say that the sources from ancient Rome tend to focus on military affairs, debates within the Senate, the opinions and actions of "big men," including writings on philosophy and legal affairs, while the sources from the Qin and Han tend towards questions about cosmology, good governance, and biographies of exemplary (or infamous) individuals and groups. In addition to the received literary and historical documents, we also have a wide range of excavated documents from early China, which give new insight into legal procedures and everyday life. While battle narratives, lauding the military achievements of generals, dominate the historical records of Rome, we have few such narratives from early China.[27] Discussions of correlative cosmology abound in the early Chinese sources, but are scant in Rome.[28] This is not to say that battle narratives were not told in early China, or that the Romans did not speculate about the nature of the cosmos, but simply that the authors of the historical texts that have become the dominant sources in each tradition, were not, respectively, as concerned with these questions. As Herbert Franke has put it, the Chinese

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[27] So few, in fact, that a volume on *Military Culture in China* contains very little to do with military culture itself. Nicola Di Cosmo, ed., *Military Culture in Imperial China* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2009). Some narratives of battles do exist, but primarily from pre-Qin sources. See Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1990), and Rebecca Zerby Byrne, "Harmony and Violence in Classical China: A Study of the Battles of the *Tso-chuan*." PhD Diss. University of Chicago, 1974.

[28] Studies of cosmology have tended to focus on comparisons between China and Greece, where there is a great deal more literature on the subject. While Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*; *De Haruspicum Responsis*) and others do comment on the nature of the universe and the gods, metaphysical questions of correlationism are not central to the discussion.

histories were written about officials, "for officials by officials,"[29] while perhaps we can say that the Roman sources were written "about *nobiles*, for *nobiles*, by *nobiles*." While it is, of course, impossible to read sources that do not exist, we can read between the lines, and try to understand these ancient sources in terms other than their own.

This type of comparison, however, raises several issues, most notably that of cultural specificity. It bears remembering that our comparisons between the ancient civilizations are not exclusively made between the two ancient civilizations, they are simultaneously a comparison with our own modern concepts of state, culture, and civilization. As Jeremy Tanner has put it, "one cannot take individual theories, for example the Greek theory of elements (*stoicheia*) and the Chinese theory of the five phases (*wu xing*), and compare them as answers to the same (probably modern) question about the 'nature of reality'."[30] These questions are particularly amplified concerning the question of religion and belief in the ancient world. There is no evidence to suggest that theories about the nature of society and the cosmos had their origins in one ur-civilization and were later adopted and adapted by disparate civilizations.[31] The comparative approach is not a search for universality of belief or understandings of the world; it is an attempt to understand how actors in different

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[29] Herbert Franke, "Some Remarks on the Interpretation of Chinese Dynastic Histories." *Oriens* 3.1 (1950): 8. While the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* were not official histories in the later sense of the term, they were mostly written from within the court environment.

[30] Tanner, "Ancient Greece, Early China," 2009, 91.

[31] This position is best exemplified, in my opinion, in Réné Girard's discussion of the origins of sacrificial rituals (*Violence and the Sacred*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977). While it is unlikely that any such ur civilization will be discovered, recent archaeological work has demonstrated that there may have been, however, much more cultural contact and transmission of technical ideas between eastern and western civilizations across the Siberian plains in ca. second millennium BCE. I was made aware of this research by Lothar von Falkenhausen, in a lecture delivered at the Montréal Musée des Beaux Arts in November, 2015.

civilizations approached similar problems under similar circumstances, and through the examination of similarities and differences, to gain a different understanding of each civilization.

Comparative studies must necessarily operate in the space between broad generalizations and historical specificity. Comparative-historical analysis, according to Matthew Lange, allows the researcher to "balance idiographic and nomothetic explanations," and "gain knowledge about individual cases while at the same time pushing the envelope to explore whether explanations hold across multiple cases."[32] Individual case studies, when placed in comparison, are thus able to reveal larger processes at work in the formation of empires, while also provide detailed analysis of the individual cases. One of the difficulties in the venture, is the balance between generality and specificity. A study which is too broad must ignore, or gloss over, important features of particular cultures and institutions, while a study that is too specific finds little ground on which to compare two societies. We must also resist the temptation to "fill in the gaps" of one society, and its historical record, with the material from another, seemingly comparable society. As Bruce Trigger argues, "there is never enough information to explain all aspects of any early civilization, and this lack of information has stimulated many anthropologists to extrapolate what is known about one society to other, presumably similar ones."[33] It is not my intention, through the discussion of the parallel processes in reforms made to religious institutions in early China and Rome, to argue for any inevitable actions or results; rather, through the juxtaposition of the two cases, I hope to demonstrate that, not only in these

[32] Matthew Lange, *Comparative-historical Methods* (Los Angeles, Sage, 2013), 2; 182.
[33] Trigger, *Understanding early Civilizations*, 2013, 15.

cases there were similarities in the actions of the rulers, but that the comparison can lead to a different, and more nuanced interpretation of both of the cases. By using one society to "make visible" elements of the other which may be hidden or occluded in the historical record, comparative history reminds us that "writings are the thoughts of the state"[34] and present only one perspective on events and ideology. What comparative history has to offer, therefore, is not easy answers, but more challenging questions.

While comparative studies often begin with a search for similarities between societies, or for points of convergence on historical trajectories, the historian is, more often than not, confronted with more difference than similarity, more divergence than convergence. Given that the two societies under investigation developed independently from each other, this should come as no surprise. That there are great differences, however, does not jeopardize the comparative study, rather, it allows us to view familiar material in new, and unfamiliar, light. The comparative approach, rather than seeking to discover similarities in the minutiae of particular institutions, or the actions of individuals, can offer broad, causal explanations, while simultaneously forcing us to rethink and reargue some of the established orthodoxies in each field.

2.2 Points of Comparison: Empire Formation in Han and Rome

Concerned with the examination of similar processes in the formation of empire in the Han and Rome, this dissertation is primarily concerned with the "parallel lives" of Augustus and Han Emperor Wu, with a secondary focus on Julius Caesar and Qin Shi

[34] Novalis, cited in Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit, Black and Red, 2010 (1983)), 131.

Huang. The reasons for this choice requires some explanation, due to the generational gap between Emperor Wu and Qin Shi Huang, and why I see Emperor Wu as the parallel to Augustus rather than the founding emperor of Han, Liu Bang 劉邦 (Han Gaozu 漢高祖, r. 206 – 195 BCE). The comparison between great rulers from Han and Rome has become an increasingly popular topic, with recent studies comparing Qin Shi Huang with either Julius Caesar or Augustus.[35] In the realm of imperial cult, however, there is a much stronger connection to be made between Augustus and Emperor Wu, and, within the process of the consolidation of imperial power, it is Emperor Wu who is the heir to Qin Shi Huang's vision of ruling All under Heaven, just as Augustus completed the transformation from Republic to Empire in Rome.[36] Augustus and Emperor Wu faced different sets of problems in consolidating their rule: for Julius Caesar and Augustus, Roman authority over the conquered territories was rarely disputed, however the rule of one man was much derided. For Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu, although a monarchical system had long been the norm, the unity of territory under the capital was, for Qin Shi Huang, a recent achievement, and during the reigns of the early Han emperors, significant parts of the

[35] David Engels, "Historical Necessity or Biographical Singularity? Some Aspects in the Biographies of C. Iulius Caesar and Qin Shi Huang Di" (forthcoming in Hans Beck and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds., *Citizens and Commoners in Greece, Rome, and China*) compares the biographies of Caesar and Qin Shi Huang, while Yakobson, "The First Emperors: Image and Memory," examines Augustus in comparison with the First Emperor of Qin.

[36] While the break between Republic and Empire is most commonly seen in the actions of Julius Caesar in his usurpation of dictatorial power in the mid-first century BCE, the transformation of the Republic had, in fact, been long underway. Harriet Flower argues that we should not view Roman history in terms of a "Republic" becoming an Empire, but rather look at a series of "Roman Republics" and transitional periods, rather than view the rule of Caesar as a single point of rupture. Harriet I. Flower, *Roman Republics* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010).

empire were ruled by the regional lords and kings (*zhuhou wang* 諸侯王).[37] Despite these differences, the steps taken by the early emperors, especially in the realms of imperial cult and religious ideology, were remarkably similar. It is thus necessary to present the broad contours of the historical background to the imperial project in early China and Rome.

2.2.1 From Republic to Empire in Rome

Rome was not the only Mediterranean state that was belligerent, or capable of fielding a large army, but it eventually came to dominate the Mediterranean world, less due to its military superiority, as the long and protracted wars and sometimes ruinous defeats indicate, than due to its "ability to assimilate outsiders and to create a large and stable territorial hegemony."[38] For much of the Roman Republic, this incorporation was accomplished by granting citizenship (initially without enfranchisement) to the conquered peoples, while Roman culture gradually spread, allowing for closer cultural ties between Rome and its conquered territories.[39] It was not only Rome's territorial empire that was built on

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[37] The Han never fully eradicated the kingdoms within the empire, though the territory they possessed was substantially limited after the reigns of Emperor Jing and Emperor Wu.

[38] Arthur M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006), 245.

[39] This is a simplification and an idealization, based on the example of the Italian peninsula. Not all conquered territories were as easily assimilated, and the process of Romanization was often long, difficult, and never entirely one-sided. See Jean-Michel David, *The Roman Conquest of Italy* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1996) on the process of the integration of the Italian peninsula. The connection of local elites to the capital in Rome eventually became an important source of prestige. On this phenomenon in the Imperial period, see Carlos Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011). The literature on Romanization is vast, and subject to much debate. See Peter Brunt, "The Romanization of the Local Ruling Classes in the Roman Empire," in *Assimilation et résistance à la culture gréco-romaine dans le monde ancien*, D. M. Pippidi, ed., 161-173. (Bucuresti; Paris: Editura Academiei; Les Belles lettres, 1976); Ramsey Macmullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000); Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek. Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in

continual expansion; elite politics were tied to this process of conquest, and aristocrats achieved political success through military conquests.[40] The highest office in the Roman Republic, the consulship, was in large part a military office, granting the consul *imperium* over an army, as well as a designated sphere of engagement (*provincia*), awarded to them by the Senate.[41] The Senate, comprised of ex-magistrates, was an advisory body, which not only determined the theatres in which the consuls would operate and which provinces would be given to magistrates to administer, but most importantly, controlled the state's finances. Ultimately, however, the election of magistrates and the passing of laws had to be voted on by "the people," a complicated political term, which broadly referred to the male citizens of Rome.[42] Such was the idealization of the Roman Republic in its last years - a state built on conquest, with an equal division of powers, and a constitution relatively unchanged from the expulsion of the kings in 509 BCE. While the idea of an unchanging Republic has been thoroughly refuted by modern scholarship, particularly the work of Harriet Flower, this concept was current in the late Republic.[43]

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the Roman East." *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994): 116-43; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[40] William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979), 18.

[41] On the many functions of the consul, Francisco Pina Polo's *The Consul at Rome: The Civil Functions of the Consuls in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011) is essential.

[42] On the role of the Plebs and the constitution of "the people" as a political concept rather than as a physical reality, see Henrik Mouritsen, *Plebs and Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, *Senatus populusque romanus : die politische Kultur der Republik : Dimensionen und Deutungen* (Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004).

[43] Flower, *Roman Republics*.

The vision of an unchanging Roman Republic, with its division of powers between the Consuls, the Senate, and the People, is most clearly expressed in Polybius's second century BCE account of Rome's "mixed constitution." Polybius describes the constitution of the Roman Republic to be equal parts monarchic (the consuls), aristocratic (the Senate), and democratic (the people), such that "it was impossible even for a native to pronounce with certainty whether the whole system was aristocratic, democratic, or monarchical."[44] Despite this, according to Polybius, fair distribution of power, while there were certainly limitations on the power of any one individual or group in the republican period, the system, from its earliest days, favoured the aristocracy, creating a system which was much closer to an oligarchy than democracy.[45] Indeed, although all male citizens were granted a vote, "the value of an individual citizen's vote depended on his social status, not only formally, but also in the actual practice of voting,"[46] due in large part to the structure of the voting system.[47] Roman politics was thus primarily a sphere of elite competition, and the changes

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[44] Polybius. *Hist*. 6.11. On the monolithic view of the Republic in modern scholarship, see Flower, *Roman Republics,* 2010, 9-10.

[45] Tim Cornell argues that the Roman kingship was abolished in the fifth century by the aristocrats who wanted to keep power distributed amongst the aristocracy, to guard against the rise of a popular figure. *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000 – 264 BCE)* (London, Routledge, 1995), 203. The intricacies of the republican system and its constituent parts are beyond the scope on this brief discussion. For an overview of the republican system, see Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999).

[46] Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, *Reconstructing the Roman Republic: An Ancient Political Culture and Modern Research* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010), 19.

[47] This is not to say that the people did not matter in Roman politics, but that the system which claimed to represent them was in actuality one which protected the interests of the aristocrats. Due to the organization of the voting assemblies (*comitia*), the wealthy held great influence, despite the fact that suffrage extended to all citizens. On voting assemblies, see Lily Ross Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies from the Hannibalic War to the Dictatorship of Caesar* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1966).

that occurred in politics were largely due to opposing ideas about what elite power should look like.[48]

With the conflicts, violence, and period of multiple reforms in the second-half of the second century BCE, the Republican system of a balance of power had begun to break down, paving the way for the Sullan reforms of the first century BCE, which dramatically limited the power of the people.[49] Sulla (Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix 138 – 78 BCE), in his role as dictator, attempted to impose a system based on the rule of law, rather than Senatorial debate and ancestral custom. While this new republican system lasted only a decade after its implementation, Sulla's usurpation of extraordinary powers through force set a precedent for the turbulent years which followed.[50] The decades from the 70s to the 50s saw a further breakdown of divisions of power, and the increase in the power of individual generals or small political cliques.[51] According to Flower, Republican politics had effectively stopped functioning around 60 BCE,[52] and the decade of the 50s should no longer be considered to be a republic,[53] as the balance of powers so admired by Polybius had almost completely disintegrated. The middle of the first century was characterised by the consuls enacting supreme power over the state, in matters of both internal and external

[48] During the early to mid-Republic, although elite competition was a fundamental part of Roman politics, external pressures led to the development of an aristocracy which was competitive, but also cohesive, Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Born to Be Wolves? Origins of Roman Imperialism," in *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco Roman History,* Robert W. Wallace and Edward Monroe Harris, eds., (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 291. The cohesion of the aristocracy began to break down in the second century BCE, and would continue to devolve until the end of the first century BCE.
[49] Flower, *Roman Republics*, 114-26.
[50] Flower, *Roman Republics*, 137.
[51] Pina Polo, *The Consul at Rome*, 248-290.
[52] Flower, *Roman Republics*, 32.
[53] Ibid., 149.

policy,[54] and throughout the 50s, there were many elections which failed to take place.[55] The last years of the decade would be marked by increasing violence, and conflicts between increasingly powerful magistrates.

The last century of the Roman Republic was characterised by the politicization of the office of consul and the dominance of a few key men, notably Sulla, Pompey (Gaius Pompeius Magnus, (106 – 48 BCE), and Julius Caesar. After the reforms of the Sullan era, it became common for the consul to remain in Rome for their year of office, and only to assume a campaign after their consulship.[56] The amount of legislation introduced by consuls in this era increased, along with consular "intervention in senatorial debates, their support for or opposition to certain legislative initiatives, [and] their active participation in courts."[57] The involvement of the consuls in the political life of the city increased in the last decades of the Republic, with the presence of the consuls in Rome during their year in office. As such, the consuls began to take power into their own hands, and we see an increase in consular speeches, edicts, and legislature in the late Republic.[58] This was exemplified in the concentration of power in men like Pompey and Caesar, who not only had much support within elite circles at Rome, they also had the support of large numbers of troops. The destabilisation and concentration of power continued, until the outbreak of civil war in 49 BCE, and the appointment of Caesar as dictator in 46.[59]

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[54] Pina Polo, *The Consul at Rome*, 317.
[55] Flower, *Roman Republics*, 151.
[56] There is debate as to whether or not this was a law enacted by Sulla. See Pina Polo, *The Consul at Rome,* 225-29.
[57] Ibid., 307.
[58] Ibid., 249.
[59] He was appointed dictator in 49 BCE, but held the position for only 11 days, while in 48 he was again appointed dictator for an undefined amount of time. In 46, he was given a ten-year term as dictator, and he would hold this position for the rest of his life.

While several men had been angling for position and had taken on extraordinary powers, it was only Caesar who indicated that he had no intention of giving up these powers. He was appointed dictator in 46 BCE for a ten year term, and given the title *dictator perpetuo* (dictator in perpetuity) in 44 BCE.[60] During this period, Caesar was given enormous honours and privileges, not all of which he accepted, including the naming of both a month and a tribe after him, public sacrifices on his birthday, and the post of censor for life.[61] The historian Dio Cassius suggests that some of these honours were bestowed upon him to make him look ridiculous, or that through these honours it was hoped that the people would come to hate him, and thus bring about his downfall, yet ultimately it was his attitude towards republican institutions that brought about the most hatred. Although he had taken on these supreme honours, what provoked the most ire amongst his opponents was his flagrant disregard for the election of magistrates (on several occasions he appointed them at his will, and several years in advance), and his disrespect towards the Senate, particularly when he failed to stand when they came to him with honorary decrees in front of the temple of Venus Genetrix.[62] Animosity towards the dictator reached a breaking point, and Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March, 44 BCE.[63]

The aftermath of the assassination resulted in yet another protracted struggle for power, with changing alliances, military campaigns, and assassinations, but ultimately, Augustus emerged victorious, and in January of 29 BCE, closed the gates to the temple of Janus,

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[60] Suet. *Iul*. 76; Dio 44.8.
[61] See Dio 44.4-6 for the complete list of honours offered to him.
[62] Suet. *Iul*. 76-9.
[63] For a broad overview of the assassination and its aftermath, the reader is directed to Richardson, 2012, 10-46.

signalling the end of the civil war.[64] In 29 BCE, the elite of Rome had been engaged in factional struggles for decades, and these long periods of disturbance had taken their toll on the people of Rome. After Caesar's assassination, and the wars which followed, a functioning Republic was nothing more than a memory, albeit a very powerful one, and the Roman political system was in disarray. What Augustus thus had to achieve, was a way to make his sole rule palatable to those who were still opposed to one-man rule, which, as we will see, was in many respects the opposite problem from his Han counterpart.[65]

2.2.2 All Under Heaven in Early China

The trajectory to empire in early China was significantly different from that of Rome. While the Roman state could be understood as those areas which were conquered by (or submitted to) and were administered by Rome, the Chinese case was far more complicated. In early China there was not the same idea of the need for "municipal self-government on the basis of civic freedom"[66] that linked together the diverse parts of the Roman empire.

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[64] Aug. *Res Gest.* 13. On the struggle for power and wars, see Dio, 47-51. See also John S. Richardson, *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14: The Restoration of the Republic and the Establishment of the Empire* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 47-79; Andrew Lintott, *The Romans in the Age of Augustus* (Malden, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 67-76.

[65] There was no single way in which Augustus was able to legitimize his rule, and throughout his reign, he was continuously trying to balance his position as effective monarch with the appearance of popular rule. This dissertation is concerned only with the actions he took in the field of imperial cult and religious ideology. Numerous excellent studies have discussed the formation of the Principate, and the reader is referred to Richardson, *Augustan Rome*, Karl Galinsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), Werner Eck, *The Age of Augustus* (Malden, Wilely-Blackwell, 2007), Lintott, *The Romans in the Age of Augustus*. On the cultural transformations, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution.*

[66] Michael Nylan, "The Rhetoric of 'Empire' in the Classical Era in China," in *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared*, Fritz-Heiner Mutschler and Achim Mittag, eds. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 47-8.

Rather, understandings of a unified China in this period are usually expressed in cultural, rather than political, terms. The Chinese cultural sphere is usually conceived based on a group's participation in the Zhou cultural sphere. The Zhou, having conquered the Shang Dynasty in 1045 BCE, established nominal control over the central plains, and created a system whereby areas were ruled autonomously by rulers related to the royal household, but who paid ritual respect to the Zhou king. In the early years of the Western Zhou, this *fengjian* 封建 system, which granted territories to relatives of the royal family, and others, worked quite effectively in the Zhou heartland, regulated as it was through an elaborate bureaucratic system.[67] By the mid-Western Zhou, as the court of the king began to lose control over the regional lords, other solutions were needed. This resulted in what Lothar von Falkenhausen has termed the "Late Western Zhou Ritual Reform" of ca. 850 BCE.[68] The ritual reform is primarily seen through the standardization of sets of bronze ritual vessels, which corresponded to one's rank, and signified the owner's relationship with the Zhou court.[69] Significantly in this reform, ownership of these vessels was not defined according to one's relationship with the ruling family, but according to one's position within the administrative system. As such, so-called "barbarians" – people from outside of the traditional culture sphere, could use Zhou vessels, provided they adopted the system wholesale.[70] The concept of what constituted the *Hua* 華 and what constituted All under

[67] On the Western Zhou bureaucracy, see Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[68] Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000 – 250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2006), 2. See also Jessica Rawson, "Western Zhou Archaeology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 433-40.
[69] Ibid., 49-50.
[70] Ibid., 251.

Heaven (*tian xia* 天下) was thus predicated on participation in a shared cultural system, rather than than allegiance to a particular state or system of government, as in Rome. Early Chinese writings on "barbarians" reinforce this vision of cultural unity, and it was the ideal of cultural unity which endured throughout the period of division.[71]

While the Western Zhou was often seen as a "golden age," it was one which did not last. The Western Zhou fell to the "barbarians" in 771 BCE, and fled east, to the capital at Luoyang 洛陽. This ushered in the Spring and Autumn (*chunqiu* 春秋 771 – 475 BCE) and Warring States (*zhanguo* 戰國 475 – 221 BCE) periods: periods of internecine warfare which lasted until the Qin unification in 221 BCE. During these five hundred fifty-years, rulers governed their states, and the Zhou kings, while still residing at Luoyang, had little to no authority over their former fiefs. While the rulers of regional states were autonomous in their own regions, they ruled through powers that had been invested in them by the Zhou king, and it was understood that the king could remove the ruler from power, if he failed to provide military support or keep his state in order. The Zhou king could (and sometimes did) interfere in succession in these states.[72] However, with the collapse of the Zhou, what authority the king did have over the regional states quickly disappeared, and, while the Zhou king maintained the exclusive use of that title until 344 BCE, the regional states were now completely independent. Over the course of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, these regional states were ruled as autonomous units, fighting amongst each

[71] On the cultural construction of "Chinese" identity in opposition to "barbarians," see Yuri Pines, "Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of the Sino-Barbarian Dichotomy," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, eds., (Leiden, Brill, 2004).
[72] Li Feng, 238; 246-49.

other, creating alliances, and securing their own territory and political systems.[73] These two periods are notable for a number of major transformations in the early Chinese political system. Over this long period, power shifted from being divided by the ruler and his family, who were often employed as his advisors, to being consolidated in the hands of a single ruler, who employed ministers to aid in governing.[74] The Warring States period saw the development of states ruled by kings and their officials, which employed mass peasant armies, and had elaborate bureaucratic institutions. This was a time of intense literary production, and increased social mobility, as men of talent sought to secure employment at a court.[75] These seven states each developed their own systems of governance, and competed amongst each other to recruit the best talent to help them rule.[76]

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[73] During the Spring and Autumn period, there were numerous small states, but over time, fifteen became dominant. This number was reduced to seven in the Warring States period. On the politics of the Spring and Autumn period, see Cho-yun Hsu, "The Spring and Autumn Period," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1000); Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period 722-453 B.C.E.* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002). On the blood covenants sworn between states and between rulers and subjects, see Susan R. Weld, "The Covenant Texts from Houma and Wenxian," in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts*. Edward L. Shaughnessy, ed. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997).

[74] At the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period, ministers were often appointed for life, but over time, appointments began to be made frequently. According to Hsu, this indicates the "growing power of rulers and the decreasing authority of chancellors." Hsu, 1965, 51.

[75] On social mobility, see Cho-yun Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722 – 222 B.C.* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1965); Yuri Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 115-84.

[76] Advisors could fairly easily leave a ruler with whom they disagreed and seek employment at another court. Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire*, 172. Barry Blakeley has written extensively on court politics and competition in the state of Chu, see, for example "King, Clan, and Courtier in Ancient Ch'u," *Asia Major* Third Series, 5.2 (1992).

While there had been constant internecine warfare throughout the period, it was only in the mid-third century that the state of Qin, located in the far west, began a systematic program of conquest, that would ultimately defeat and unite the other states in 221 BCE. The Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods are often referred to as "periods of division" with the implication that this division was somehow anomalous, and that the natural tendency of the states in the Central Plains was towards unity.[77] Regardless of philosophical conceptions of the benefits of imperial unity, the reality facing the First Emperor of Qin, and later Han Gaozu and Emperor Wu, was that these states had long been divided, and accustomed to independent governance.

The Qin state, given its secure position in the west, had several geographical advantages over the other states. With the conquest of Shu 蜀 and Ba 巴 in 316 BCE, the Qin had access to the fertile Sichuan basin, which greatly facilitated Qin's ability to conduct long campaigns against the other states.[78] The Qin had made important reforms in legal and administrative areas which gave them a stronger centralized administration.[79] The Qin conquered the six states in rapid succession (between 230 and 221 BCE), and quickly implemented an administrative system to govern the newly-conquered territories. Replicas of the palaces of the rulers of the former states were built along the Wei River 渭

[77] See Pines, 2009, and, more recently *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012), which argues for a continuity in the idea of imperial ideology for the *longue durée* of Chinese history.
[78] Steven F. Sage, *Ancient Sichuan and the Unification of China* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1992), 145.
[79] On the various reasons for Qin's success, see Derk Bodde, "The State and Empire of Ch'in," in in *The Cambridge History of China: The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 BC – AD 220,* Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 46-50.

河, perhaps, as Mark Edward Lewis has argued, to create a microcosm of the empire at his capital.[80] The rulers of the former states were also moved to the capital at Xianyang 咸陽, to prevent future rebellion by removing them from their areas of influence.[81] However, despite these achievements, and the First Emperor's proclamation that he had built an empire to last ten thousand years,[82] the Qin Empire fell almost as quickly as it had been established, and the states of the central plain once again descended into civil war.

The reasons for the fall of Qin are numerous. Following Han historical accounts, many have attributed their fall to overly harsh laws, punishments, and taxation, as well as the repudiation of tradition.[83] Especially during the reign of the Second Emperor, Er Shi 二世 (229 – 207 BCE; r. 210 – 207), pressure on the peasants was huge, and there was no regulation of court spending. The Qin had overextended themselves in attempting to rapidly assimilate these politically independent states that had developed their own administrative and cultural traditions. In the rebellions that followed the death of the First Emperor, many of the rebels had close ties to the former ruling families of the Warring States. While the First Emperor made some attempts to culturally integrate the states, discussed in more detail in the following chapters, the task of cultural and territorial integration would fall eventually to Emperor Wu.[84]

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[80] *Shiji* 6.239. Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2006), 170-73.
[81] *Shiji* 6.239.
[82] *Shiji* 6.236.
[83] Bodde, 85-87.
[84] Steven Sage argues that the Qin conquest of Sichuan had been effective precisely because care was taken to integrate the new land and adopt their policies of conquest to suit the area. Had the First Emperor taken more time to try to unite the states, and followed a more flexible model, he argues, the unification of the Warring States may have created a much longer-lasting empire. Sage, 139-155.

After emerging victorious in the civil war following the end of the Qin, the Han founder, Han Gaozu needed to create a system that would both unite the broken empire and reward his supporters. The Han system was thus a combination of the Qin and Zhou models – a centralized imperial bureaucracy, inherited from the Qin, with a supreme ruler at the centre, but a territory divided into semi-autonomous kingdoms, to be ruled by Liu Bang's family and allies, and commanderies, which were under the administration of the capital.[85] Throughout the years of the early Han, there were conflicts between the kingdoms and capital, and the kingdoms resisted attempts to limit their power and incorporate them into the central administration. The most notable of these, the Rebellion of the Seven Kingdoms in 154 BCE, during the reign of Emperor Jing 景帝 (r. 157 – 141), was a direct response to attempts made by the emperor to reduce the size of the kingdoms.[86] The Han successfully defeated the rebellion, and the failure of this rebellion limited the power of the regional kings.[87] This process of limiting the power of the kings begun under Emperor Jing would be continued by Emperor Wu, under whose reign "the last significant opposition to the

[85] There were ten kingdoms recognized by Liu Bang at the beginning of the Han, most of which were in the east. By 196 BCE, all but one of the kings were replaced by relatives of the Liu family, in the hopes that this would strengthen the kingdoms' connection to the court. The kingdoms were expected to govern themselves, modelled on the central government, and to remit taxes to the centre. On the Han dynasty kingdoms and the consolidation of state power, see Tang Xiejun 唐燮軍 and Weng Gongyu 翁公羽, *Cong fenzhi dao jiquan: xi Han de wangguo wenti jiqi jiejue*. 從分治到集權：西漢的王國問題及其解決 (Hangzhou, Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2012).

[86] Emperor Jing's imperial counsellor, Chao Cuo, had advised the emperor to take steps to reduce the power of the regional lords, however, his political rivals at court convinced the emperor to have him executed to stave off rebellion. While Chao Cuo was executed, it did not prevent rebellion, and the rebellion was only supressed by military engagement.

[87] Telly H. Koo, "The Constitutional Development of the Western Han Dynasty," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 40 (1920): 185. See also Michael Loewe, 1986. "The Former Han Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 1: the Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220*, 103-222. Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

centralized power was quashed."[88] The empire inherited by Emperor Wu was one teetering between centralization and fragmentation. While the elite of the Han were not opposed to monarchism, as were the *nobiles* of Rome, there was periodic, but fierce resistance to the spread of centralized administration throughout the lands formally part of the Han Empire. While military force was often required to wipe out resistance and enforce policy, these were not the only factors contributing to Emperor Wu's successes in centralizing the Han.

2.2.3 Empire, Convergence, and Divergence

After this discussion of the different trajectories of the Han and Roman Empires, and of the different goals of their rulers, it becomes necessary to distinguish what we mean by "empire" for these ancient cases. While the term is commonly employed for the Qin, Han, and Rome, "empire" is also used to describe a variety of historical states, as well as contemporary "empires" that transcend the boundary of the state – economic, corporate, or media empires. As the term has been used to describe so many diverse entities, it has come to encapsulate a number of different characteristics, making definition difficult. It is tempting to classify these different "empires" under what Kathleen Morrison has described as the "pornography definition": "I can't say what they are, but I know one when I see one,"[89] yet for the empires of the ancient world, some common ground can be found on which to base a comparative analysis. The early empires of Rome and China provided

[88] Nylan, "The Rhetoric of 'Empire,'" 49.
[89] Kathleen D. Morrison, "Sources, Approaches, Definitions," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, Susan E. Alcock, et. al., eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

"long-lasting reference points for later empire-builders,"[90] and while their governing institutions differ greatly, they share a number of characteristics with each other, and with later empires in world history. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper have argued that, while empires are not all alike, there are several properties that are common to all. First, empires incorporate "diverse peoples into the polity while sustaining or making distinctions among them."[91] The lack of homogeneity amongst the population is one of the defining characteristics of an empire,[92] and sets it in contrast to nation-states, which define themselves according to the self-rule of a, mostly homogenous, group of people.[93] Empires are also expansionist, or, at least, have a "memory of power extended over space"[94] and they develop through interactions with others – either with newly incorporated peoples with different cultural norms, or with other empires at their borders: the "intersection of empires provoked competition, imitation, and innovation."[95] Empires also create, adopt, and transmit "various repertoires of rule"[96] – the different strategies employed by the rulers as they incorporate these disparate groups of people, and seek to create their own imperial identity.

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[90] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010), 4.
[91] Ibid., 2.
[92] Greg Woolf emphasizes this lack of homogeneity and the tolerance of regional diversity as one of the characteristics of the early Roman empire, and, perhaps, one of the keys to its longevity. Greg Woolf, "Inventing Empire in Ancient Rome," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, Susan E. Alcock, et. al., eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 311.
[93] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 10. The authors note that this idea of a nation state is, of course, itself a product of a particular type of history, "of a state that through institutional and cultural initiatives convinced its members to think of themselves as a single people."
[94] Ibid., 8.
[95] Ibid., 15.
[96] Ibid., 3.

In the case of the early empires of Qin, Han, and Rome, these empires were unlike what had come before. This is made explicit in the Chinese case, while in Rome, the transition to empire was completed under the pretext of a revival of tradition. This is most visible in the adoption of new titles by the early ruler: the First Emperor's adoption of the title *huangdi* 皇帝 "August Celestial Deity" ranked him above his former title of "King" *wang* 王, and marked his reign, and his accomplishments, as something new and glorious. Augustus, in adding the title *imperator* to his name, demonstrated his authority to command, both outside and in the city of Rome. According to Robin Yates, the imperial design of the Qin placed the emperor at the centre of a cosmographic and cosmologic system, which helped to develop the association of empire in China "with the person of the emperor, his activities, and his patrilineal ancestral line."[97] While the Chinese had a long history of inherited power, the creation of a lineage of Caesars was a new development in Rome, beginning with Caesar's adoption of Octavian (the future Augustus), and further solidified by the use of "Caesar" as a surname, and ultimately a fundamental part of the imperial title.[98]

In both of these cases, while the empire is ruled by an emperor (though the title "emperor" is not in use in Rome in the period under discussion), he is supported by, and often in conflict with, elites at his court, and in addition to attempts made to consolidate

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[97] Robin D.S. Yates, "Cosmos, Central Authority, and Communities in the Early Chinese Empire," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, Susan E. Alcock, et. al., eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 353 and 368.

[98] The use of Caesar as a surname took place during the middle of Augustus' reign, Werner Eck, *The Age of Augustus* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 57. See below, Chapter Five, on the relationship of the surname with calendrical reforms. Woolf notes that subsequent emperors adopted the name, "Inventing Empire in Ancient Rome," 313, and the title was subsequently adopted and modified by many European rulers.

authority over newly-incorporated territories, the emperor often also struggles to consolidate his authority at court. Whether or not overt attempts towards cultural homogeneity are made, in these early empires, there is a general tendency towards the adoption of an imperial culture throughout the empire.[99] In Rome, this imperial culture was defined according to the *populus Romanus*, the citizens of Rome, in contrast to the non-citizen subjects.[100] Imperial culture spread through the bestowal of citizenship on groups within the empire, but also through the emulation of the imperial elites by the provincial elites.[101] In the Qin and Han empires, imperial culture was created, in part, by the patterning of the empire on the cosmos, in accordance with the cycle of five phases, and this imperial culture was written onto the laws, lands, and bodies of the people.[102] However, imperial culture was not unchanging, and in the process of creating an imperial ideology, these empires adopted much from outside of the rulers' own cultural backgrounds, and incorporated ideas and beliefs from the disparate populations under their control.

While both the Han and Rome share these features of empire, they also diverge in a number of fundamental ways. It is by no means my contention that these societies or their systems of governance were identical, simply that there are sufficient grounds, in terms of their basic identities as empires, to warrant comparison. In terms of their political and

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[99] Numerous studies on Romanisation and Hellenization discuss the spread of cultures in the ancient Mediterranean. See for example, Brunt, "The Romanization of the Local Ruling Classes in the Roman Empire," D.M. Pippidi, *Assimilation et résistance à la culture gréco-romaine dans le monde ancient* (Bucuresti; Paris: Editura Academiei; Les Belles lettres, 1976), Macmullen, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus*, and Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, who explores the ways in which Greek and Roman culture shaped each other in the late Republic and early Empire.

[100] Woolf, "Inventing Empire in Ancient Rome," 314-15.

[101] See Chapter Five on the spread of the calendar in the form of marble *fasti*, and Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West*, on the spread of imperial iconography on coins.

[102] Yates, "Cosmos, Central Authority, and Communities."

administrative structures, not to mention their cultural systems, the two polities are substantially different. As we have seen above, they differ in their basic political constitutions: the early Chinese had a long history of hereditary monarchy, and while elaborate administrative systems grew with the expansion of states in the periods prior to the formation of the first empire, there was no real question of who had ultimate authority, nor was there direct participation by the people in the decisions of government.[103] In Rome, the people, or at least the idea of popular participation, was fundamental to the legitimacy of the government, as was the principle that power should not be held by any one man for a lengthy period of time. The role of the people, and of the ruler's relationship to the people, stands as one of the main differences between the two societies: in Rome, political and religious action was always public, and it was necessary for the elite to present themselves to the people; in the Qin and Han, however, the emperor did not have a public role in front of the masses, and, unlike his Roman counterpart, his performance of the most important

[103] There was, of course, much debate on how a ruler should rule, and many emperors who chose to leave the affairs of state to their ministers, or who were too young to rule themselves. While for the most part the people of early China did not participate in political decisions through popular votes, the importance of the people cannot be entirely ruled out. The one exception to this is the occasional ad-hoc voting assemblies during the Spring and Autumn period, open to the *guoren* 國人, the "Capital Dwellers." These were not open and democratic votes, in the Greek sense, and while the *Zuo zhuan* contains numerous examples of the people expressing their will, on many of these occasions popular expression is ignored by the ruler, or popular will was manipulated to further an elite individual's personal cause. Ultimately, final decision making was considered to be the responsibility of the ruler. See Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire*, 192-97 on the *guoren*, and ibid., 187-218 on the relationship between the ruler and the people in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. On the *guoren*, see also Cai Feng 蔡鋒, "Guoren de shuxing ji qi huodong dui Chunqiu shiqi guizu zhengzhi de yingxiang" 國人屬性及其活動對春秋時期貴族政治的影響, *Beijing daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 北京大學學報 （哲學社會科學版）3 (1997); Chao Fulin 晁福林, "Lun Zhou dai guoren yu shumin shehui shenfen de bianhua," 論周代國人與庶民社會身分的變化, *Renwen zazhi* 人文雜誌 3 (2000); and Lewis, *Construction of Space*, 136-50.

religious ceremonies was in front of a very limited audience. In the discussions that follow of the role of the emperor in religious ceremonies and institutions, this difference will be of fundamental importance.

Despite these two very different histories, as part of their creation of imperial ideology, in both empires, the rulers and historians invoked a "golden age" of the past – for Augustus, this was the heyday of the Roman Republic, while under Emperor Wu, a connection was made with the legendary sage-kings of antiquity, particularly the time of the Yellow Emperor. The insistence that the new imperial order was based on a glorious historical precedent influenced the ways in which the rulers spoke about their regimes, and their practices: for Augustus, this meant a "return" to traditional Roman *mores* and the "revival" of ancient religious festivals, and for Emperor Wu, a wholesale expansion of imperial cult that spanned the empire. In both cases, as we will see, elements of these "golden-age" narratives were created during the early empires, in order to lend support to contemporary practices. In both societies, literary culture and written records played a large role in how these "golden ages" were remembered, and the writers of the period contributed to the shaping of each ruler's reforms to religious institutions.

2.3 Sources

Both cultures had a rich literary tradition, and writings about the state flourished in both empires. These sources were, largely, written by elites, often members of court society or the administration. As such, the literary record is closely linked to the socio-political changes of the time, and in some cases, contributed to narratives of legitimacy.

While there had been a long tradition of historical writing in early China, the genre took a particular form during the reign of Emperor Wu; a form which it would largely retain throughout imperial Chinese history. Started by the Director of Astrology Sima Tan and completed by his son, Sima Qian, who also succeeded him as Director of Astrology, the *Shiji* was intended to be a history of the entire world, from earliest times to the reign of Emperor Wu, under which it was written. This history divided into imperial annals (*ji* 紀), tables (*biao* 表), treatises (*shu* 書), hereditary houses (*shi jia* 世家), and biographies (*lie zhuan* 列傳), set the precedent for subsequent history writing in China.[104] Rather than being simply a narrative history, the *Shiji* encompasses a vast amount of information about various subjects. The imperial annals provide a year-by-year overview of events relating to the reigning emperor, including omens and natural disasters, amnesties, imperial decrees, imperial travels, and military campaigns. The tables section includes chronological tables of important events and lineages, in order to clarify the different genealogical lines which existed simultaneously.[105] The treatise section contains chapters on diverse topics related to the empire; pertinent to this dissertation are the chapters on the calendar, ritual, and sacrifice. The Hereditary Houses section provides information on the Zhou states, and

[104] Sima Qian was deeply influenced by the tradition of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, attributed to Confucius. On the structure of the *Shiji* see Grant Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo: Sima Qian's Conquest of History* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1999), particularly Chapter Five on the Confucian influence. See also Griet Vankeerberghen, "Texts and Authors in the *Shiji*," in *China's Early Empires: A Re-appraisal*, Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[105] *Shiji* 130.3319. Endymion Wilkinson notes that many of the dates in the *Shiji* have been challenged by historians from the Han period onwards, and most of the dates which are challenged are in this "tables" section. *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2013), 706.

contain a mixture of chronological and biographical information. Finally, the biographies section, the longest part of the text, is a collection of biographies of notable individuals; some notable for their connection to the imperial house, some famous statesmen or thinkers, and others, infamous for their crimes. The work is remembered as Sima Qian's greatest achievement, and his title *Taishi ling* is often translated, incorrectly, as the "grand historian" as a result of his work.[106] However, he was not employed by the court to write history, and this project was not directly related to his duties as Director of Astrology.[107] His position gave him access to imperial archives, and he also travelled to historical sites to gather materials and interview local officials, in order to present as comprehensive history as possible.[108] For the imperial records of the Western Han, it is reasonable to expect that his writing was based on materials from the imperial archive.

The work was not, however, an attempt at purely objective history writing: in many cases it is a critique of the reign of Emperor Wu, out of whose favour Sima Qian had fallen.[109] The work was also a very personal project, as Sima Qian was perhaps attempting

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[106] This is the common translation of the title which is used for translations of the *Shiji*, and while it does reflect Sima Qian's role as archivist and historian, belies the fact that his official role was primarily concerned with observing and recording astronomical phenomena.

[107] See particularly Bo Shuren 薄樹人 "Taolun Sima Qian de tianwenxue sixiang" 討論司馬遷的天文學思想, *Beijing shifan daxue shixue yanjiu suo ziliao shi* (1982): 1-15, on Sima Qian's role on astronomy.

[108] See Jin Dejian 金德建, *Sima Qian suojian shukao* 司馬遷所見書考 (Shanghai, Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1963), on the types of works he may have been able to consult. The question of Sima Qian's motivations has been long debated, with some arguing that his work is an "accurate history," while others see the text as a means of promoting his own name. See Stephen W. Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1995). Michael Nylan provides a religious explanation for his writing of the text, arguing that this was the epitome of filial piety. Nylan, "Sima Qian: A True Historian?" *Early China* 23-24 (1998-99): 203-46.

[109] Due to the Li Ling affair, recounted in "Sima Qian's letter to Ren An," included in the *Hanshu* biography of Sima Qian, *Hanshu* 62.2725-36.

to position himself as a "second Confucius;" an assertion which in itself was an implicit critique on the legitimacy of the reigning emperor.[110] As we will see, Sima Qian's position as Director of Astrology directly affected his writing of the calendrical reforms under Emperor Wu, and his account of the process is not as comprehensive as that of the next great historian of early China, Ban Gu.

The *Hanshu* was written primarily Ban Gu, with contributions by his sister Ban Zhao 班昭 (45 – ca. 116 CE), was also a project inherited from their father, Ban Biao 班彪 (3 – 54 CE), and completed in 111 CE. The *Hanshu* largely follows the model of the *Shiji*, comprised of imperial annals, chronological tables, treatises (*zhi* 志), and biographies (*zhuan* 傳). The Hereditary Houses section was not included, as it was not pertinent to the Western Han. Unlike the *Shiji*, the *Hanshu* was a history of a single dynasty – the Western Han. Written during the early Eastern Han, the *Hanshu* records the period from the founding of the Han dynasty to the end of the reign of Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BCE – 23 CE), and his Xin Dynasty 新, in 23 CE. Much of the *Hanshu* repeats verbatim the text of the *Shiji*, yet it also builds upon the work of Sima Qian, not only extending the history to the end of the Wang Mang period, but supplementing many of the details from the reign of Emperor Wu.[111] Writing from a later period, the *Hanshu* provides a very different

[110] See particularly Durrant, 29-60.

[111] On the textual overlap and differences between the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, Pak Chae-u, "Shiji" "Hanshu" *bijiao yanjiu* "史記" "漢書" 比較研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenxue chubanshe, 1994). A.F.P. Hulsewé has argued that we need to be "circumspect when dealing with textual contradictions or irregularities," as both text have their own independent traditions, and thus irregularities must be compared between the two histories. These irregularities may sometimes result from a copyist's error, rather than intentional manipulation by an author or editor. A.F.P. Hulsewé, "A Striking Discrepancy between the Shih chi and the Han shu," *T'oung Pao* 76.4-5 (1990): 323.

perspective of the events of Emperor Wu's reign, and is less interested in critique. This is not to suggest that it is free from its own bias, but that it has the benefit of historical perspective for this period. As the *Hanshu* account is more comprehensive for the reign of Emperor Wu, and as the Ban family had knowledge of the events up until the end of the Western Han, I will rely primarily on the *Hanshu*, using the *Shiji* to supplement it, when necessary.

In addition to these two histories, written during the Han, I make use of other texts from the pre- and early-imperial period, which provide more detailed explanations of ritual practices, or were intended as practical guides, such as the *Liji* (*Rites Records* 禮記),[112] *Lüshi Chunqiu* (*The Spring and Autumn Annals of Lü Buwei* 呂氏春秋) , and *Huainanzi* (淮南子). These texts, particularly the ritual texts, can be tricky to employ in the study of Han institutions, for they were likely considered to be prescriptive texts, rather than representative of actual practice, and there is no indication as to what extent they were

[112] The *Liji* is a text made up of forty-nine chapters that discuss various aspects of ritual theory and performance. Kenneth Brashier has described the text as a loose-leaf binder, a text "into which chapters and their commentarial notes were inserted, shuffled, and removed," over time, including chapters from texts from written from the Late Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (Brashier, 48-49). The various chapters of the text were extant during the Han period, though it is possible that they were not combined into one text named the *Liji* before 102 CE. Within the text, it is nearly impossible to determine the origins of individual chapters. Jeffrey K. Riegel, "*Li Chi* 禮記" in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, Michael Loewe, ed., (Berkeley, Society for the Study of Early China and Institute of East Asian Studies, 1993), 294-5. See also Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001), 187-88, and Michael Puett, "Combining the Ghosts and Spirits, Centering the Realm: Mortuary Ritual and Political Organization in the Ritual Compendia of Early China," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC – 220 AD)*, John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, eds., vol. 2. (Leiden, Brill, 2009), 696. On the textual transmission of the "Zi Yi" 緇衣 chapter of the *Liji*, see Edward Shaughnessy, "Rewriting the *Zi Yi*: How One Chinese Classic Came to Read as It Does," in *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2006).

employed by scholars at court, though we know that they were in circulation in some form. These texts represent various types of knowledge available to the advisors to the emperor: at times they represent a consensus, at times plurality of opinions on how ritual action should be undertaken. The texts whose authorship we can trace for this period were all produced by elite writers, many of them either directly employed by or closely affiliated with a court.[113] While this is advantageous in that the historians, in particular, were able to include transcripts of imperial edicts, and had access to a wide variety of source materials, it does also mean that the histories are concerned almost exclusively with elite affairs, and pay scant attention to the common people. A similar situation is evidenced in Rome.

One of the earliest historians of Rome, the Greek Polybius Πολύβιος, argued that the most important type of history was what he termed "pragmatic history:" history focused on the "deeds of people, cities, and rulers."[114] This type of history should be written to educate his readers, and it is likely that his intended audience was aspiring politicians.[115] Furthermore, he stated that in order to write this type history, one should be equipped with the necessary skills. Particularly, he suggested that hands-on political experience was necessary for the historian to understand politics, and how to evaluate sources.[116] While not all of the historians, biographers, or other writers from Rome were themselves politicians, they were all connected to the ruling elite, and thus had not only close connections to the leading political figures of their time, but also the necessary education

[113] On the authorship and composition of early texts: Michael Loewe, ed. *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993).
[114] John Thornton, "Pragmatic History," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History,* Roger S. Bagnall, et. al., eds. (Malden, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). 5499.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ronald Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (London, Routledge, 1999), 9.

and access to sources to be able to write. In this section, it is not my intention to provide a comprehensive overview of the various literary and historiographical traditions at Rome, topics for which there are lengthy studies and bibliographies.[117] In what follows, I will provide a brief overview of the major literary sources used in the dissertation, with an eye to comparison with those from early China.

The literary sources used in this dissertation include histories, biographies, autobiographies, and other genres written during, or shortly after, the transition from Republic to Empire. Livy (Titus Livius, 64 or 59 BCE − 17 CE), like Sima Qian, wrote a history of the city of Rome from its earliest days, beginning with the founding of the city, up until his own time. Like the Han historians, he was confronted with challenges with regards to his sources – in many cases, for the earliest histories, he relied on the principle of verisimilitude – that which is most believable – in order to avoid including fictitious or legendary stories from Rome's earliest history.[118] As his massive work approached his own time, Livy sought out earlier writings on the past – the so-called annalistic tradition – evaluated their sources, and consulted other sources as available, in order to determine which principal source was the most believable. He then worked this material into his own prose, avoiding adding embellishments that would detract from the narrative.[119] His history is conscious of making links between the past and the present, as well as including

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[117] On Roman historiography, see the overviews by Mellor, Andreas Mehl, *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to Its Basic Aspects and Development* (Malden, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), Andrew Feldherr, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), John Marincola, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Malden, Blackwell, 2007). The scholarship on individual authors and texts is too vast to cite here; pertinent studies will be referred to throughout the dissertation.

[118] Mellor, 64. This, of course, was subject to his own criteria for believability.

[119] Mellor, 67.

his own views on morality, and his history can thus be read, in part, as social commentary.[120] Livy was also closely connected with the imperial family; along with other notable literary figures, such as Vergil (Publius Vergilius Maro, 70 – 19 BCE) and Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 65 – 8 BCE), he was often a guest in Augustus' house, and even encouraged the future emperor Claudius, in his pursuit of history.[121] Despite their close relationship, Livy was certainly not a "court historian."[122] Although Livy's moral views often agree with those of the imperial family, historians believe that Livy "deeply believed in much of the 'Augustan program' on his own account,"[123] and that he was not influenced by Augustus to portray events in a particular fashion.

Livy's *Ab urbe condita* is usually read as a historical source, rather than a history, but the text contains some errors, chronological and geographical. Livy is often criticised by modern historians for relying too heavily on one particular source, rather than seeking out multiple documents on which to base his work. However, these errors are often minor, in relation to the entirety of the work, and as Livy attempted to be as objective as possible, his history remains one of the most important sources for the Late Republic.[124]

As Livy's history ends in the early Principate, and many of the books have been lost to us, much of our understanding of the transition from Republic to Principate is the third century CE *Roman History* Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία of Cassius Dio (153 – 235 CE). The *Roman History* begins in legendary times, with the arrival of Aeneas in Italy (ca. 1200 BCE), and continues up to 229 CE. Of the original eighty books, only the books covering the events

[120] Mellor, 69; Mehl, 109-9.
[121] Mellor, 70; Mehl, 100.
[122] Mellor, 71.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 70-75.

from 68 BCE to 47 CE (Books 36-60) are extant, making it an invaluable source for the late Republic and early empire.[125] Dio, like Livy, wanted to present a factual history of events in Rome, but his account is embellished with his own dramatization, particularly in his composition of speeches for long-dead politicians, in which he inserts his own voice and opinions into the narrative.[126]

Aside from the historians, other literary sources abound for the late Republic and early empire, in a variety of forms. Most important to this dissertation are the biographies, autobiographies, poems, and writings of statesmen which treat the topics of religion, politics, and the flow of time. For the rulers, the most valuable literary sources for the historian are their writings about themselves, as well as the biographies, written in the second century CE by Suetonius (69 – after 122 CE). These biographies, written in a thematic rather than chronological fashion, draw from a vast range of sources, unlike the histories, which tend to privilege only one or two. Ronald Mellor has described Suetonius as an "ancestor of the modern scholar" for his meticulous research, wide source base, and his tendency to include direct quotations, in both Greek and Latin, rather than to re-write them in his own style.[127] The rulers and eminent men also left behind writings about their lives and deeds. Augustus' *Res gestae divi Augusti*, engraved on bronze pillars after his death, provides not only a detailed list of the *princeps'* achievements, but also reveals to the reader what he himself considered to be a great deed, and what he hoped to be

[125] Mehl, 152.
[126] Ibid. The most conspicuous case is the discussion between Agrippa and Maecenas over the Roman constitution.
[127] Mellor, 149-51.

remembered for.[128] This point is important to emphasize, as it is clear that the "great men" of ancient Rome were conscious of their role, and that their lives would be written about. Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106 – 43 BCE) makes this point in reference to Caesar, stating that in writing his commentaries, Caesar's aim was "to furnish others with material for writing history," and influencing how he would be remembered.[129] Cicero himself likely wrote with a similar idea in mind. As a prolific writer, the statesman and orator surely wrote with a sense of the possibility that his works would be not only discussed during his own time, but influential in posterity.

In line with the Republic's focus on individual achievement through military success, advancement to high office via the *cursus honorum*, and the ability of a man to create a legacy worth remembering, it is perhaps unsurprising that the literary sources, whether history, biography, or poetry, reflect similar themes. Topics of religion and the cosmos are influenced by this zeitgeist: religion is discussed primarily with regard to the way it is used politically (see Chapter Four), while the Julian reform to the calendar is primarily framed in terms of a political and economic struggle for authority over intercalation, within the context of Caesar's dictatorship. The Han sources, on the other hand, pay far more attention to the cosmological and technical concerns of these religious institutions, and it is only following Emperor Wu's reign that these topics are discussed in terms of their political implications. The different orientation in the historical and literary traditions are representative of the respective intellectual traditions of each society, and while the Qin,

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[128] Peter Brunt and J. M. Moore, ed. and trans., Res gestae divi Augusti: *The Achievements of the Divine Augustus* (London, Oxford University Press, 1967).
[129] Cic. *Brut*. 262. *Sed dum voluit alios habere parata, unde sumerent qui vellent scribere historiam.*

Han, and Rome can be compared on the basis of their similarities as imperial states, the literary traditions demonstrate the variations in imperial ideology, and remind us that these imperial ideologies are always deeply rooted in their respective cultural traditions. The comparison of the sources and their biases, alongside the comparison of the reforms to imperial religious institutions, is one of the underlying threads of the dissertation. The great cultural differences between the societies, while precluding any direct comparison of institutions, in fact makes the comparison between the processes of reform more viable, for it allows us to challenge these familiar sources and reforms with different perspectives.

Chapter Three: Imperial Cult in the Qin and Han

3.1: Introduction

One of the difficulties in discussing reforms to imperial cult in the period before the Eastern Han (東漢 25 CE – 220 CE) is that it is hard to define what exactly was meant by "imperial cult." While there were certainly a number of sacrifices that were made without fail by all of the early emperors, there were also numerous sacrifices performed by some emperors (or on their behalf) which were not performed by others, and so it is challenging, if not impossible, to identify a unified practice of state cult. Sarah Queen and John Major have recently described imperially sponsored religion in the early Western Han as "confused and somewhat chaotic,"[130] as there was no real structure to religion in this time. The term "imperial" (or official) cult refers in this dissertation not only to the worship of deities who were literally "out of this world," as many of the spirits to whom the Qin and Han emperors paid tribute were (sometimes living) immortals who were believed to inhabit the same terrestrial plane. "Imperial cult" is defined as any cult patronized by the emperor, or worshipped on his instruction.[131] These cults changed with each emperor, and while some were maintained after the death of an individual emperor, many were abandoned.

State cult in this period, the Qin through early Western Han, is a moving target – both literally and figuratively, as the imperial sacrifices sometimes caused the emperor to travel

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[130] Sarah A. Queen and John S. Major, trans., *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn: Attributed to Dong Zhongshu* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2016), 506.

[131] For reasons of space and to make a more fruitful comparison with Rome, I do not discuss ancestral worship performed by the emperors. For a recent discussion of ancestral worship under the Han, see Kenneth E. Brashier, *Ancestral Memory in Early China* (Cambridge, Harvard University Asia Center, 2011). For the role of ancestors in Republican Rome, see Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999).

to sacred sites across his realm, and what was included in the corpus of sacrifices changed frequently, with new cults being added, and others being disbanded. According to Poo Mu-chou, the only definition of imperial cult that we can make with certainty is that "[w]hat distinguished an "official" from an "unofficial" cult was not the deities worshipped, but whether or not it was supported by the court."[132] What we think of as "official" cult could thus change according to the whim of the emperor, and the structure of imperial worship only began to settle into a more concrete form under the reign of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33 – 7 BCE), and from then it would remain fairly constant throughout the Eastern Han.[133]

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[132] Mu-chou Poo, "Religion and Religious Life of the Qin," in *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited*, Yuri Pines, et. al. eds. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014), 192.

[133] The reforms in late Western Han are discussed by Michael Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 104 BC to AD 9* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1974), Chapter 5; Kaneko Shūichi 金子修一, *Chūgoku kodai kōtei saishi no kenkyu* 中國古代皇帝祭祀の研究 (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2006), 123-219; Gan Huaizhen 甘懷真, *Huangquan, liyi yu jingdian quanshi: Zhongguo gudai zhengzhishi yanjiu* 皇權，禮儀與經典詮釋：中國古代政治史研究. (Shanghai, Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008), Tian Tian, "The Suburban Sacrifice Reforms and the Evolution of the Imperial Sacrifice," in Michael Nylan and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds. *Chang'an in 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2015), 270-84, has argued that there only became a settled system with Wang Mang's 5 CE reform. While there were numerous reversals and restorations, the blueprint for imperial cult was drawn up at this time. Imperial cult was also not the exclusive prerogative of the emperor – while the *feng* sacrifice could only be performed by the emperor, the cults under his sponsorship were maintained by sacrificial officials, and many others pursued immortality (or other cults) on the advice of religious experts. The state by no means had a monopoly over either religion or sacrificial practice, though it did at times attempt to moderate sacrifices and ancestral worship through sumptuary regulations. See also Marianne Bujard (2009) "State and Local Cults in Han Religion," in *Early Chinese Religion*, Vol. 2, John Lagerway and Marc Kalinowski, eds (Leiden, Brill, 2008), 777-811. On local religion, see also, Anna Seidel "Traces of Han Religion in Funerary Texts Found in Tombs," in Akizuki, Kan'ei 秋月觀英, ed. *Dokyo to shukyo bunka* 道家と宗教文化 (Tokyo: Hirakawa, 1987); Roel Sterckx, "Religious Practices in Qin and Han," in *China's Early Empires: A Re-appraisal*. Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010); Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1979); Loewe, *Chinese Ideas of Life and Death: Faith, Myth and Reason in the Han Period (202 BC-AD*

In fact, it is impossible to speak of a single type of imperial cult in the period prior to the reign of Emperor Cheng, and the reigns of the emperors of Qin and early Western Han are categorized by either apathy or experimentation towards cult, and the outlines of state cult are reflected in the emperors' individual attitudes towards it. The pursuit of immortality was also an important part of the worship of both Qin Shi Huang and Han Emperor Wu, and the immortals were worshipped alongside the High Gods (*Shangdi* 上帝).[134] Additionally, the cults patronized by the emperors included earthly and celestial powers, such as mountains, rivers, stars/planets, and other sites and objects that were deemed to have spiritual power. Imperial cult should thus be thought of as encompassing the multitude of cults patronized by individual emperors, rather than as an established sacrificial schedule to a fixed pantheon that remained constant throughout the Qin and Han.[135]

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220) (London, Allen & Unwin, 1982); Loewe, *Divination, Mythology, and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), and Bernhard Karlgren "Legends and Cults in Ancient China," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*. 18 (1946).

[134] Bujard argues that Shangdi in the Qin and Han should be read in the plural; rather than one high god, Shangdi is a term used to refer to all of the five emperors. This view is supported by the fact that at Yong, the sacrifice to the Shangdi included sacrifices to the four (during the Qin) or five (during the Han) altars (*zhi* 畤) to the *di.* Marianne Bujard "Le « Traité des sacrifices » du *Hanshu* et la mise en place de la religion d'État des Han." BEFEO (1997).

[135] Imperial cult is distinct from emperor worship, and it is not my intention to intervene in the debate over rulers' perspectives of themselves as divine kings. On divine kingship in China, see Puett, *To Become a God*, and Puett, "Human and Divine Kingship in Early China: Comparative Reflections," in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World*, Nicole Brisch, ed. (Chicago, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008). For Rome, see Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002); Simon R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984); Greg Woolf, "Divinity and Power in Ancient Rome," in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World.* Nicole Brisch, ed. (Chicago, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008).

It would also be a mistake to consider the imperial cult as the sole domain of the emperor. While the emperor was certainly the most important officiant with particular ritual privileges, as we will see below, there was no cult that was the exclusive domain of the emperor prior to the cult reforms after the reign of Emperor Wu.[136] While the evidence remains scant, the histories reveal that each of the sacrificial sites was staffed by both officials who would carry out the sacrifices as well as artisans and others who supplied the sacrificial animals and vessels. Moreover, at certain sacrificial locations the regional lords (*zhuhou* 諸侯) were required to maintain residences and visit the site on the anniversaries of certain sacrifices. Additionally, as we can see through amnesties, tax exemptions, and declarations of periods of universal drinking, imperial travel to sacred locations was burdensome to the local populations, who would have been expected to provide supplies for the emperor and his entourage. Amnesties, tax exemptions, and festivities were dedicated to the people in part to celebrate the emperor's successful sacrifices and favourable omens from heaven, but also for the more practical reason of alleviating the strain of supporting these expensive tours and preventing the possibility of dissent. Worship of the imperial cult, therefore, whether performed by the emperor himself or not, had an impact on vast numbers of the population, regardless of their direct involvement.

This chapter reads the changes made to cult practice up to the end of Emperor Wu's reign as a continuous process of innovation and expansion. Rather than seeing Emperor Wu's expansion of imperial cult as anomalous, or as simply a revival of practices of the First Emperor, I demonstrate that the expansion of imperial cult under Emperor Wu was

[136] See Bujard, "Le "Traité des sacrifices" du *Hanshu* et la mise en place de la religion d'Ètat des Han," 119.

the culmination of an expansion of cult that took place not only under the First Emperor, but also under Han Gaozu and Emperor Wen 文帝(r. 179 – 157 BCE). The massive expansion of cult under Emperor Wu was only possible due to the weakening power of the regional lords, and the expansion of the Han Empire under his reign. While many of the cults that were worshipped under Emperor Wu were initiated so that the emperor could seek immortality (and modelled after the legendary Yellow Thearch *huangdi* 黃帝), the expansion of imperial cult had the result of expanding imperial rule throughout the empire, and of involving all peoples living within the empire in this imperial practice, through the frequent rewards and amnesties given by the emperor. In the process of expansion of cult, Emperor Wu was very much influenced by the *fangshi*, who are much maligned in the histories, as their advice frequently conflicted with the *Ruist* 儒 traditions that would later come to dominate the court. I contend that Emperor Wu employed certain *fangshi* whose advice could support his attempts to expand cult, and attain immortality, but that these pursuits were in line with his broader goals of expanding imperial authority and prestige. By relying on the advice of these men, who came from outside the traditional group of literati, and outside of the court elite, Emperor Wu sought knowledge of the supernatural from across the empire, incorporating this knowledge and cult practice into imperial cult, and laying a network of sacrificial officials across the empire.

3.2 Types of Sacrifice in the Qin and Han

Prior to discussing the changes made to cult during the early rulers of Qin and Han, it is necessary to explore some of the different types of sacrifice offered during this period. While there were many different types of sacrifices in the Qin and Han, depending on who

was offering the sacrifice, to whom it was being offered, and for what purpose, one sacrifice in particular stands out in the corpus of imperial cult. This is the *jiao* type 郊 sacrifice, and, as with imperial cult as a whole, there was a lot of discussion in the early texts about what constituted a *jiao*, and contemporary scholarship reflects this confusion. The term has formerly been translated as the "suburban sacrifice" or "border sacrifice," and for some in the early Han it did indeed take this very literal meaning.[137] However, the sacrifice in the suburbs of the capital that would be passed down to subsequent dynasties only achieved its form towards the end of the Western Han, with the reforms implemented by Kuang Heng 匡衡 under Emperor Cheng. During the early Western Han, however, *jiao* was a polysemic sacrifice, a type of sacrifice which could be used at various locations and at various times of year, and while there were certain fundamental characteristics, the actual performance of the sacrifice could change due to context or need. The sacrifice was always a sacrifice to heaven, or to heavenly spirits, as opposed to earthly spirits, as it consisted of a burnt offering, whereas sacrifices to earth or rivers were generally buried or sunk. The *Liji*, which purports to record the sacrificial practices of the Zhou, state that the minimum sacrificial offering for the *jiao*-type sacrifice was an ox,[138] but often the offering was

[137] The sacrifice would be performed with regularity in the suburbs only following the ritual reforms in 31 BCE, and consistently only in the Eastern Han. During the reign of Emperor Wu, Dong Zhongshu was the most vocal proponent of the performance of the *jiao* sacrifice in the suburbs, in the first month of the year, however, despite being consulted on the topic in 123 BCE, there is no evidence to suggest that his opinion had any influence, and his theories on the sacrifice only became influential in the debates in the late Western Han. See Queen and Major, 509-10, and Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: the Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn Annals, According to Dong Zhongshu* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36 on Dong Zhongshu's memorials.

[138] *Liji* "Jiao te sheng," *Liji jijie* juan 25, *Xuxiu siku quanshu* Vol. 104, 34. Translation, Legge, Vol. 27, 416. The "Regulations of the King" chapter (*wang zhi* 王制) specifies that, in sacrificing to the spirits of the land and grain, the regional lords were to sacrifice only an ox and a boar, while other officials, in sacrificing at their ancestral temples, did so with

extended to include a full complement of sacrificial animals, the *tai lao* 太牢, consisting of an ox, a sheep, and a pig.[139] According to the *Liji* chapter "Jiao te sheng"

> 郊特牲而社稷大牢天子適諸侯諸侯膳用犢諸侯適天子天子賜之禮大牢
>
> A single sacrificial animal was used at the *Jiao* sacrifice, while at the altars to the earth and grain, the full complement (of three victims) was used. [When] the Son of Heaven went to visit the regional lords, the regional lords' feast [for him] used [one] calf; when the regional lords visited the Son of Heaven, the rites with which he favoured them [consisted of] the full complement [of three] sacrificial victims.[140]

However, the practice of rituals did not always follow the textual prescriptions, and so the types of sacrificial victims used in *jiao* sacrifices during the Western Han changed,

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an animal only if they had sufficient lands. If they did not have land, they offered fruit. Commoners presented various seasonal offerings, including scallions, wheat, millet, and rice, accompanied by, respectively, eggs, fish, a suckling-pig, and a goose. 諸侯社稷皆少牢。大夫、士宗廟之祭，有田則祭，無田則薦。庶人春薦韭，夏薦麥，秋薦黍，冬薦稻。韭以卵，麥以魚，黍以豚，稻以雁。 ("Wang zhi" *Liji jijie* juan 13, *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, Vol. 103, 954-955). The *Liji* further stipulates that ritual expenditure should be based on the size of one's territory and on the size of the harvest, so as to not burden the population in years of bad harvest. ("Li qi" *Liji jijie* juan 23, *Xuxiu siku quanshu* Vol. 104, 11-12.)

[139] Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, *Picturing Heaven in Early China* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2011), 83. According to Roel Sterckx, the development of taxonomic systems for animals was in many respects related to their use in sacrifice, and animals might be raised differently based on their physical characteristics, and by whom they would ultimately be sacrificed. See Roel Sterckx, "Animal Classification in Early China," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 23 (2005): 40-46 on ritual and correlative classification of animals, and Reol Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2002), Chapter One, on classification of animals and the relationship with ritual practices more generally.

[140] *Liji* "Jiao te sheng," *Liji jijie* juan 25, *Xuxiu siku quanshu* Vol. 103, 34. Translation modified from Legge, Vol. 27, 416-17.

depending on various factors, including auspicious omens, environmental disasters (floods, droughts, etc.) and even the availability of horses. Under the Lords of Qin, the set of three animals offered to the Shangdi consisted of a bay colt, a yellow cow, and a billy goat, and this formula would largely remain in use for the Han sacrifices at Yong 雍.[141] The system, however, was flexible, and additions were made to the sacrificial offerings at Yong under both Emperors Wen and Wu, and during Emperor Wu's reign, the sacrificial vessels themselves were modified to better reflect contemporary cosmological thinking. Indeed, under Emperor Wu a debate even arose as to whether or not the sacrificial offerings had to be live animals, or if a simulacrum (*xiang* 象) would suffice. This was largely out of necessity – the Han had a chronic shortage of horses,[142] and could not always afford to use them for sacrificial purposes. It was determined that in years when Emperor Wu did not personally perform the sacrifices, a wooden model of a colt could be used instead of the real animal (see below). According to the *Liji*, the *jiao* sacrifice required the use of blood, and so in this instance at least, as Chen Shuguo has argued, by allowing the sacrificial officiants to sacrifice a simulacrum, Emperor Wu was not acting in accordance with the regulations of antiquity.[143]

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[141] *Shiji* 28.1358; *Hanshu* 25A.1194.

[142] The shortage of suitable horses for the military was perhaps one of the motivating factors behind certain campaigns in the west, according to Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 232. See also Robin D.S. Yates, "The Horse in Early Chinese Military History," in *Junshi zuzhi yu zhanzheng* 軍事組織與戰爭, Huang Ko-Wu 黃克武, ed. (Taipei, Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo, 2002).

[143] Chen Shuguo 陈戍国, *Zhongguo lizhi shi: Qin-Han juan* 中國禮制史：秦漢卷 (Changsha, Hunan jiao yu chu ban she, 2002 (1993)), 110.

This comment bears further discussion, as many of the debates about sacrificial practice beginning in the late Western Han also raised this question of how much of early Han sacrificial practice was based on the ancient regulations. With the exception of the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 sacrifices, ancient sacrificial regulations were rarely invoked in discussions of state cult under Emperors Gaozu, Wen, and Wu, who all preferred to look towards the recent past or the conditions of the present for their sacrificial programs. While many of the chapters of the *Liji* were likely circulating during the reigns of the early Han emperors, though not necessarily in the same form as the later, "fixed" versions of the text, there is no evidence to indicate that they influenced the decisions on sacrifice made by the emperors or their advisors. Arguments about ancient sacrificial policy only begin to appear at the end of the Western Han, with the triumph of the "reformist" faction at court, and the demise of the "modernists" who held influence under Emperor Wu.[144] Attempts to understand the expansion of cult under the early Han emperors in terms of the practices of the ancients are doomed to reflect only the opinions of the court scholars who believed that contemporary practice should be modelled on antiquity, rather than the reality of sacrifice during the Han, which was itself primarily a continuation of Qin practice.

As I will argue below, there is, in fact, very little to suggest that there was any type of unifying theory behind imperial cult under the early Qin and Han emperors.[145] While Sima

[144] These terms are Loewe's (1974). The "modernist" faction had been dominant at court under Emperor Wu, and encouraged his expansion of government and cult, while the "reformists," who became dominant after the reign of Emperor Wu argued for smaller government and less government expenditure. See also Liang Cai on the rise of these reformist, Confucian scholars in the post-Emperor Wu period: *Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2014).

[145] The most consistent feature of the sacrificial systems of Qin and Han was the cluster of sacrificial activity based at Yong. See also Tian Yaqi 田亞岐, "Qin-Han zhi zhi yanjiu" 秦漢置畤研究 *Kaogu yu wenwu* 3 (1993): 53-59.

Qian tried to impose some sort of order on the sacrifices, the actual sacrifices rarely matched the neat structure detailed in the "Treatise on the Feng and Shan Sacrifices" 封禪書. The *Shiji* chapter can thus be read, in part, as Sima Qian's attempt to systematize the sacrifices of the early Han emperors. The *jiao* to the Shangdi, according to Sima Qian, was supposed to be performed by the emperor once every three years, at the beginning of the year, at the Five Altars (*wu zhi* 五畤) of Yong, however, the *Hanshu* biography of Emperor Wu reveals that sometimes he sacrificed once per three years, sometimes in consecutive years, and sometimes he did not personally perform the sacrifices for ten years at a time. With the *Taichu* calendar 太初曆 reform and the change of the beginning of the civil year from the tenth month to the first, the *jiao* sacrifice was no longer performed consistently in either month. During Emperor Wu's reign, the *jiao* to the Shangdi shifted locations between Yong, near the capital, and Ganquan 甘泉, in the Northwest, without any apparent consistency, or reason. According to Sima Qian, the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, for which the emperor also performed the rites of the *jiao*, were also to be renewed every five years, but again, the emperor was not consistent in this pattern, occasionally renewing the *feng* every five years, occasionally every three or four. The *jiao* under Emperor Wu should thus be seen as a type of sacrificial ritual that could be adapted and used for various purposes, while it was influenced by the traditions of the ancients, it was adapted to meet the conditions of the Western Han, and bears little resemblance to the *jiao* that would be established in the suburbs of Chang'an 長安 in the late Western Han. The *jiao* under the early Han emperors was more closely related to sacrificial practices that were in use in the state and empire of Qin. The sacrifices changed according to their time and frequency;

under some emperors, they were performed by officials, with modified rites, while at others, they were performed by the ruler himself. The establishment and maintenance of the imperial sacrifice was a political, as well as religious, act. According to Poo Mu-chou, "the sovereign needs to perform the correct ritual so as to place his regime in the proper cosmological position and thus to ensure his legitimacy both in the eyes of humans and the divine powers."[146] Offering sacrifices to the spirits both established the legitimacy of a ruler, and attempted to bring benefit to the state; by ensuring that the spirits received their due, the ruler hoped that the spirits would return the favour, in the form of good agricultural conditions and a lack of natural disasters. This *do ut des* relationship existed not only between the ruler and the Shangdi and nature spirits, but also between the people and local spirits, and the living and the dead. The offering of sacrifice was, at all levels of society, an attempt to secure "personal welfare," and for the ruler, this included not only his own personal welfare, but the welfare of the people under his rule.[147] Additionally, some rulers, particularly Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu, used sacrifice as part of a quest for immortality, offering sacrifices to the immortals so that they would show them the path to immortality. The evolution of the sacrifices of the imperial cult is explored in the next section.

3.3 Writing History from Myth: the *Shiji* and pre-Qin State Sacrifice

The majority of what we know about the cult practices of rulers and emperors in the pre-imperial and early imperial periods comes from the descriptions of Han historians.

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[146] Poo, 2014, 190.
[147] The term "personal welfare" is Poo Mu-chou's: *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1998).

Discussions of the myth and history of cult, as well as contemporary practices, are contained in both the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*; in the *Shiji*, this information is included in the *Fengshan shu*, the "Treatise on the *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices," while the *Hanshu* chapter is entitled the *Jiaosi zhi* 郊祀志, or "Treatise on the *Jiao* and *Si* Sacrifices." The first half of the *Hanshu* chapter is almost, but not quite, identical to the *Shiji* chapter,[148] while the second half discusses sacrificial practices from the period of Emperor Wu through to the end of the Western Han. Like the texts to which they belong, the chapters are increasingly detailed as they approach the historian's own time, when Sima Qian was a direct observer and participant in shaping imperial cult; as he ventured into the past, his sources became increasingly sparse, and many of the discussions of the practices of the Western Zhou, Spring and Autumn, and Warring States periods are based on texts of dubious antiquity, while claims made about pre-Zhou ritual practices are, in the eyes of modern historians, based purely on legend.

The *Shiji* chapter, while narrative in its structure and somewhat polemical in its nature like so much of the text, is not simply a work of history. I believe that it is also representative of the reconstruction of the history of imperial sacrifice that took place under

[148] The *Hanshu* chapter has formerly been commonly translated as the "Treatise on the Suburban Sacrifice." However, these sacrifices only took place in the suburbs beginning in the late Western Han, and while in the early Eastern Han the term had come to take on this meaning, I prefer to render the chapter title as the "Treatise on the *jiao* and *si* Sacrifices" as the chapter encompasses much more than simply the suburban sacrifices initiated in the late Western Han. The first half of the *Hanshu* chapter (郊祀志上 25A) is for the most part a copy of the *Shiji* chapter, though there are some differences in phrasing; pertinent sections will be highlighted in the footnotes. The second half of the *Hanshu* chapter (郊祀志下 25B) discusses sacrifices in the post-Wu period, up to the early Eastern Han own time. Chapter 25B has been translated into French by Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne : théorie et pratique sous les Han occidentaux* (Paris, École française d'Extrême Orient, 2000).

Emperor Wu as he sought the advice of officials and advisors from outside the court environment in expanding his sacrificial programme. Sima Qian, and his father Sima Tan before him, were partially responsible for advising the emperor on how to perform important sacrifices, necessitating a knowledge of how previous rulers had performed these rites. As many of the most important sacrifices were of such antiquity that the records for them were lost (or may never have existed), the sacrificial procedures had to be (re)created by scholars at court. It was necessary, therefore, for Sima Qian to present a history of the sacrifices of past dynasties, based on the sources available to him at the time. As we will see, there are many suspicious parallels in the way in which the sacrificial programs of the First Emperor and Emperor Wu are recorded, suggesting, perhaps, that the parallels were emphasized and highlighted in order to critique the Han emperor's elaborate sacrificial programme. While we now know that the origins of many of the sacrifices in the *Shiji*, including the *feng* and *shan* can be traced back only as far as the Qin state and empire,[149] this distinction between history and myth was not so black and white to the ancient scholars. Indeed, according to Chen Shuguo, although the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices were an invention of Qin Shi Huang, we must not entirely discount Sima Qian's discussion of the events as a work of fiction.[150]

The pre-Qin information contained in Sima Qian's chapter is valuable to us not because it gives us a completely accurate picture of sacrifices made by rulers and kings in

[149] Tian Tian argues that the sacrificial system under the early Han was based on the system established under the Qin empire, based on practices from the Qin state, and including some sacrifices from the defeated states. However, far from being a comprehensive and unchanging system, the sacrifices were continuously changing, until the reforms of the late Western Han. "Chunqiu Zhanguo Qinguo ci si kao" 春秋戰國秦國祠祀考 *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化. 1 (2013): 35, 46.
[150] Chen Shuguo, 17.

the ancient periods, which it does not, but because it demonstrates what the scholars, officials, and emperors of the Han thought about pre-Qin sacrifice. Sima Qian treated the material contained in this chapter with the same diligence as he approached the rest of his history, but the material dealt with in this chapter was not recorded solely for the purposes of posterity: the narrative of state sacrifice was created within the context of ritual reforms at court under Emperor Wu, and helped to shape imperial sacrificial practice for Emperor Wu and his successors. The chapter not only describes what the Han knew about early sacrificial practices, but it also contains Sima Qian's own critique of Emperor Wu's sacrificial program and the advisors he employed to formulate it. In the section which follows, I present the pertinent elements of the Han histories of imperial sacrifice, with the caveat that although this may not be, for modern readers, strictly historical, it represents Sima Qian's attempt to establish a historical tradition for the readers of his day.[151] Sima Qian and Ban Gu narrate the origins (and decline) of three sacrificial systems, those of Shun, the Western Zhou, and the Lords of Qin, before turning to a discussion of state sacrifice under the Qin and Han empires.

As with the rest of his history, Sima Qian traces the origins of state sacrifice back to the beginnings of time. While Sima Qian opens his chapter with a musing on the reasons why some rulers had received the mandate, and necessary omens, to perform the *feng* sacrifice (see Chapter Six), the *Hanshu* chapter begins with a discussion of the nature and

[151] While the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* chapters are largely similar, they differ on a few points, and I will thus occasionally alternate between the two texts. Citations are given for both texts, and where a phrase appears only in one, it will be indicated as such. The *Hanshu* "Yiwen zhi" chapter cites an additional three texts on the *fengshan* sacrifices, "Gu fengshan qunsi" 古封禪群祀 (twenty-two *juan*), "Fengshan yi dui" 封禪議對 (nineteen *juan*), and "Han fengshan qunsi" 漢封禪群祀 (thirty-six *juan*). *Hanshu* 30.1709.

origins of sacrificial practice.[152] The earliest sacrifices, according to the *Hanshu*, were made by the sage kings in order to filially serve the ancestors and communicate with the gods and spirits 祀者，所以昭孝事祖，通神明也.[153] One who correctly performed the sacrifices and rituals to the spirits, mountains, rivers, and ancestors would have order in the universe. By correctly employing the offices of the gods and the people, then the gods would bestow fortune on the world, and disasters would not arrive.[154] Sacrifices must be performed in harmony with the cosmos – too few or too many sacrifices and the balance would be upset and calamities would descend on the empire. In certain times, this indeed was said to have happened, and so the sages of antiquity determined the correct sacrifices for the people.

While many of the sacrifices had been developed by Zhuanxu (to whom calendrical science was attributed, see Chapter Five) Gonggong 共工, Gou Long 句龍, and Lie Shan 烈山, the system that Sima Qian held in highest regard was that of Shun. Following the "Shun Dian" 舜典 chapter in the *Documents* (*shu* 書),[155] Sima Qian writes that Shun

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[152] The practice of having introductory comments about the nature of the world is not unique to this chapter on sacrifices: we see similar introductions in other treatise chapters, including both the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* treatises on musical pitch-pipes, as well as in the *Hanshu*23 "Treatise on Punishment and Law," (Xingfa zhi 刑法志, as has been noted by A.F.P. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law Volume 1: Introductory Studies and an Annotated Translation of Chapters 22 and 23 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Leiden, Brill, 1955), 309.

[153] *Hanshu* 25A.1189. This passage is not in the *Shiji*.

[154] *Hanshu* 25A.1189.

[155] Watson, (*Han II*, 4) notes that this lengthy quotation was likely included to demonstrate that "even in the most ancient of the Confucian Classics there is no detailed account of the Feng and Shan sacrifices." While this is certainly a part of it, it is also possible that this description of the earliest sacrificial programs of the sages was also included to provide a certain amount of continuity with the subsequent inspection tours under the First Emperor and Emperor Wu, and it is also important with regard to Emperor Wu's desire to take control over the rites at the Five Sacred Peaks (see below). Burton Watson, *Records of the*

observed the movement of the cosmic bodies using a jewelled-astronomical instrument (*xuanji* 璿璣). He made special offerings to the Six Honored Ones,[156] the mountains and rivers, and various other groups of spirits. By announcing auspicious days of the sun and moon, he supervised the Regional Lords of the four directions. Shun also embarked on an inspection tour, once every five years. In the second month, he travelled east to Mt. Tai, where he made a burnt offering, and sacrificed from afar to the mountains and rivers. In the fifth month, he travelled to Mt. Heng 衡山 in the south. He arrived at Mt. Hua in the west in the eighth month, and in the eleventh, at Mt. Hengg 恆山 in the north.[157] The rites performed at each of the mountains resembled those at Mt. Tai 泰山, and in each location, he observed the regional lords, and ensured that in All under Heaven, the seasons, months, days, pitch-pipes, measures, and rites were harmonized.[158] Shun was succeeded by Yu 虞, and others who maintained the correct sacrifices, but after his reign, over time, subsequent rulers became increasingly morally corrupt, and the rituals of these rulers became progressively marked by licentious ingenuity rather than sacrificial decorum, until they were replaced by another ruling house, and the cycle repeated once more.

The next model system outlined in the Han histories is that of the early Western Zhou, established by the Duke of Zhou 周公, the regent of the young King Cheng 成王 (r. ca. 1042 – 1021 BCE). During this time, "the way of the king was in great harmony, rituals

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Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty, 2 Vols. (Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1993 (1961)).

[156] *Shiji* 28.1355; *Hanshu* 25A.1191.

[157] As the *pinyin* for these two mountains is the same, following Burton Watson, I use "Hengg" for 恆山 to distinguish it from 衡山.

[158] *Shiji* 28.1356; *Hanshu* 25A.1191.

were regulated and music was composed" 王道大洽，制禮作樂.[159] The sacrifices were used by the king to communicate with heaven, and all within the four seas contributed, according to their offices to the sacrificial program. The Son of Heaven sacrificed to the named mountains and rivers, and brought peace to the hundred spirits. While the Son of Heaven sacrificed to all of the named mountains and rivers within All under Heaven, the regional lords only sacrificed to those that were within their domains. Individuals knew their position within the hierarchy of the state, and only sacrificed according to their office – commoners, for example, could only sacrifice to their grandfather, while those of higher rank could sacrifice to increasing numbers of ancestral and extrahuman spirits.[160]

This Western Zhou sacrificial model is obviously an idealized ritual system, and there is no evidence as to whether or not it existed in practice. However, it was an important ideal for Sima Qian, and these early sacrificial programmes were influential on the architects of the Qin and Han programmes. It is not indicated in the texts whether or not the early Western Zhou rulers continued to perform the inspection tours initiated by Shun, or with what frequency they sacrificed to the mountains and rivers, but it is possible that

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[159] *Hanshu* 25A.1193. While Sima Qian includes the system of King Cheng in his history, the comment on the harmony of the way of the kings is only in the *Hanshu* chapter.

[160]而諸侯祭其疆內名山、大川，大夫祭門、戶、井、灶、中霤五祀，士、庶人祖考而已 *Hanshu* 1193-94. A similar comment is included in the *Shiji* prior to the discussion of the reign of King Cheng, but is phrased slightly differently: 天子祭天下名山大川，五嶽社三公，四瀆社諸侯，諸侯祭其疆內名山大川。*Shiji* 28.1357. (Watson, *Han II*, 6: "The Son of Heaven sacrifices to all the famous mountains and great rivers of the empire. He regards the Five Peaks as his high ministers and the four great watercourses as his feudal lords. The feudal lords sacrifice only to the famous mountains and great rivers that are in their respective domains.") The *Shiji* chapter does not connect the worship of the named mountains and rivers to the stipulation that people of certain rank (below the regional lords) could only worship up to a certain generation of ancestors. This idea is ubiquitous in various ritual texts and discussions of ritual, see Brashier, 64ff.

the Zhou kings were at least thought to have continued these inspection tours. However, as with the Shang, and others before them, the rulers became increasingly immoral, and the proper rites and music were abandoned. King You of Zhou 周幽王 was defeated by the Quanrong 犬戎 peoples in 771 BCE, and the court was moved east to Luoyang, where the Zhou was re-established under King Ping 周平王. For his efforts in saving the Zhou court, Lord Xiang of Qin 秦襄公 (r. 777-766 BCE) was made a regional lord, and was given a territory in the former heartland of the Zhou.

At this point, as Sima Qian's (and thus, Ban Gu's) history moves into the less-distant past, the story becomes both more detailed and more complicated. While the Zhou king in the east held nominal ritual authority over the regional lords, the narrative focuses on the sacrificial practices of the state of Qin. Whether this is because the Qin system would eventually come to dominate the Han world, or whether it was due to lack of records for the other regions is unclear. However, beginning with the defeat of the Western Zhou, we see the roots of the sacrificial practices that would last until the end of the Western Han.

3.4 Sacrificial Practices in the State and Empire of Qin

One of the most important sacrifices in the early Western Han, and a topic of much debate throughout the Han period was the *jiao* sacrifice to the five Shangdi performed at Yong, 150km west of Chang'an. The *jiao* sacrifice at Yong developed slowly, reaching its apex under Emperor Wu. Sima Qian traces the origins of this sacrifice to Lord Xiang of Qin. Lord Xiang built a sacrificial altar in the west, where he worshipped the White Emperor, sacrificing to him a burnt offering of one bay colt, one yellow cow, and one goat. This sacrificial altar was moved during the reign of Lord Wen 秦文公 (r. 765 – 716 BCE),

who, after hunting between the Qian 黔江 and Wei rivers and consulting with diviners, discovered an auspicious place to establish his home. The lord dreamed himself to be a yellow snake, stretching across all of the lands under heaven; his scribe Dui informed him that it was appropriate to establish an altar at this place. The lord proceeded to do so and to offer the three animals, performing the *jiao* sacrifice to the White Emperor 於是作鄜畤，用三牲郊祭白帝焉.[161] Because the area was in the highlands, it was considered by some to be a "cove of the spirits" (神明之隩), and therefore an appropriate place to perform the sacrifices of the type *jiao*.[162]

Under Lord De 秦德公 (r. 677-676 BCE), with the transfer of the capital to Yong itself, the sacrifices in the region became plentiful.[163] The altar to the White Emperor was joined by an altar to the Green Emperor south of the Wei River under Lord Mu 秦穆公 (r. 659-621 BCE), and altars to the Yellow[164] and Red/Fire Emperors were established by Lord Ling 秦靈公 (r. 424-415 BCE).[165] These four altars remained at Yong into the Han, and it seems that they received regular sacrifices from a staff of sacrificial officials, and

[161] *Hanshu* 25A.1194; *Shiji* 28.1358.
[162] *Hanshu* 25A.1195; *Shiji* 28.1359.
[163] *Hanshu* 25A.1196; *Shiji* 28.1360. While Sima Qian begins his history of the cult practice at Yong with the creation of the shrine to the White Emperor under Lord Wen, Tian Tian (2013, 40) notes that with the cult of Chen Bao located in the region, the area had a much lengthier history of cult. The cult to Chen Bao was established under Lord Wen (r. 765-716). See Ibid. and Tian Yaqi for a discussion of the development of cults practiced at and around Yong under the Qin. On the cult of Chen Bao, see Marianne Bujard, ""Le culte du Joyau de Chen : culte historique – culte vivant." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie: Culte des sites et culte des saints en Chine* 10 (2008).
[164] A distinction must be made here between the Yellow Thearch, the legendary culture hero who was said to have lived during the second millennium BCE, and the Yellow Emperor, who was one of the five gods worshipped at Yong (*shan di* 上帝).
[165] *Hanshu* 25A.1199; *Shiji* 28.1364.

occasionally from the Qin lords themselves. However, neither Qin Shi Huang nor Qin Er Shi was recorded to have sacrificed to the Shangdi at Yong in person, though they continued to employ sacrificial officials, and Qin Er Shi sacrificed to numerous spirits at the site in 209 BCE.[166] The altars at Yong were maintained as they were until the time of Han Gaozu.

While it seems that Qin Shi Huang did not personally worship the Shangdi at Yong, he greatly expanded Qin cult, again setting a precedent for the reforms that would follow under Emperor Wu. The First Emperor embarked on five inspection tours of the empire, performing various sacrifices along the way, to the mountains and rivers, as well as to the Eight Lords.[167] Most important among these, for Sima Qian, was his performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices at Mt. Tai and Mt. Liangfu 梁父山.[168] While there has recently been debate as to whether or not the First Emperor actually performed a *feng* and *shan*, or if this was an interpolation by Sima Qian, we do know that the emperor went to sacrifice at the summit of Mt. Tai, and that he left a stone inscription, the text of which is recorded in the *Shiji*.[169] Whether or not this sacrifice was intended to be a *feng* is in some ways moot

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[166] To the sun, moon, Orion, Antares, the southern dipper, the northern dipper, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, the 28 lunar lodges 二十八宿, the wind, rain, four seas, nine vassals, fourteen vassals, and the various others. *Hanshu* 25A.1206-7. The *Shiji* does not record the Second Emperor's sacrifices at Yong.

[167] *Shiji* 28.1367-68. The Eight Spirits were, the Lord of Heaven, Lord of Land, Lord of Arms (who was worshipped by sacrificing to Chi You), Lords of Yin and Yang, Lords of the Moon and Sun, and the Lord of the Four Seasons. Tian, 2015b, notes that rather than simply being political inspection tours, as they are often read, the sacrifices on the First Emperor's tours were of great importance.

[168] *Shiji* 6.242.

[169] *Shiji* 6.243. The inscription has been translated by Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Qin Dynasty* (Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1993), 46 and Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven, American Oriental Society, 2000), 17-23. In the inscription, the First Emperor does not state that he was performing a *feng* sacrifice at the

– it is sufficient to note that by the time of Sima Qian's writing of the *Shiji* chapter and Emperor Wu's desire to perform the *feng* himself, it was believed that Qin Shi Huang had performed a *feng* at the summit of Mt. Tai.[170] After the fall of Qin, rumours began to circulate that because the emperor had encountered a storm as he descended the mountain, he had not actually succeeded in accomplishing the *feng*.[171] This would be used as evidence that Emperor Wu did succeed, as he did not meet with any bad omens after his own attempt. The *Shiji* does not record whether or not sacrifices were made at the summits of all of the mountains the emperor visited, only that he erected stone monuments at each of the sites. The second innovation that Sima Qian records is the First Emperor's pursuit of immortality and reliance on the *fangshi*.

Indeed, the First Emperor's is often best remembered (and ridiculed) for his reliance on the *fangshi* and his quest for immortality. In the *Shiji*, Sima Qian (echoed by Ban Gu in the *Hanshu*) is quick to alert the reader to the trickery of the *fangshi.* During the time of Confucius, Sima Qian recounts, a man named Chang Hong 萇弘 attempted to win favour with the King of Zhou by magically causing the regional lords to come to court and submit themselves to him. However, his magic failed, and while he was "the first among the men of Zhou to expound the use of such magical arts," he was also the first to be killed for them, as he was killed by men from the state of Jin 晉國, during the time of King Jing.[172] While

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summit of Mt. Tai, merely that he "ascended the mountain and surveyed the eastern extremities" 登茲泰山周覽東極.

[170] The similarities in the descriptions as to how the emperors each tried to piece together this lost rite lends credence to the idea that this is a later interpolation. The details of the *feng* sacrifice will be discussed in Chapter Six.

[171] *Shiji* 28.1367; *Hanshu* 25A.1205. The authenticity of the First Emperor's Feng sacrifice will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

[172] *Shiji* 28.1364; *Hanshu* 25A.1199; the translation is Watson's, *Han II*, 10-11.

Chang Hong is not named as a member of the *fangshi*, who, according to Sima Qian, only coalesce into a group beginning with Zou Yan 鄒衍 (305 – 240 BCE),[173] the historian makes it clear that magical arts of this nature, in his opinion, are of little use to the rulers. The *fangshi* were associated primarily with the former states of Yan 燕國 and Qi 齊國, in the east, and their practice of esoteric arts kept them outside of the court literati culture.[174] These men were specialists trained in magical arts, and they "followed the immortal way, separating from their bodies, and transforming into spirits, according to the way of the supernatural" 為方仙道，形解銷化，依於鬼神之事.[175] However, after the famous Zou Yan, there were many who claimed to have been his disciples, and have similar powers, yet they did not truly understand his teachings. According to the sources, they travelled around, flattering rulers, and expounding fantastic ideas.[176] In his quest for immortality, the First Emperor relied heavily on these *fangshi*, primarily by sending them out to sea to seek the islands of Penglai 蓬萊, Fangzhang 方丈, and Yingzhou 瀛洲, where, it was said, the elixir of immortality could be procured.[177] On each of his inspection tours to the east, the First Emperor questioned the magicians, who all replied that they had seen the islands, but had not been able to quite reach them.[178] The emperor, despite his best efforts, was

[173] Zou Yan was a specialist in Yin and Yang and Wu Xing theory. There is a short biography of him in *Shiji* 74, translated in Ngo, 14-15, and some of his theory on the patterns of Heaven and Earth is perhaps reflected in Book 13 of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. See John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei* 呂氏春秋 (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000), 277-286.
[174] Roth, 282.
[175] *Hanshu* 25A.1203; *Shiji* 28.1368.
[176] *Hanshu* 25A.1203-4; *Shiji* 28.1369. 而燕、齊海上之方士傳其術不能通，然則怪迂阿諛苟合之徒自此興，不可勝數也。
[177] *Shiji* 6.247.
[178] *Hanshu* 25A.1205; *Shiji* 6.263; 28.1369-70. Legend (or rumor) had it that while it was easy to approach the islands, a wind would drive it away as soon as it attempted to dock.

unable to attain the elixir of immortality, and passed away on his final inspection tour, in 210 BCE. The First Emperor's failures, however, are echoed by those of Han Emperor Wu, who similarly sought immortality on the advice of the *fangshi* and sent men in search of the elixir of immortality across the sea.

3.5 Expansion and Experimentation in the Early Han

Despite declaring the founding of a new dynasty on principles different from those of the Qin, Han Gaozu maintained most Qin institutions, including the sacrificial programs, going so far as to employ the former Qin sacrificial officials and advisors, notably Shusun Tong 叔孫痛 (d. ca. 188 BCE), the Qin sacrificial official and Zhang Cang 張蒼 (253 – 152 BCE), who was an expert in calendrical science and the pitch-pipes. These officials continued the sacrifices of the Qin, with only minor modifications made by the first Han emperor, who placed his focus on securing his position and his new empire, rather than on imperial sacrifice.[179]

Shortly after establishing the Han, Gaozu travelled to the site at Yong, and asked his officials why there were only altars to four emperors, when he had heard that there were in fact supposed to be five emperors. None of his officials was able to satisfactorily answer this question, and Gaozu came to the conclusion that it was his task to complete the set, by erecting a temple to the Black Emperor, in the North.[180] The text here is not clear if Gaozu was declaring himself to actually be the Black Emperor 於是高祖曰：「吾知之矣，乃

One of the magicians, Xu Fu, blames the difficulty on large fish (大鮫魚) blocking the way, and asks for an archer with a multiple-bolt arcuballista to be assigned to the team, so that he could shoot at the fish on subsequent journeys (*Shiji* 6.263). See also Ngo, 18.

[179] *Shiji* 8.343ff.

[180] *Shiji* 28.1378; *Hanshu* 25A.1210.

待我而具五也。」乃立黑帝祠，名曰北畤 or if he saw his role simply as completing the set of altars. However, Gaozu charged his officials with presenting sacrifice to the newly established Northern Altar at Yong, along with the other altars for the Shangdi; Chen Shuguo argues that this indicated that Gaozu was in fact proclaiming himself as the Black Emperor, as it would be inappropriate to offer sacrifice to himself.[181] There is no mention in the *Shiji* biography of Gaozu of this self-divinization, but the explanation makes sense if one takes into consideration that Gaozu likely employed the former Qin calendrical official, Zhang Cang. Zhang Cang believed that the power of Water remained in ascendancy, and that it was appropriate for the Han to maintain this phase rather than to declare the dynasty under a new power. Zhang Cang argued that because Gaozu reached Baoshang in the tenth month, that the tenth month should be maintained as the start of the year, and the dominant colour should remain black.[182] This position remained dominant until the reign of Emperor Wu, though it was challenged under Emperor Wen (see below).

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[181] Chen Shuguo, 109. The text is not explicit on whether or not this is the case, and the later discussions of the sacrifices at Yong do not refer specifically to worship of Gaozu at the site (who received worship as an ancestor at his Changling mausoleum. On the worship of deceased ancestors, see Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy*, 267-99; Brashier, 102-83; and Wu Hung, "From Temple to Tomb: Ancient Chinese Art and Religion in Transition," *Early China* 13 (1988), on the shift of focus for ancestral worship from temples to tombs in the late Eastern Zhou. Watson's translation reflects the uncertainty: [Gaozu]: "They were waiting for me to come and complete the five!" (Watson, *Han II*, 19.)

[182] John Knoblock, trans., *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works* (Stanford, Stanford University Press 1988), 216. The text leads the reader to believe that Gaozu understood Qin Shi Huang to have divinized himself at Yong and to have received sacrifice there, however, the Annals of Qin provide no indication of this. Michael Loewe has argued that while there was discussion about the dominant element (or phase) in Qin and Western Han, there was not a comprehensive system until at least the time of Wang Mang, and so we must bear in mind that these systems and ideas were still in their formative stages. Michael Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China: A Companion to* A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han, and Xin Periods (Leiden, Brill, 2004), 335; *Dong Zhongshu, A "Confucian" Heritage, and the* Chunqiu Fanlu (Leiden, Brill, 2011), 496.

While we do not have any further details on the sacrifices at Yong during Gaozu's reign, it is clear that the fifth altar was established at the same site as the previous four, and a group of sacrificial officials were employed to maintain the sacrifices at Yong, under the direction of the former Qin officials. Gaozu ensured that sacrifices which had been current in Qin, but had lapsed due to the war, were revived, declaring that the sacrifices to the Shangdi, the mountains, rivers, and the various spirits would each have their [sacrificial] time according to the ancient customs 今上帝之祭及山川諸神當祠者，各以其時禮祠之如故.[183] In the sixth year of his reign, Gaozu ordered sacrifices to be maintained, in accordance with historical precedent at the Fenyu alter 枌榆社, and he established an altar to Chi You 蚩尤, and to various other spirits in Chang'an.[184] Despite this activity, there is nothing to suggest that Gaozu performed sacrifices in person, only that he took the advice of his sacrificial officials in maintaining sacrifices and establishing shrines.

Emperor Wen made only minor reforms to the ritual program of his predecessors, though cult remained an important feature of his reign, and he considered undertaking large-scale reforms to the dynasty's cosmological position. However, Emperor Wen decided not to make any dramatic changes, and the majority of what was accomplished in his reign was to ensure that the important sacrifices of the empire were being performed

[183] *Shiji* 28.1378; *Hanshu* 25A.1210.
[184] *Shiji* 28.1378-79; *Hanshu* 25A.1210-11. Chi You was a spirit, associated with wind and rain, and particularly with weapons and warfare. Some sources describe him as the inventor of weapons, while others note only that he improved them. He was described as a beast who killed indiscriminately, and was best known for his mythological battles against the Yellow Thearch. Chi You received worship under both the Qin and early Han; the shrine established by Gaozu was only disbanded in the ritual reforms of 31 BCE. See Loewe, *Divination, Mythology, and Monarchy*, 242-6; Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, 165ff.

according to what were understood to be the ancient ways. This is most clearly seen in his policy towards the sacrifices to the named mountains and rivers: due to negligence on the part of the rulers of Qi and Huainan 淮南 to maintain the sacrifices to the mountains and rivers within their domains, Emperor Wen brought these rites back under the auspices of the imperial court, ordering imperially-appointed sacrificial officials to ensure that the rites were carried out according to tradition. According to the "Regulations of the King" *wang zhi* 王制 chapter of the *Liji*:

> 山川神祇，有不舉者，為不敬；不敬者，君削以地
>
> Where any of the spirits of the hills and rivers had been unattended to, it was held to be an act of irreverence, and the irreverent ruler was deprived of a part of his territory.[185]

He also subsequently increased the sacrificial offerings to the Shangdi at Yong, as well as to the Yellow, Han, and Qiao rivers. [186]

While there were no major cult reforms during his reign, there was a serious discussion about whether or not it would be appropriate to change the element under which the Han governed, and perhaps even an indication that Emperor Wen considered modelling himself after the Yellow Thearch and pursuing immortality. Thirteen years into his reign, a debate arose between two high officials regarding the calendar, cult, and colour of the Han. Gongsun Chen 公孫臣 submitted a memorial to the throne stating:

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[185] "Wang zhi" *Liji jijie* juan 12, *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, Vol. 103, 943. Legge, trans., Vol. 27, 217.
[186] *Hanshu* 25A.1212; *Shiji* 28.1381.

> 始秦得水德，及漢受之，推終始傳，則漢當土德，土德之應黃龍見。宜改正朔，服色上黃。
>
> At the beginning Qin obtained the power of water, now Han has received it; since the [cycle] revolves, and now goes from the end to the beginning, then Han ought to [rule by] the power of earth. The appropriate [sign] of the power of earth is the appearance of a yellow dragon. It is appropriate to change the first month [of the year][187] and the clothing colour should be made yellow.[188]

However, the Chancellor (*chengxiang* 丞相), Zhang Cang, who was well learned in the pitch pipes and calendrics, argued that it was still the time of water and the colour black, and that Gongsun Chen's words were false, thus ending the discussion. However, the next year, a yellow dragon was in fact spotted, and Emperor Wen summoned Gongsun Chen to court, made him an Erudite, and asked him to explain to him the theory of ascendancy of the power of earth, to calculate a new calendrical system, and to discuss the changing of the colours of the clothes.[189] With this favourable omen, the emperor embarked on a journey to Yong to sacrifice to the Shangdi, and a number of advisors counselled him on how to perform the sacrifices, and on their advice, he established the Weiyang 渭陽 temple to the Shangdi, north of the Wei river, where he offered sacrifice.[190] This was done on the recommendation of a *fangshi*, Xinyuan Ping 新垣平, and after the sacrifice was performed, Ping was raised up to the rank of Counsellor *dafu* 大夫. The following year, Ping

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[187] From the tenth month to the first, so as to resemble the Xia calendar.
[188] *Hanshu* 25A.1212; *Shiji* 28.1381.
[189] *Hanshu* 25A.1212-3; *Shiji* 28.1381.
[190] *Hanshu* 25A.1214; *Shiji* 28.1381-2, does not specify the month, only that this visit took place in the summer.

discovered, and submitted to the emperor a jade cup, on which it was inscribed "Long life to the lord of men." The emperor was pleased, and Ping suggested that this might be a sign that it would be possible to discover the ancient tripods of Zhou in the He 河 river,[191] and an envoy was subsequently ordered to search for it. However, an anonymous memorial was submitted to the throne stating that all of Ping's words had been false, with the implication that the jade cup, too, had been fabricated. Ping and his family were all executed, and Emperor Wen gave up his interest in reforming the calendar and imperial cult, and the cult continued on as it had before, with no further direct participation of the emperor.[192]

Emperor Wen is credited by Sima Qian for discovering this treachery and executing the charlatan responsible for taking advantage of him. Because of the deceit of Xinyuan Ping, Emperor Wen turned his gaze away from cosmological reforms, and has since been remembered as one of the more "practical" of the Han emperors.[193] Sima Qian certainly presents him in this way, in contrast to Emperor Wu, who would be taken in by any and all claiming to have knowledge of the immortals. However, we should not be so quick to believe that Emperor Wen was not tempted by the possibility of immortality. Although

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[191] The nine legendary tripods of Zhou were thought to confer the mandate to rule, but all were lost in the period of internecine warfare prior to the founding of the Qin Empire. Several emperors searched for them, to bolster their legitimacy.

[192] *Hanshu* 25A.1212-14; *Shiji* 1382-83. Ping predicted that cauldrons would be discovered at Fenyin, and subsequently buried at least one on that site, to be discovered. He was executed before it was found, but it was discovered under Emperor Wu and believed to be authentic.

[193] Emperor Wen also famously issued an edict dramatically reducing the required mourning period for an emperor, so that affairs of state would not be thoroughly disrupted after he died. The edict, however, was ignored, but his example was often cited by those advocating moderation in mortuary and mourning rituals. *Hanshu* 4.132. See also Lai Guolong, "The Diagram of the Mourning System from Mawangdui," *Early China* 28 (2003), for a discussion of the changes made to mourning periods.

initially sceptical of Gongsun Chen's proclamation, with the appearance of the yellow dragon, he quickly began to prepare to remodel the Han's cosmological position, based on the legends of the Yellow Thearch and the advice of a *fangshi*.

Gongsun Chen's recommendation and Emperor Wen's investigations into cosmological reform were based on legends of the Yellow Thearch. The Yellow Thearch was said to have ruled by the power of earth, his calendar started in the first month (as opposed to the tenth month used by the Qin and early Han), and he was said to have achieved immortality by ascending to heaven on the back of a yellow dragon. While Emperor Wen did not pursue immortality to the extent that either Qin Shi Huang or Emperor Wen did, he certainly entertained the notion and took some steps towards inaugurating a new era with a new calendar, and, possibly, the performance of the *feng* sacrifice. In fact, many of these steps would be repeated, and taken to their extremes, by Emperor Wu. Emperor Wen was certainly more sceptical than other Han emperors, but we should not imagine that Emperor Wu was the only Han emperor to pursue immortality. The rise and fall of Xinyuan Ping was to be echoed by subsequent *fangshi* under Emperor Wu.

3.6 Emperor Wu and the Proliferation of Cult

No major cult reforms that we know of took place until the reign of Emperor Wu,[194] who undertook some of the most significant reforms of the Han, and was the emperor who

[194] Due to trouble at the borders with the nomads, sacrificial records for the period between Emperor Wen and Emperor Wu were not kept (or were lost), but both the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* state that there were no major changes to sacrificial practice during this period, and that sacrificial officials continued to perform the rites according to antiquity. *Hanshu* 25A.1215; *Shiji* 28.1384.

was the most active in imperial cult. He revived and expanded the cults to the five emperors, as well as the sacrifice to heaven. He established the sacrifice to earth, to complement the sacrifice to heaven. He achieved the (purportedly) ancient *feng* and *shan* sacrifices (see Chapter Six), and engaged in a massive project of building sacrificial altars, halls, pavilions, and palaces near all of those sacred sites. He pursued the immortals with even more fervour than Qin Shi Huang, employing countless men to seek them on land and sea, and establishing shrines and sacrifices for them throughout the empire.

Yet there was no overarching ideology behind Emperor Wu's expansion of cult. It is impossible to classify the sacrifices, the travels, or the pursuit of the immortals as being based on the recommendations of any one school of thought, or ideology. What the sources reveal instead is a mélange of ideologies and a multitude of diverse participants in the reforms. Emperor Wu's reign, rather than being characterized by the ascendancy of *Ruist* thought was in fact characterized by experimentation, and a willingness to seek counsel from anyone who could demonstrate that they had knowledge of the cosmos, as I will demonstrate below. The sacrificial program of Emperor Wu was established so that the emperor could "personally contact as many divine powers as possible in order to obtain their power,"[195] and in order to do so, the emperor had to employ men who were able to assist him. As with the calendrical reforms, Emperor Wu based his sacrificial program on the advice of men from outside the traditional hierarchy of officials; many of these men were subsequently appointed to official positions, or given rank. Many others were executed when their proposals failed to produce the desired results, or if they were determined to have falsified information. Emperor Wu's extravagant sacrificial program

[195] Puett, *To Become a God*, 245.

was criticized by the Han historians and officials for its lavish expenditure, excessive travels, and, later, by its failure to adhere to the cult practices of the ancients, and most of the sacrifices and cults patronized by Emperor Wu would be abandoned after his death. However, imperial cult under Emperor Wu had a significant impact in the expansion and consolidation of imperial authority throughout the Han, both in terms of spreading the knowledge of the emperor, as well as enhancing its geographical control. Emperor Wu continued the expansion of cult that had begun under Qin Shi Huang, Han Gaozu, and Emperor Wen, but for him, cult occupied a place of much larger importance than under any of the previous emperors. This was due in part to Emperor Wu's aspirations to immortality, but also due to the fact that unlike the other emperors, Emperor Wu ruled at a time when it was possible for him to expand cult across the empire.[196]

Emperor Wu turned his attention to state cult and the pursuit of immortality shortly after the death of his grandmother, the Grand Empress Dowager Dou 竇皇后, in 135 BCE. Prior to her death, the *Hanshu* biography of the emperor only notes two events related to cult: a discussion in 139 BCE about the possibility of building a new *mingtang* 明堂,[197] which was rejected, and an edict in that same year ensuring that the sacrifices to the named mountains and rivers, and other agricultural sacrifices were renewed and were henceforth to be held annually. These rites, as we have already seen under Emperor Wen, were loosely under imperial supervision. While the sacrifices to the mountains and rivers were the

[196] Cf. Chapter One. The First Emperor also undertook most of his pursuit of immortality in the latter half of his reign, when threats against the empire had largely been pacified.
[197] On the importance of the *mingtang* in cosmological and political ideology, see Ming-chorng Hwang "Ming-tang: cosmology, political order and monuments in Early China" PhD Diss. Harvard University (1996), especially Chapters 1 and 2. On the archaeological evidence of Han-era *mingtang*, see Tseng, 70-81.

responsibility of the lords in whose domain they were located, the emperor, as the ruler of All under Heaven, had the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that these sacrifices were carried out correctly. While Emperor Wen did not reincorporate the mountains and rivers after the lords had failed to properly maintain their sacrifices, he did send forth imperially-appointed sacrificial officials to maintain the rites at these sites. We will see below how Emperor Wu continued this policy, going so far as to replace or relocate kings and lords in order to bring the named mountains and rivers under his direct authority. The reacquisition of the mountains and rivers was only one way in which Emperor Wu's cult practices changed the geography of empire, for his cult extended across the width of his domain, from the seas in the east to the farthest reach of the empire in the northwest.

Sima Qian's account of Emperor Wu's sacrificial program begins with a positive view of the emperor and on the state of affairs in the Han:

> 漢興已六十餘歲矣，天下艾安，縉紳之屬皆望天子封禪改正度也，而上鄉儒術，招賢良
>
> The Han had already been established for over sixty years, and All under Heaven was governed peacefully. All of the government officials hoped that the Son of Heaven would perform the *feng* and *shan* [sacrifices], reform the calendar, and regulate the weights and measures. [that he would] turn towards the Ru techniques and summon the good men to service.[198]

However, we will see that, although Emperor Wu did indeed accomplish all of these important reforms and sacrifices, according to Sima Qian, he turned towards the wrong types of people to assist him. Rather than employing the *Ru*, he often shunned them, and

[198] *Hanshu* 25A.1215; *Shiji* 28.1384.

chose instead to follow the advice of charlatans, many of whom claimed access to otherworldly knowledge and communion with the immortals.

Emperor Wu made his first imperial visit to perform the *jiao* sacrifice at Yong in 134 BCE, and this sacrifice was the beginning of a massive expansion of state cult, and a concentration of authority over sacrificial power in the person of the emperor. While Emperor Wu ultimately dictated what cults would be worshipped and where, he was forming these decisions on the advice of various individuals and groups. While Sima Qian indicates that the year after the death of the Empress Dowager, the "the next year he called up the scholars of the textual tradition" 其明年，徵文學之士[199] he is quick to alert the reader to the fact that Emperor Wu sought the advice of individuals outside of the textual traditions, and was quick to believe the often unbelievable claims of men who claimed to have personal knowledge of how to attain immortality, or personal connections with the immortals. While Emperor Wu loosely followed an annual sacrificial schedule, the sacrifices were frequently modified, moved, abolished, or established based on the advice of the outside advisors.

The first of these men to influence Emperor Wu was Li Shaojun 李少君. It was said that he was able to command animals; that he was in communion with the spirits; that he did not age; and, most importantly, that he was able to make a gift of his talents.[200] Li

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[199] *Hanshu* 25A.1215; *Shiji* 28.1384 reads 而上鄉儒術昭賢良。Martin Kern notes that the concept of *wen* 文 is always closely linked to its historical circumstances, and while the term *wenxue* 文學 eventually came to refer to the "Confucian" tradition, in the pre- and early-imperial period, it referred to those who studied the transmitted texts. By the late Western Han, this textual tradition came to include the imperially-sponsored canon. Martin Kern, "Ritual, Text, and the Formation of the Canon: Historical Transitions of "Wen" in Early China," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series 87.1/3 (2001): 48.

[200] *Hanshu* 25A.1216; *Shiji* 28.1385.

made his living by being skilled at recipes, and he was known for his strange tales of the past, which he claimed to have seen first hand. Li was an old man, but from hearing his stories, men at court assumed him to be a spirit, a misconception that he encouraged. Li told the emperor that:

> 祠竈皆可致物，致物而丹沙可化為黃金，黃金成以為飲食器則益壽，益壽而海中蓬萊僊者乃可見之，以封禪則不死，黃帝是也。臣嘗游海上，見安期生，安期生食臣棗，大如瓜。安期生僊者，通蓬萊中，合則見人，不合則隱。
>
> [If] you sacrifice to the stove, then you will be able to reach the ghostly spirits,[201] [through] reaching the spirits, then cinnabar can be transformed into yellow gold, yellow gold being created, then it can be used to make drinking and eating vessels, then [you can] prolong your life. [With] this prolonged life, then you can go to see the immortals of Penglai, in the middle of the sea. By means of this and the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice, then [you] will not die, this is how it was for the Yellow Thearch. I once travelled to the coast, [and] I saw An Qisheng.[202] An Qisheng fed me jujubes [that were] so big they resembled gourds. As for the immortal An Qisheng, he wanders through Penglai, he makes himself visible to those he likes, and hides from those he does not like.[203]

This was one of Emperor Wu's earliest attempts to find an elixir of immortality or to find the immortals of Penglai. He started to personally visit the altar of the grain and the stove,

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[201] Following Yan Shigu's 顏師古 (581-645 CE) commentary: 物亦謂鬼物
[202] An immortal.
[203] *Hanshu* 25A.1216-17; *Shiji* 28.1385.

and sent ten *fangshi* out to enter the sea to seek out the islands of Penglai and the immortal An Qisheng 安期生; they were also instructed to find a way to transform cinnabar into gold. However, after some time, Li Shaojun became ill and died, but many, including the emperor assumed that he had not died, but had instead completed his transformation into an immortal, and so the emperor sent more men to the coast to find his recipe. These men also met without luck. After these events, more and more *fangshi* claiming to have knowledge of the spirits appeared on the coasts of Yan and Qi.[204]

This account of Emperor Wu's interaction with Li Shaojun set the tenor of the relationship between the emperor and the outsiders who advised him throughout his reign. In the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* accounts, ten of these *fangshi* advisors to the emperor are named, while many more names are lost to history.[205] While the advice offered by these men differed in specifics, it generally did not stray away from the above themes.[206] Emperor Wu was instructed to establish new sacrifices, or revive neglected ones; he was told that it would be possible to seek the immortals of Penglai, if he just followed the correct

[204] *Hanshu* 25.1217; *Shiji* 28.1386.

[205] Sima Qian does not always specify if he includes an individual within the classification of *fangshi*. The ten I refer to are all those who practice the magical arts and advise the emperor on questions of immortality, and who appear to be outside of the literati tradition. In order of appearance these are: Li Shaojun 李少君, Kuan Shu 寬舒, Miu Ji 謬忌, Shao Weng 少翁, Youshui Fagen 游水發根, Luan Da 欒大, Gongsun Qing 公孫卿, Gongyu Dai 公玉帶, Ding Furen 丁夫人, and Yu Chu 虞初. On a number of occasions, the texts refer to memorials submitted by unnamed men, and on others, they note that these *fangshi* were accompanied by colleagues or assistants, and so the total number of advisors to the emperor must have been much larger. In addition to the *fangshi*, the emperor took advice from textual scholars, and even, on one occasion, the advice of Yong Zhi 勇之, from the recently conquered Yue people, incorporating some of their sacrifices.

[206] With the exception of Ding Furen and Yu Chu, who uttered curses against the Da Yuan and Xiongnu (in 104 BCE), the others all advised the emperor on various methods of attaining immortality, contacting spirits, or on the specifics of performance of sacrifices.

instructions; and he was reminded of the fact that if he followed the actions of the Yellow Thearch, then he, too, would be able to attain immortality. Some of these advisors died of natural causes, some were executed, and some outlived the emperor, but all were criticized by later scholar-officials for hoodwinking the emperor and leading him on a fruitless chase, to the neglect of affairs of state, and of depleting the empire's coffers. Interestingly, many of these advisors seem to have been familiar with both the plans proposed by their predecessors and their outcomes, and the more successful of the *fangshi* were able to build on the instructions of former advisors, and explain to the emperor why the former plans had failed to achieve their desired result. Sima Qian, prior to his remarks at the end of the chapter, informs the reader that towards the end of his life, the emperor himself had begun to tire of the schemes of the *fangshi* but was so obsessed with his quest for immortality, that he continued to take their advice:

> 天子益怠厭方士之怪迂語矣，然羈縻不絕，冀遇其真。自此之後，方士言神祠者彌眾，然其效可睹矣。
>
> The Son of Heaven was increasingly unsatisfied with the strange and circuitous speech of the *fangshi*, but he became increasingly bound to them, without breaking [his ties], all the while hoping to find one who knew the truth. After this time, the *fangshi* who spoke of the spirits and sacrifices became increasingly numerous, but the effects are as we have seen.[207]

[207] *Shiji* 28.1403-4 Here we see one of the differences between the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* accounts, for Ban Gu is far less critical of the *fangshi* and the emperor: 天子猶羈縻不絕，幾遇其真 (*Hanshu* 25A.1248)

Whether or not these advisors were concocting tales of spirits and immortality to intentionally hoodwink the emperor, or whether they truly believed, like Emperor Wu, that it was possible to become an immortal, we will never know.[208] The impression left by Sima Qian is that they were all charlatans and the emperor was so desperate to become an immortal that he was a fool to follow them. However, while the many excursions and sacrifices that the *fangshi* recommended to the emperor would not outlast the end of Emperor Wu's reign, and indeed, the sacrificial program would become dramatically scaled down in the Eastern Han, these *fangshi*, in encouraging the emperor to travel the empire, to build palaces and terraces, and to incorporate mantic knowledge from across the empire, had a long lasting effect on the empire, and on Chinese alchemy and science.[209]

One of the most decried, but most important features of Emperor Wu's imperial cult was that it required him to travel the empire to visit sacred locations or to search for the immortals. The emperor also engaged in many building projects of palaces, shrines, ceremonial halls, and terraces on which he performed his rites. Much of this construction took place on the advice of the *fangshi*, who encouraged him to build structures to entice the immortals, and other spirits, to come to him. While Emperor Wu was the last of the Han emperors to be so actively engaged in religious practices, he left behind a vast infrastructure of cult sites, sacrificial officials, and spiritual buildings which helped expand imperial institutions throughout the empire. Additionally, as the imperial cult was not the

[208] We do know of certain cases, such as Shaoweng, who attempted to create a false omen by feeding texts to a sacrificial cow and predicting their discovery, or Xinyuan Ping during Emperor Wen's time, who intentionally tried to deceive the rulers.

[209] The magical arts of the *fangshi* are seen by some as the precursor to later medical and omenological techniques, as well as providing some of the roots of later organized Daoism. See Cskiszentmihalyi, 408.

sole domain of the emperor, requiring as it did the participation of elites and commoners, the imperial cult performed an important social function of ritually prescribing and regulating the position of individuals within the social hierarchy of the empire. These consequences of Emperor Wu's imperial cult were the result of his experimentation in pursuit of immortality, which saw the emperor seek advice and elixirs across the many domains under his control. The imperial sacrificial program, far from being a failure, played a significant role in the expansion of ritual power in the mid-Western Han.

Imperial cult was concentrated primarily around four locations during Emperor Wu's reign: Yong, Ganquan, Mt. Tai, and Fenyin 汾陰, though the emperor also sacrificed at many other sites and made journeys to the coast in an attempt to find the immortals of Penglai. The first of these locations, Yong, discussed above, was the site most frequently visited by the emperor. While the altars to the Shangdi at Yong had been in existence since the time of the Qin state, and reached their final complement of five under Gaozu, activity at the site increased dramatically under Emperor Wu, who chose to personally perform the *jiao* sacrifice at the Five Altars with some degree of regularity. While the *Shiji* states that he performed the *jiao* at Yong once every three years, in the *Hanshu* "Annals" it is only recorded that he only performed it in person in 134, 123, 122, 114, 113, 110, 108, and 92 BCE,[210] suggesting that the emperor only performed the sacrifice in person when it was convenient, or deemed it to be particularly auspicious, rather than according to a strict sacrificial framework. There is nothing in either the biographies of the emperor or in the treatises on sacrifices to indicate why these irregularities existed, but it is likely that the

[210] The *Hanshu* records a visit to Yong in 129 BCE, but does not record a sacrifice in this year.

sacrifices were carried out on the emperor's behalf by the sacrificial officials in residence at Yong when the emperor himself did not travel to the site.

A few of these imperial sacrifices stand out for particular comment. In 122 BCE, a unicorn was captured while the emperor was performing the *jiao* sacrifice at Yong. As the unicorn was determined to be an auspicious omen from heaven, Emperor Wu ordered that each of the Five Emperors was to receive one additional ox as sacrifice. Additionally, each of the regional lords was given a silver coin to commemorate the occasion, and as Griet Vankeerberghen has noted, this was a way for the emperor to demonstrate and assert his authority over the regional lords.[211] Unlike the *princeps* in Rome, the emperor was not the first among equals, he was the Son of Heaven, and the supreme ruler of the empire. With this auspicious omen from Heaven, Emperor Wu began to expand imperial cult into sacred spaces throughout the empire, and in so doing, removed these spaces from the control of the regional lords and brought them under the authority of the court.

Of primary importance to the emperor were the Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue* 五嶽). At the time of Emperor Wu's reign, only two of these peaks, Songgao 嵩高, in the centre, and Mt. Hua 華山, in the west, were under control of the capital, while the other three, Mt. Tai, 泰山 in the east, Mt. Heng, in the south, and Mt. Hengg, in the north, were part of the kingdoms of Jibei 濟北, Hengshan 衡山, and Changshan 常山, respectively. For the emperor, it was important for all five of the peaks to be within his domain, as they had been during the time of the Yellow Thearch and Shun, and this quickly became clear to many of the regional lords. With remarkable foresight, in 122 BCE, the King of Jibei, having heard

[211] *Shiji* 28.1382; *Hanshu* 25A.1219; Griet Vankeerberghen, *The* Huainanzi *and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2001), 64.

rumour that the emperor was considering performing the *feng* sacrifice, submitted a memorial to the throne, presenting Mt. Tai and its surrounding cities (which were located within his kingdom) to the emperor as a gift. The emperor accepted this gift, and bestowed upon him another district in compensation.[212] Other rulers had less foresight, and the emperor had to resort to other means. Mt. Heng, in the kingdom of Hengshan, had been incorporated into the empire with the abolition of the kingdom in 122 BCE, due to the revolt of the king.[213] Mt. Hengg was located in the kingdom of Changshan, and on the pretext of resolving a messy succession in the kingdom (caused, we are told, by a queen with loose morals), the Kingdom of Changshan was abolished, its territory divided, and the two claimants to the throne were each given their own domains.[214] While we have few details about these events, the identical *Shiji* and *Hanshu* passages are explicit that these territorial claims were made to further the emperor's sacrificial program:

> 然後五嶽皆在天子之郡。
>
> After this, the Five Sacred Peaks were all within the commanderies of the Son of Heaven.[215]

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[212] *Hanshu* 25A.1219, *Shiji* 28.1387.

[213] *Hanshu* 44.2155-56. Ord notes that "The king's real offense was failure to take a hint," Edmund Burke Holladay Ord, "State Sacrifices in the Former Han Dynasties According to the Official Histories," PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley (1967), 232.

[214] *Hanshu* 25A.1219; *Shiji* 28.1387; *Hanshu* 53.2434-36. *Hanshu* 53, 景十三王傳 "Biographies of the Thirteen Sons of Emperor Jing" describes the affair. After abolishing the kingdom, the King of Changshan's son was made ruler of the region of Zhending 真定, within the former territory of the king, so that he could maintain the ancestral sacrifices. The chapter indicates that the emperor was lenient in assigning territory to each of the sons of King Xian, choosing to blame the offence on the licentious queen, rather than on the misguided sons. The section on the king of Changshan is very concise and makes no mention of the emperor's acquisition of Mt. Hengg.

[215] *Hanshu* 25A.1219; *Shiji* 28.1387.

The five peaks had formerly, according to legend, been sacred to the Yellow Thearch, who frequently visited them and sacrificed to them before he achieved immortality. Rather than simply resolve the succession struggle, or outright replace the king with another member of the Liu clan, Emperor Wu chose to divide the kingdom of Changshan, and keep for himself the territory surrounding Mt. Hengg. Liu Kuan 劉寬, the King of Jibei, may have suffered a similar fate had he not made the donation of Mt. Tai to the emperor, though he and his kingdom would only barely outlive the reign of Emperor Wu.[216] In 85 BCE, having had an affair with his step-mother and cursing the emperor during a sacrifice, he committed suicide, and Emperor Zhao reincorporated his land into the empire as Bei'an commandery.[217] While we have little information about the specifics of sacrifices at the mountains other than at Mt. Tai, the emperor did visit them on several occasions, and sacrifices to the mountains were performed by imperially-employed sacrificial officials.

The second *jiao* sacrifice at Yong that bears attention took place in 113 BCE. After performing the *jiao* to the Shangdi, Emperor Wu questioned his officials as to why there was a sacrifice to the Shangdi, but not to Houtu 后土, reasoning that if there was a sacrifice to the heavens, there should also be one to earth.[218] The officials, including the Grand Scribe Sima Tan and the Sacrificial Official, Kuanshu 寬舒, offered their thoughts to the emperor:

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[216] The King of Jibei, the nephew of Liu An and Liu Ci, Kings of Huainan and Hengshan, respectively, was also likely eager to avoid being charged with rebellion after the execution of his uncles. For more on the events of 123-122 BCE, see Vankeerberghen, *The* Huainanzi *and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority*, 55-60.
[217] *Hanshu* 44.2157.
[218] *Hanshu* 25A.1221; *Shiji* 28.1389.

> 天地牲角繭栗。今陛下親祠后土，后土宜於澤中圜丘為五壇，壇一黃犢牢具，已祠盡瘞。而從祠衣上黃。
>
> Heaven and Earth [were formerly] sacrificed to using an ox with horns the size of cocoons or millet. Now your majesty [wishes to] personally offers sacrifice to Houtu, [for the sacrifice to] Houtu, it is suitable to [sacrifice] on a round mound in the middle of a pond, [and there] to establish five altars. At the altars, [you should use] a yellow calf and a set of three sacrificial victims. After the sacrifice, they should be buried. From this, [it is appropriate that] the sacrificial clothes should honour [the colour] yellow.[219]

In the twelfth month, the emperor travelled to Fenyin (in Hedong) where a sacrificial altar was established at an auspicious location on the bank of the Fen river. The emperor offered his respects to Houtu in person, and the rites resembled those performed to the Shangdi, with the only change being that the offerings were buried in the ground, rather than burned, as was suitable for earth.[220] The establishment of the cult to Sovereign Earth was one of the more innovative aspects of Emperor Wu's program, and is exemplary of his willingness to listen to anyone and try anything. The cult to Sovereign Earth, while having roots in pre-Qin tradition, was a Han innovation, in order to address Emperor Wu's belief that there

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[219] *Hanshu* 25A.1221-22; *Shiji* 28.1389. On the sacrifices to Sovereign Earth, see Tian Tian *Qin-Han guojia jisi shigao* 秦漢國家祭祀史稿 (Beijing, Xin zhi san lian shu dian, 2015), 147-58 and Tang Xiaofeng, "Fenyin Houtu ci de diaocha yanjiu" 汾陰后土祠的調查研究, in *Jiuzhou, Vol. 4 Zhongguo dilixue shi zhuanhao* 九州。第四輯，中國地理學史專號 (Beijing, Shang wu yin shu guan, 2007).

[220] *Hanshu* 25A.1222; *Shiji* 28.1389. This is in accordance with the *Liji* "Ji Fa" 燔柴於泰壇，祭天也；瘞埋於泰折，祭地也. "With a blazing pile of wood on the Grand altar they sacrificed to Heaven; by burying (the victim) in the Grand mound, they sacrificed to the Earth." (Legge, trans. Vol. 28, 202-3)

should be a sacrifice to earth to correspond that to Heaven. This sacrifice became one of the most important in the Han canon,[221] but the emperor only visited this site to perform the sacrifice on four subsequent occasions, in 107, 105, 103, and 100 BCE, usually following a sacrifice to Taiyi at Ganquan. As with the other sacrificial locations, staff were employed to maintain the sacrifices. The site of Fenyin is notable for one more event, six months later: the discovery of a purportedly ancient and precious bronze *ding* in the river in the sixth month of the fifth year of Yuanding (元鼎 113 BCE).[222] Later scholars now believe this vessel to be the forgery cast and hidden by Xinyuan Ping under the reign of Emperor Wen, but during the reign of Emperor Wu, this vessel was believed to be a very real and important omen. The interpretation of this omen would shape the course of Emperor Wu's sacrificial practice, and in the debate over the tripod, Gongsun Qing, the most influential of the emperor's *fangshi* advisors, would triumph.

The discovery of the *ding* inspired some debate, in part because its discovery came at a time of unfortunate weather, but also because it did not resemble any other *ding*-type vessel known to the Han, bearing only a strange pattern rather than an inscription. The shaman who discovered it was questioned, but he was found to be without treachery, and the *ding* was accepted as authentic. Emperor Wu was confused: despite having offered sacrifices to the earth god in order to entreat the spirits for a good harvest, he had not yet performed the sacrifices required to repay the spirits for their blessing. It seemed odd to receive an omen such as this precious *ding* under these circumstances. His ministers argued that the *ding* was a sign that the emperor had received Heaven's mandate, and that the *ding*

[221] Tian, *Qin-Han guojia ji si shigao*, 154.
[222] The *Hanshu* biography records the discovery of two bronze *ding* at Fenyin, the first in the first year of Yuanding (116 BCE) for which the reign period took its name.

should be presented to the spirits in the ancestral temple and then stowed away in court, as a way to repay the blessing. The emperor approved of this recommendation.[223]

However, there remained some uncertainty, as the emperor continued to hear conflicting advice from other men. It was at this point that the man from Qi, Gongsun Qing 公孫卿, introduced himself into the emperor's circle. Qing wanted to present a memorial concerning the *ding* to the throne, but the official, Suo Zhong 所忠, to whom he presented it, read through the letter and believed that Qing had invented his story, and, moreover, that his letter did not accord with the Classics. He decided that as the debate over the *ding* had already reached a satisfactory conclusion, that he would not pass the memorial along. Qing was undeterred, and asked one of the emperor's concubines to submit it to him;[224] when the emperor received the letter, he was overtaken with joy, and immediately summoned Qing to court to discuss the matter.

In his letter, and presumably in their conversation, Gongsun Qing informed the emperor that the discovery of the *ding* was unrelated to the annual sacrifices. What it marked instead was that the conditions of the age were identical to those of Yellow Thearch. Qing informed the emperor that the coming year would being with the winter solstice at the beginning of the first month of the year, and that that day would be a *Xinsi* 辛巳 day.[225] Under similar cosmological conditions, as was certainly well known to Emperor Wu, the

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[223] *Hanshu* 25A.1225-26; *Shiji* 28.1392.

[224] The histories merely state that he was able to get the memorial passed to Emperor Wu by one of his favorites, but are silent as to how Gongsun Qing managed to speak with the concubine.

[225] The *Xinsi* day was the eighteenth day in the sexagenary cycle (干支). It was said that at the time of the Yellow Thearch's ascension into Heaven, the year had also begun with a *Xinsi* day.

Yellow Thearch had become an immortal and ascended heaven on the back of a dragon.[226] Qing claimed to have received the letter from an immortal named Master Shen 申公, also from Qi, who had been friendly with the immortal An Qisheng. The letter predicted that the "the sage of the Han is among Gaozu's sons and grandsons" and that he would be made known through the discovery of a precious *ding*, which would permit communication with the spirits 漢之聖者，在高祖之孫且曾孫也。寶鼎出而與神通.[227] Master Shen had told Gongsun Qing (according to Qing), that if the Han emperor were to perform the *feng* sacrifice at the summit of Mt. Tai, then he, too, would ascend to heaven as an immortal. These words obviously appealed to the emperor, who made Qing a Lang 郎 (Palace Attendant), and sent him east to await the spirits at Taishi 太室 (Mt. Songgao). Under the direction of Gongsun Qing, Emperor Wu greatly expanded both his sacrificial program and his search for the immortals.

The next thirteen years (to ca. 100 BCE) saw a flurry of cult activity as the emperor travelled back and forth across the empire to emulate the sacrificial practices of the Yellow Thearch and obtain communication with the immortal spirits. In the tenth month (the first civil month) of the sixth year of Yuanding, the emperor returned to Yong to perform the *jiao* sacrifice to the Shangdi. The next month, he travelled to the northwest, where he established the altar to Taiyi 太一 at Ganquan. Ganquan Mountain was located 100 km to the northwest of Chang'an. The first Han palace was built at the site by Emperor Wu in 119 BCE, on the recommendation of the *fangshi* Shaoweng 少翁,[228] but the location had

[226] *Hanshu* 25A.1227; *Shiji* 28.1394.
[227] *Hanshu* 25A.1228; *Shiji* 28.1393.
[228] *Hanshu* 25A.1219; *Shiji* 28.1388.

formerly been important during the Qin dynasty as the southern terminus of the *Zhidao*, the Qin Direct Road, which was built on the orders of Qin Shi Huang in 212 BCE. The road was to open a passage to the north, with a northern terminus at Jiuyuan (near Baotou 包頭, Inner Mongolia).[229] While the road was not completed,[230] it was an important part of the Qin campaigns against the Xiongnu, and Ganquan remained an important site on the border of the Han Empire.[231]

While Emperor Wu had visited Ganquan on several occasions prior to 113 BCE, it was only after this point when it became an important part of his cult.[232] This was largely due to the fact that Gongsun Qing had informed him that the Yellow Thearch came into contact with the spirits there, at Mingting (明庭) which was identified as Ganquan.[233] On the Winter Solstice, the first day (*xinsi*) of the eleventh month of the 6th year of Yuanding (Dec. 24, 113 BCE), the emperor once again performed a *jiao* sacrifice, this time to the altars of Taiyi, and to the altars of the Five Emperors which surrounded it. Emperor Wu performed the *jiao* to Taiyi and to the Five Emperors again in the fourth month of 107 BCE, the first month of 100 BCE (now the beginning of the civil year), and in the first month of 88 BCE,

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[229] Charles Sanft, "Debating the Route of the Qin Direct Road (Zhidao): Text and Excavation," *Frontiers of History in China* 6.3 (2011): 326-27; *Shiji* 6.241.
[230] *Shiji* 88.2566-67.
[231] The area remained contested until the campaigns during Emperor Wu's reign, in 166 BCE, the fourteenth year of Emperor Wen's reign, the Xiongnu Shanyu led forces into Han territory and scouts went as far as Ganquan palace. *Shiji* 110.2901.
[232] In 119 BCE, on the advice of the *fangshi* Shaoweng, he built at Ganquan, and again in 118 BCE, on the advice of a shaman, in order to cure his illness. Cf. Li Ling, "An Archaeological Study of Taiyi (Grand One) Worship" Donald Harper, trans. *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995-96): 4; *Sanfu Huangtu*, 70-71.
[233] *Hanshu* 25A.1230; *Shiji* 28.1394. 其後黃帝接萬靈明庭。明庭者，甘泉也。This is also noted in the *Sanfu Huangtu*, which, citing the "Guanfu Ji" states that the Yellow Thearch would sacrifice to Heaven at the round mound at Ganquan." 黃帝以來圜丘祭天處. (*Sanfu Huangtu*, 47)

though he visited the site on at least seven other occasions (111, 105, 97, 94, 91, 89, and 87 BCE). In 105 BCE, again on the advice of Gongsun Qing, Emperor Wu began holding court at Ganquan, and decreed that residences must be maintained for the Regional Lords at the site (a similar requirement would be made at Mt. Tai), and on this occasion, he received the "accounts" from the regional lords (受計與甘泉).[234] Court was held for the regional lords again in 97 and 87 BCE. In 94 BCE, Emperor Wu travelled to Ganquan to banquet guests from foreign countries (though the *Hanshu* does not specify which countries specifically: 饗外國客),[235] and this trend would be continued by Emperor Xuan 漢宣帝 (r. 73 – 49 BCE), who on two occasions even required that the Xiongnu Shanyu himself come to pay court.[236]

This final point is important, though it is not emphasized by the *Hanshu*. Ganquan was a site that was sacred to the Xiongnu; it was a mountainous region where they worshipped heaven,[237] and Emperor Wu's adoption of Ganquan as a place sacred to the Han can thus be seen as a form of spiritual imperialism. Given the Han's knowledge of

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[234] *Hanshu* 6.199. The *Hanshu* records the receiving of these accounts in two other years, 106 BCE and 98 BCE, both at the *mingtang* at Mt. Tai.
[235] *Hanshu* 6.206.
[236] *Hanshu* 25B.1253. The use of Ganquan palace corresponds to the end of Nicola di Cosmo's "second phase" of Han expansion in the north west, and the pursuit of further expansion after consolidating the northern border. Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies*, 241-44. The Xiongnu did not formally accept Han superiority until 51 BCE, during the reign of Emperor Xuan (ibid., 206).
[237] Guan Donggui 管東貴, "Qin-Han Ganquan gong xiaoshi" 秦漢甘泉宮小識", in *Kaogu yu lishi wenhua: Qingzhu Gua Quxun xiansheng bashi dashou lunwen ji (xia)* 考古與歷史文化：慶祝刮去尋先生八士大壽論文集（下）, (Taipei, Chengchung shuju, 1991), 54, and *Sanfu Huangtu* 67-82 on the importance of the site and its various palaces.

the Xiongnu and their customs,[238] it is likely that Emperor Wu and his advisors knew of the spiritual power of Ganquan; however, nowhere in the rhetoric, that is preserved, of Emperor Wu or his officials is this point enumerated. Prior to the establishment of the sacrifices to Taiyi at Ganquan, an altar to Taiyi had been established in the southwest suburb of Chang'an, yet shortly thereafter Ganquan was chosen as a more spiritually efficacious site. Rather than seeing the use of Ganquan as an affront against the Xiongnu, it is more likely that Emperor Wu and his advisors made use of every location that they believed was suitable to communicate with heaven in his pursuit of immortality, though the increasing importance of the Ganquan site also indicates the importance which Emperor Wu placed on the conquest of the western regions. While it would appear that Emperor Wu did not achieve immortality there, Ganquan was an important symbol of imperial unity: not only did it represent Emperor Wu's triumphs against the Xiongnu and provide him with a location closer to the ongoing campaigns, it was also a meeting point for all of the nobles; a sacred location where the emperor could call them all together, and where no one was in doubt as to who was truly the ruler of All under Heaven.

Notwithstanding the importance of this site and the numerous sacrifices established at Ganquan, Emperor Wu continued to pursue other avenues to achieve immortality. Despite his best efforts, he had still not personally met any immortals, yet rumours of them continued to reach his ears. His ear was bent increasingly towards Gongsun Qing. Qing, who had been waiting in the east for news from the immortals, announced to the emperor (in the winter of 113 BCE) that he had seen footprints of the immortals at the top of the

[238] See for example *Shiji* 110, *Hanshu* 96, and *Huainanzi* 11. Sima Qian (*Shiji* 11.2892), however, identified an alternate site for the Xiongnu's worship of heaven, at Longcheng, which Di Cosmo places in modern Inner Mongolia.

city wall near Mt. Goushi 緱氏. In addition to the footprints of the immortals, pheasants had come to fly over that location.[239] When the emperor went to observe for himself, he challenged Gongsun Qing, asking him if he was not simply falsifying omens in order to remain in the emperor's good graces, and gently reminded him that his predecessors had been executed.[240] Qing reminded the emperor that although he may be the supreme man on earth, the immortals were still above him, and that rather than wait for the immortals to come to him, he should instead pursue them more ardently:

> 卿曰：「仙者非有求人主，人主者求之。其道非少寬暇，神不來。言神事，如迂誕，積以歲，乃可致。」
>
> [Gongsun] Qing said: "As for the immortals, they do not seek the master of men, it is the master of men [who should] seek them. If one is not open-minded on this path, [then] the spirits will not come. Speaking of the affairs of the spirits [sounds like] talking in wild circles, but after many years [of pursuit/discussion] then [the spirits] can [be caused to] arrive.[241]

After hearing these words, the emperor increased his pursuit of the immortals, and word soon travelled that the emperor intended to perform even more sacrificial tours.

He continued to rely on the advice of Gongsun Qing, who was given increasingly important tasks. In 110 BCE, when the emperor went on an inspection tour to the east,

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[239] Pheasants were another symbol of the immortals, connected with the Chen Bao cult at Yong; the immortal would often appear as either male or female pheasants. Tian Tian, "Chunqiu Zhanguo Qinguo ci si kao," 39.
[240] Emperor Wu asked him if he was not following the example of two previous *fangshi*, Shaoweng and Luan Da, who had both been executed for their deception (Shaoweng) and failure (Luan Da). *Shiji* 28.1396; *Hanshu* 25A.1232.
[241] *Hanshu* 25A.1232; *Shiji* 28.1396.

Gongsun Qing was sent ahead of the emperor with the imperial seals, in an attempt to find the immortals and inform them of the emperor's impending arrival. At Mt. Donglai 東萊, he reported that he had encountered a giant (perhaps the one responsible for the footprints on the city wall at Goushi), but when he approached it, the giant disappeared, leaving only more footprints.[242] A nameless minister reported that he had seen an old man walking a dog who had said "I desire to see the Great Lord" 吾欲見巨公 and this man also abruptly disappeared when the minister approached him.[243] The emperor had gone to inspect the footprints, and was beginning to suspect that Gongsun Qing's grasp on the truth was tenuous at best, but was convinced of the events when he heard the report of the man with the dog.[244] The emperor provided the *fangshi* with carriages so that they could travel around more easily, and sent out several thousand more men to search for the immortals.[245]

Had Gongsun Qing been proven a charlatan at this point in time, Emperor Wu's sacrificial program might have changed dramatically. For while these events were occurring, the emperor and his officials were drawing up plans for the highest of all sacrifices, the sacrifices which had only been achieved by the ancient sage kings the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.[246] As with all of his other projects, Emperor Wu once again sought the advice of both his ministers and any others with knowledge of spiritual affairs. While the first seed about the *feng* and *shan* had been planted in the emperor's mind by Li Shaojun, it was Gongsun Qing's tale of the Yellow Thearch that convinced the emperor to emulate

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[242] *Hanshu* 25A.1235; *Shiji* 28.1397.
[243] *Hanshu* 25A.1235; *Shiji* 28.1397.
[244] *Hanshu* 25A.1235; *Shiji* 28.1397-98.
[245] While these numbers are likely inflated, it is clear that the emperor was sending out many more men than Sima Qian believed he should
[246] Notably, the historians suggest that Qin Shi Huang, in his assent of Mt. Tai attempted to perform a *feng* sacrifice, but failed.

his sacrificial program and eventually perform the *feng* and *shan*, discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

Though the emperor had performed all of the sacrifices according to the methods outlined by the *fangshi* and the Ru scholars, the immortals (and immortality) continued to elude him. He continued to travel and sacrifice, and sent more and more men out to seek the immortals of Penglai, but after establishing the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, there were few changes made to the rituals already in place. In the second year of *Taishi* 太始 (95 BCE), the emperor issued an edict,[247] discussing whether or not the *jiao* sacrifice to the Shangdi needed to be modified, and the *jiao* to Shangdi continued to alternate between Yong and Ganquan. He continued to seek the advice of Gongsun Qing, who assured him that the immortals would soon present themselves, if only he would build more terraces and palaces, and provide Qing himself with even more rank and privileges. However, it seems that Emperor Wu did not attain the immortality he so desperately sought, as he died at Ganquan palace in 87 BCE.

No other Han emperor was as diligent as Emperor Wu in his sacrificial program, and Emperor Wu remained the only Han emperor to perform the *feng* and *shan* until Emperor Guangwu of the Eastern Han 漢光武 (r. 25 – 57 CE) According to the *Hanshu*, although there was much abundance during his reign, Wu's heir, Emperor Zhao 昭帝 (r. 87 – 74 BCE), did not personally travel and sacrifice.[248] Emperor Xuan, upon taking the throne, was concerned about the fact that the imperial sacrifices had been allowed to lapse, and so

[247] *Hanshu* 6.206.
[248] *Hanshu* 25B.1248. The *Shiji* chapter on which the *Hanshu* chapter is based ends with the death of Emperor Wu.

he began to revive the cults that had been established by Emperor Wu, performing the *jiao* sacrifice to Taiyi at Ganquan in the first month of 62 BCE and in the third month, he performed the sacrifice to Houtu at Hedong.[249] In an attempt to regulate the often haphazard timing of sacrifices under Emperor Wu, he issued an edict stating that there should be regular annual and seasonal sacrifices at the five named mountains and the four rivers. Mt. Tai was to have five sacrifices per year, while the Jiang river had four; the other mountains and rivers each received three sacrifices.[250]

3.7 Imperial Cult and Empire

As the above discussion has demonstrated, the Qin and early Han emperors certainly undertook religious activity out of motivations for their own personal welfare (to use Poo Mu-chou's phrase), but they did so in ways which corresponded with their political aims. Qin Shi Huang, distinguishing himself from earlier rulers by his title as well as his achievements, set out on a series of inspection tours of his newly-formed empire, in order to not only survey the domains and peoples under his control, but to gain knowledge of cult practices from the east. His mountain sacrifices were also a way to demonstrate his dominance over the land – its peoples as well as its spirits.[251] Gaozu, although not as involved in cult activities as other emperors, merely added to the sacrificial altars at Yong,

[249] Emperor Xuan was here following precedent set by Emperor Wu, who frequently performed the *jiao* at Ganquan in the first month, followed by the sacrifice to Houtu in the third.
[250] *Hanshu* 25B.1249.
[251] The clearest example of this is in 218 BCE, when after encountering strong winds which almost prevented him from crossing the Huai River, he denuded Mr. Xiang, in order to punish the deity who he believed had caused the heavy winds. *Shiji* 6.248. Watson, *Qin* 49-50. See also Charles Sanft, "Progress and Publicity in Early China: Qin Shihuang, Ritual, and Common Knowledge," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 22.1 (2008): 25.

perhaps with the intention to adding himself to the ranks of the Shangdi. Emperor Wen, long considered the most pragmatic of Han emperors, briefly entertained the notion of modelling himself on the Yellow Thearch, and took steps to establish sacrifices and initiate cosmic reforms that would lead him on the path to immortality. Had the chicanery of Xinyuan Ping not been discovered and the reforms abandoned, Emperor Wen may have continued along this road. Emperor Wu, the most active of the Han emperors in state cult followed in the footsteps of his predecessors, actively pursuing immortality and the worship of the spirits with such desperation that, despite discovering deceit on numerous occasions, he continued to increase the sacrifices and inspection tours according to the teachings of the *fangshi* who had ingratiated themselves with him. Emperor Wu's vision of immortality was one which required a particular geography of empire, one which included the five sacred peaks under his sole rule, and so while the most obvious impact of his cult reforms on imperial unity was the (re)acquisition of three of the five sacred peaks, it was by no means the only one. While Emperor Wu's inspection tours in some respects resemble those of the First Emperor, the tours were made for religious, rather than political reasons. Perhaps this was an attempt to avoid people making parallels between the two rulers, just as Augustus took steps to avoid certain comparisons with his adoptive father, Julius Caesar.

There were three facets to the expansion of imperial cult that had a lasting impact on the stability of empire that are generally overlooked, for they are not made explicit in the standard histories. These three elements are, 1) the sacrificial networks established by the emperor at the various sacred locations, 2) the inherent imperialism in the sacrificial tours themselves, and, 3) the rewards issued to the populations throughout the empire and

particularly in the regions through which the sacrificial tours passed. As the histories focus on the people involved in the expansion of imperial cult, as well as their motivations, be they the emperors' pursuit of immortality or the desire for fame and fortune of the *fangshi*, we lose sight of the bigger picture: that the sacrifices took place across a vast territory, and mobilized large numbers of people, from commoner to king.

As the expansion of state cult was much greater and much better documented under Emperor Wu, I will focus primarily in what follows in the changes made during his reign, though examples will be drawn from previous emperors when appropriate.

3.7.1 Sacrificial Networks

It is clear from the above that as the imperial cult expanded, it became impossible for the emperor to perform all of the sacrifices himself. Indeed, this did not seem to be a problem at all – the sacrificial system was designed so that officiants could offer sacrifice on the emperor's behalf, and ensured that all of the proper steps were taken in sacrificing to the spirits. As we have seen, each of the important sacrificial locations were staffed by officials who were responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the ritual locations, as well as performing the necessary rituals, large and small. Indeed, it was not until the reign of Emperor Wu that the emperor personally regularly officiated the important sacrifices.[252] In years when the emperor himself visited the sacrificial location, presumably these officiants would have acted as assistants, not only facilitating the emperor's performance

[252] To give but the example of Yong, neither of the Qin emperors sacrificed personally to the Shangdi; Gaozu established a fifth shrine, but did not sacrifice; Emperor Wen increased the sacrifices at Yong, and sacrificed on one occasion, before establishing a second temple to the Five Di north of the Wei river; Emperor Wu sacrificed frequently, but not according to a fixed schedule

of a sacrifice, but also ensuring that it was performed correctly. These sacrificial officials were under the supervision of the Superintendent of Ceremonial (the *fengchang* 奉常 or *taichang* 太常),[253] who was also responsible for the supervision of the Grand Scribe, the Grand Diviner (*taibu* 太卜), and the erudites (*boshi* 博士).[254] The rituals performed throughout the empire were connected to the centre, under the supervision of this high-ranking official.[255] The establishment of sacrificial officials at important locations throughout the empire, some of which had been recently appropriated from kingdoms, contributed to the development of imperially promulgated networks, along with the infrastructure that went with it. While most of our information about these sacrificial networks are allusions in the histories, on several occasions they mention the existence of sacrificial officials at important cult locations, and, in the case of Emperor Wen, we know that the emperor ordered a *Taizhu* 太祝 (Director of Prayer) to ensure that the sacrifices to the mountains and rivers were carried out properly, in kingdoms that had been temporarily abolished.[256] After Emperor Wu sacrificed at Mt. Songgao, he established a town of three

[253] This position, occupied by a holder of noble rank, was often dangerous, and there are many instances wherein the holder of this post was accused of ritual impropriety, and stripped of his rank and title, suggesting that perhaps this position was highly politicized. See Griet Vankeerberghen, "Of Gold and Purple: Nobles in Western Han China and Republican Rome" (forthcoming in Hans Beck and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds., *Citizens and Commoners in Greece, Rome, and China*) and *Hanshu* 19B.771ff.
[254] *Hanshu* 19A.726, Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980), 17-23.
[255] As Luke Habberstad has demonstrated, the responsibilities of the Superintendent of Ceremonial declined dramatically with the ritual reforms in the late Western Han. Habberstad, "Legalizing Ritual: Critiques of Imperial Cults and the Ascendance of Ritual over Law During the Western Han," paper delivered at the "Empire and the Media of Religion" Workshop, UCLA, May 2015.
[256] *Shiji* 28.1380; *Hanshu* 25A.1212.

hundred households to maintain the sacrifices.[257] When the mountains and rivers were outside of the jurisdiction of the Han court, the kings or lords of that domain were responsible for making the sacrifice, but there could be imperial repercussions for failure to do so. What this sacrificial oversight looked like on the ground, we do not know. However, it likely would have encouraged compliance with the wishes of the imperial court, at least insofar as observations of ritual propriety were concerned. Failure to correctly follow ritual prescriptions could, at times, be very dangerous for the emperor's inferiors. In 112 BCE, one hundred and six nobles were purged of their titles and their domains for failing to correctly observe ritual propriety when presenting the emperor with contributions for his sacrificial programme.[258] While this purge was likely political, as it had been common for nobles to pay their dues in cash rather than in kind, this purge reinforced the court's willingness to use ritual prescriptions to further political aims. By staffing spiritually-important locations with imperially-appointed sacrificial officials, the Han i*mperium* was granting itself the prerogative to ensure that sacrifices were being performed according to the imperial court's wishes.

The locations where the emperor sacrificed were important, not only for their spiritual significance. Many of the emperor's tours went to the eastern regions, regions that had

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[257] *Shiji* 12.474; 28.1397; *Hanshu* 6.190. According to Roel Sterckx, this would have amounted to a population of approximately 1500 people to provide sacrifice at this one mountain. Roel Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, and Sagehood in Early China* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 136. The establishment of towns to maintain sacrifices was particularly common near mausoleums; see, Michael Loewe, "The Tombs Built for Han Chengdi and Migrations of the Population," in *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*, Michael Nylan and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds. (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2015).

[258] The nobles had sent gold instead of wine for offerings in the ancestral temple, and while this was a common practice, it went against ritual prescriptions. Loewe, "The Former Han Dynasty," 159; Brashier, *Ancestral Memory in Early China*, 114-23; *Hanshu* 6.187.

long maintained semi-autonomy from the Han court. As the emperor travelled not only with his sacrificial advisors, but with much of the court, these sites became loci of imperial power themselves. As Tian Tian has argued, "As the important cult sites such as Yong, Sweet Springs [Ganquan], and Mount Tai often served as centers of political and administrative activities, this dispersal of cult sites over a very wide area might well have diluted the importance of the imperial capital. Probably the decision to combine political progresses with cultic activities at key sites was aimed at building a 'control network' throughout the empire."[259] Unlike the consolidation of religious authority under Julius Caesar and Augustus which was confined to the city of Rome (see Chapter Four), Emperor Wu's religious authority, and his corresponding political authority, extended across the empire. This territorial expansion of cult, and with it the movement of the political centre across the empire is natural given that the Han empire did not expand outward from a single city, as the Roman empire had.[260] Lewis has described the Han cities as "transitory phenomena built of perishable substances"[261] unlike the Roman capital, which Augustus "found (…) built of brick and left [it] in marble,"[262] and while the Han capital was the centre of the empire, during the reign of Emperor Wu, the emperor and his officials spent much of their time outside of the capital. While the Han capital was in the west at Chang'an, Han authority travelled with the emperor across the realm, and "the Han house came to

[259] Tian Tian, *Qin-Han guojia jisi shigao*, 270.
[260] The court's ties to the capital began to change in the late Western Han, particularly under the reign of Emperor Cheng. See the recent volume *Chang'an in 26 BCE* (Nylan and Vankeerberghen, eds.) for the development of the capital in the late Western Han.
[261] Mark Edward Lewis, "Public Spaces in Cities in the Roman and Han Empires," in *State Power in Ancient China and Rome*, Walter Scheidel, ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), 205.
[262] Suet. *Lives*. II.28.

justify its rule through its ability to transcend all local ties and limitations."[263] One of the ways in which they were able to do so, was through this expansion of religious authority.

3.7.2 Imperial Tours

While imperial inspection tours had a long history, that can be traced back to both the legendary sage kings and to the historical kings of the Western Zhou, during the Qin and Han, inspection tours became linked with the sacrifices offered by the emperors at the sacred locations in the empire, connecting the system of inspection tours of the Zhou kings with the new political culture of the Qin and Han.[264] These imperial tours reached their apex under Emperor Wu. He went on over thirty imperial tours in his fifty-three-year reign, and it is generally recognized by scholars that these tours helped to enforce imperial regulations and standards throughout the empire, as well as to promote the image of the emperor in far-flung regions.[265] While the emperor would not have been directly visible to the population, the tours were large, consisting of soldiers, guards, officials, and assistants/servants to the emperor, and often carried with them numerous sacrificial objects and rare animals. These large processions would likely have made manifest the emperor's power and grandeur as he travelled around the empire.

Unfortunately, there are no records that tell us in detail what an imperial tour might have looked like, and so the image must be pieced together from various inferences in the texts. The rulers of the pre-Qin period levied troops to accompany them on inspection

[263] Ibid., 222.
[264] He Pingli 何平立, *Xunshou yu fengshan: fengshan zhenzhi de wenhua guiji* 巡狩與封禪：封禪的文化軌跡 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 2003) 118.
[265] See for example, Sanft, "Progress and Publicity," on the First Emperor's tours, He Pingli, 150, and Tian Tian, *Qin-Han guojia jisi shigao*, 270.

tours, as the roads were full of perils, and we know that Qin Shi Huang also travelled with his army.[266] Not only was there the very real possibility of an attack on the imperial convoy, as happened to Qin Shi Huang in 218 BCE, but the roads and mountain passes were sometimes blocked by bandits.[267] The emperors were also travelling across varied and difficult territory, summiting mountains and visiting rivers, and they would have required manpower to build or repair roads and bridges that led them across these perilous paths. One of the prime arguments during Emperor Cheng's reign in favour of consolidating the sacrifices in the capital at Chang'an was the difficulties in reaching the various sacrificial locations, and the implication that ritual objects were often lost in the journey.[268] During the reign of Emperor Wu, the imperial tours were stated to be more concerned with contacting spirits than with inspecting the commanderies and states, but they nonetheless retained the nomenclature of former times. While we have no documents detailing the reason for this, I suspect that the emperor may have been attempting to distance himself from the First Emperor's precedent: rather than being seen as the conqueror of the known world, surveying his new land, Emperor Wu sometimes combined his inspections with sacrifices, and sometimes adapted his sacrificial schedule to fit with inspection tours.[269] The tours themselves demonstrate a great deal of flexibility: as with the important sacrifices, we see no real consistency in the emperor's travels. At the beginning of Emperor Wu's reign, the imperial tours primarily went to Yong or Ganquan, sites to which roads had long

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[266] He Pingli, 100.
[267] *Shiji* 6.249, 55.2034; *Hanshu* 6.204.
[268] *Hanshu* 25B.1253. Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris: Farnborough, Gregg, 1969 (1910)) provides a description of the terrain surrounding Mt. Tai in the early twentieth century, with a discussion of the role of the mountain in China's religious history.
[269] Ironically, this was stymied by Sima Qian's insistence on making that very comparison.

been established, but, as he pursued immortality with more fervour, the tours went to locations that were increasingly far from the capital. Between 113 and his death in 87 BCE, there are only three years in which the emperor did not undertake some kind of tour, and he often spent months at a time on the road.[270] Prior to 113 BCE, the *Hanshu* biography only records visits to Yong and Ganquan, whereas after 113 BCE, the tours took him to a variety of sites.[271] While Yong, Ganquan, and Mt. Tai remained the three most frequently visited locations, the emperor also toured through the east, stopping at sites where he believed, on the advice of the *fangshi*, that he would meet the immortals.

According to Mark Edward Lewis,

> Evoking the theme of universal lordship, they [the *fangshi*] reworked the old royal processions as magic circuits which traced the cosmic mandala of the four directions, with the nodal points marked by the Five Sacred Peaks…[272]

However, this interpretation reads a far too coherent ideology into the emperor's tours, and there is nothing in the treatise to suggest that this was the case. Rather than systematically sacrificing at the great mountains and rivers, as Lewis would suggest, the emperor sacrificed to them when convenient, when he was passing through those regions, as it were. It was ultimately not so important that the emperor personally perform the rites to the mountains and rivers, just as it was not of the utmost importance that he personally perform the *jiao* at Yong. When the emperor was in the vicinity of the sacred locations, he

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[270] Yuanfeng 3rd Year (108), Taichu 4th Year (101), and Taishi 1st Year (96).
[271] To Yong in Yuanguang 2nd and 6th year (134 and 130), Yuanshuo 1st and 2nd Year (122, 121), and to Ganquan in Yuanshuo 4th year (125).
[272] Mark Edward Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 79.

performed the sacrifices in person: “He performed the rites and sacrifices to the named mountains and great rivers when he passed through [their locations]” 所過禮祠其名山大川.[273] However, there was no systematic pattern or “magic circuit” which the emperor completed. Just as there was no real consistency with which the emperor travelled to the mountains and rivers, though we are led to understand that the sacrifices took place regardless of his presence, neither, over the course of the pre- and early-imperial periods, did the great mountains and rivers remain consistent. Sima Qian himself remarks on the many changes and of the impossibility of providing a comprehensive history:

> 自五帝以至秦，軟興軟衰，名山、大川或在諸侯，或在天子，其禮損益世殊，不可勝記。
>
> From the time of the ancient Five Emperors down to the Qin, periods of strong central government alternated with periods of decay, and the famous mountains and great rivers were sometimes in the possession of the regional lords and sometimes in the possession of the Son of Heaven. The rituals employed in the worship of these places, therefore, were often changed and varied from age to age. It is consequently impossible to give a detailed description of them.[274]

The histories provide lengthy lists of the various mountains and rivers that were designated as being worthy of sacrifice. Under the First Emperor, a multitude of mountains and rivers were sacrificed to, classified into two groups, “East of Mt. Yao” 崤以東 and “West of Mt.

[273] *Hanshu* 6.196.
[274] *Shiji* 28.1371. Watson, *Han II,* 16. *Hanshu* 25A.1206.

Hua." 華液西[275] Under Emperor Wu, the concern was primarily with the Five Sacred Peaks (*wu yue* 五嶽), and the other "famous mountains and great rivers" 名山大川 were no longer a part of the corpus of imperial sacrifices.[276] This choice was significant, as these Five Peaks were those visited by Shun on his inspection tours, travelling east to Mt. Tai in the second month of the year, south to Mt. Heng in the fifth month, west to Mt. Hua in the eighth month, north to Mt. Hengg in the eleventh month, with Mt. Songgao in the centre.[277] While Emperor Wu succeeded in uniting all five peaks under imperial control, his processions were not so consistent as those of Shun, but he was, like Emperor Wen before him, able to ensure that the sacrifices to these mountains took place consistently.

Lewis is right, however, to attribute the emperor's tours to the advice of the *fangshi*. While few *fangshi* appear in the biographical chapters of the *Hanshu*, the treatise makes it clear that these tours were inspired by Emperor Wu's quest to find the immortals. The proliferation of imperial tours began in 113 BCE, when Gongsun Qing began to bend Emperor Wu's ear. While the emperor had sent out many missions prior to 113 BCE to seek the immortals of Penglai, he had heretofore not pursued them himself, but as Qing instructed him that the immortals would only respond if he personally sought them, he began to more actively pursue his sacrificial program. The imperial progresses made by

[275] The number of mountains worshipped under the First Emperor expanded to included five mountains and two rivers east of Mt. Yao, seven mountains and four rivers from Mt. Hua to the west, seven rivers around the capital area, and other miscellaneous mountains and rivers. The *Shiji* notes that the rituals were not always the same for each of these. Mt. Yao is located between Chang'an and Luoyang, and Mt. Hua is approximately 120km west of Xi'an.

[276] Tian Tian, "Dong Han shanchuan jisi yanjiu: Yi shike shiliao wei zhongxin" 東漢山川祭祀研 究: 以石刻史料為中心, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢, 1 (2011): 106.

[277] *Shiji* 28.1355-56; *Hanshu* 25A.1191.

Emperor Wu were thus directly related to his quest for immortality: he performed the sacrifices he believed would bring him into contact with the immortals, and he travelled to those locations where they had been reported to have been seen, particularly Goushi and the eastern coast. Indeed, the imperial tours increased in the years immediately prior to the emperor's death in 87 BCE, and he travelled more frequently to the coast in those years. These tours occurred during the years of the emperor's life when he would have been least capable of undertaking them – no longer a young man, travelling across the empire in chariots over dirt roads must have been quite unpleasant for a man in his late sixties, and this only emphasizes the desperation he must have felt as he continued to age without any contact with the immortals.

While the ultimate goal of these imperial tours, the attainment of immortality for Emperor Wu, failed, they were very effective in another regard: in establishing the presence of the emperor and his agents throughout the empire. As seen above, the emperor's sacrificial program resulted in the union of all five named mountains under direct control and also in the establishment of imperially-appointed sacrificial officials at the designated locations throughout the empire, but it also served to publicize the emperor's presence and might throughout the empire. This argument is not new, nor were the Qin and Han emperors the first or last to pursue this strategy. He Pingli has argued that Emperor Wu's *feng* and *shan* sacrifices were part of large-scale publicity campaigns,[278] and Charles Sanft has argued that Qin Shi Huang's imperial tours promoted the idea of the emperor throughout the empire, even to those who had not personally seen him or the tours.[279]

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[278] He Pingli, 169.

[279] Sanft, using Michael Suk-young Chwe's theory, argues that communicating the knowledge of a new regime was essential to the longevity of that regime.

While we have no evidence for how the commoners reacted to the processions of Emperor Wu, at least among the elites, the tours served to inform them of his rule, and of his elevated position. Not only did the sacrificial tours transport the emperor and his very large entourage across the land, they also required the regional lords and kings to travel to him.[280] As seen above, it was decreed that the regional lords and kings must maintain residences at both Mt. Tai and Ganquan, and on several occasions the emperor received them at one of these locations. The important sacrifices were marked not solely as ritual occasions, where the emperor communed with the spirits, but also as important political occasions, where the emperor met with the regional lords and kings. Politics and religion were not separate; the regional lords met the emperor on these important spiritual moments, and were reminded of their position, both figuratively and literally, within the empire.

I have hinted above that the impression of the common people, as explained by Sanft in his discussion of Qin Shi Huang's inspection tours, were ultimately less important to imperial unity than that of the regional lords. However, this is not to suggest that the common people were not important: indeed, as the Han well knew from the history of the Qin, the commoners could be instrumental in determining the legitimacy of a dynasty. What I suggest is that the commoners were less concerned with dynastic legitimacy, with imperial pageantry, than they were, like the emperor, with their own personal welfare. I am not convinced, given the speed of communication, that individuals outside of the imperial or local bureaucracy would have been concerned with the emperor himself; rather, they would have been concerned only with the ways in which his policies affected their

[280] The *zhuhou wang* had an obligation to travel to the court at certain times of the year, but Emperor Wu's sacrificial schedule frequently changed the location of these meetings.

everyday life. The emperor was himself concerned with this: in addition to the amnesties and exemptions that were given to the people, on at least one occasion, the emperor sent out envoys to investigate the conditions of the commanderies, and had them report any officials who had been exploiting the population.[281] Indeed, given the flow of communication in the ancient world, it is likely that, with some exceptions, commoners were probably not particularly concerned with, or aware of, the high level politics at court. The question remains, then, how these exceptionally expensive imperial tours could have inspired the complicity of the commoners.

3.7.3 Rewards and Honours

While we have no data for the number of men, animals, and goods that were transported across the Han with the emperor, it is apparent that these tours were exceedingly costly, both in terms of manpower and finances. These costs, ultimately, were borne by the people themselves, as they were the ones who provided the labour and taxes that were used to finance the emperor's tours. However, rather than seeing popular opinion turn against an onerous governmental program (as the people did against Qin Shi Huang's successor, Qin Er Shi), there is evidence to suggest that the commanderies *desired* an imperial visit. The *Shiji* notes that, after once again increasing the number of sacrifices and imperial tours on the advice of Gongsun Qing in 113 BCE,

> 於是郡國各除道，繕治宮館名山神祠所，以望幸矣。
>
> Thereupon the commanderies and kingdoms each opened their gates and improved their roads, repaired and administered the palace guest-houses at the

[281] In Yuanshou 6 (117 BCE). *Hanshu* 6.180.

> named mountains where the sacrifices to the spirits took place, and hoped for an imperial visit.[282]

This passage raises a number of important questions, and provides us with some insight as to how the Han sacrificial system and the imperial visits proceeded. It is clear that the commanderies and kingdoms maintained lodgings for the emperor, and perhaps for other important guests, but it is also clear that imperial visits were not as regular as the ritual texts might lead one to believe.[283] Given the irregularity with which the emperor performed the important sacrifices in person, this should not be surprising. Hope for an imperial visit was also impetus to improve infrastructure within a commandery or a kingdom, and this, presumably, contributed also to ease of trade and travel between the commanderies and kingdoms of the empire. However, this alone does not explain why a commandery or kingdom would so hope for an imperial visit.

The answer likely lies in the very unsystematic distribution of rewards that followed successful sacrifices, omens, of both the favorable and unfavorable variety, and imperial tours themselves. The proclamation of amnesties was not an innovation of Emperor Wu,[284]

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[282] *Hanshu* 25A.1232; *Shiji* 28.1396. A similar comment is made in the "Treatise on Food and Money" *Hanshu* 24B.1173; *Shiji* 30.1438, that in preparation for the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice, all the commanderies and kingdoms repaired their roads and readied their palaces for an imperial visit, awaiting the imperial visit.

[283] Eg. the *Liji* chapters "Royal Regulations" (Wang zhi 王制) and "the Single Victim at the *Jiao* Sacrifice" provide instructions on imperial visits.

[284] McKnight has demonstrated that the use of amnesties in the Han followed precedent set by the Qin state, particularly in issuing amnesties on the ascension of a new ruler, though in the Han this later changed to a commemoration of a ruler's death. It has previously been assumed that there were no such amnesties under the First Emperor, as Sima Qian makes this claim in *Shiji* 6.238, see also, Brian E. McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy: Amnesties and Traditional Chinese Justice* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 1981), 14-15. However, recent archaeological evidence indicates that there were some amnesties under Qin Shi Huang, see, for example, the evidence in the Yuelu slips in Thies Staack and Ulrich Lau, *Legal Practice in the Formative Stages of the Chinese Empire: An Annotated*

but their occurrence increased dramatically under his long rule. On some occasions, amnesties were granted for the entire empire, on others, only for regions through which the emperor passed.[285] Sometimes these amnesties were accompanied by gifts of rank or material objects, and on some occasions certain groups of the population were singled out for reward. Another reward was the designation of a period of several days of "Universal Drinking," a celebration which allowed commoners and officials to gather together to feast and drink.[286] Over the course of Emperor Wu's reign, a total of sixteen amnesties[287] were granted to All under Heaven, along with five five-day periods of universal drinking.[288] In addition to the amnesties granted to the entire empire, in the decade in which Emperor Wu travelled the most (109-100), on three occasions amnesties were granted specifically to the areas he travelled through. When the amnesties were given to All under Heaven, the areas through which Emperor Wu travelled sometimes received additional tax exemptions, material gifts, or gifts of rank.[289] As many of the sacrifices that the Emperor performed

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Translation of the Exemplary Qin Criminal Cases from the Yuelu Academy Collection (Leiden, Brill, 2016), 130.

[285] McKnight demonstrates the cosmological and political reasons for the increasing use of general amnesties under the early Han emperors, pp. 12-36. While this study focuses primarily on amnesties granted to the entire empire, he does note that on some occasions, more localized amnesties were granted for political purposes.

[286] Chen Shuguo, 4. While the origins of the periods of "universal drinking" may have derived from military celebrations, it later became an opportunity for officials and commoners to drink together, which was forbidden under Qin law. See William Nienhauser, et. al., trans., *The Grand Scribe's Records*, Vol. 1 (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994), 134 n. 118.

[287] In 140, 134, 131, 128, 126, 122, 120, 116, 112, 109, 106, 100, 98, 96, 93, 90, and 88. The amnesties were usually granted in the spring, though they do not appear to follow a pattern.

[288] In 133, 126, 116, 103, and 94.

[289] One step of rank was given to commoner men in 140 and 134. In 110, one step of rank was given to people within the five commanderies that Emperor Wu had travelled through. Gifts were given in 122 to the filially pious, in 118, to All under Heaven, according to rank, in 109 to the regions through which the emperor had travelled, and again in 109 to the

were done in secret, or at least out of the sight of the common people, the commoners would know that with the imperial tour came rewards, which presumably offset the expenses incurred by a region which hosted the emperor. While the imperial tours were certainly costly, and a strain on the court's finances, attempts were made to alleviate the burden on the people whose regions were most affected by the tours, and to offer sufficient rewards so as to stave off any popular rebellions.

3.8 Conclusions

Sima Qian's personal comments at the end of his chapter on the sacrificial programs are as follows:

> 余從巡祭天地諸神名山川而封禪焉。入壽宮侍祠神語，究觀方士祠官之意，於是退而論次自古以來用事於鬼神者，具見其表裏。後有君子，得以覽焉。
>
> I accompanied the emperor when he journeyed about to sacrifice to Heaven and Earth, and all the deities, the famous mountains and rivers, and when he went to perform the Feng and Shan. I entered the Temple of Long Life and assisted at the sacrifices there when the deity spoke, and I thus had an opportunity to study

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empire, in honour of the discovery of fungus at Ganquan. As Moonsil Lee Kim has shown in her study of the legislation surrounding food distribution, in many cases, what was recorded by the historical texts was what the legislators *hoped* to be able to distribute, but the actual distribution of food (or other gifts) did not always meet what was specified in the written records. Additionally, she notes that oftentimes gifts were paid out in cash, rather than kind. See Moonsil Lee Kim, "Food Redistribution during China's Qin and Han Periods: Accordance and Discordance among Ideologies, Policies, and their Implementation," PhD Diss., University of California, Santa Barbara (2014), Chapter Three.

> and examine the ways of the magicians and the sacrificial officials. Later I retired and wrote down in order all that I knew about the worship of the spirits from ancient times on, setting forth both the outside and the inside stories of these affairs.[290]

In many respects, the *Shiji* account (and the equivalent *Hanshu* chapter) does just this: they provide a chronological record of cult practice from earliest written records (the accounts of Shun in the *Documents*) up until the time of Emperor Wu, as well as a detailed catalogue of the sacrifices and other offerings made by the emperor himself. As he travelled with the emperor, along with the other high officials, and knowing that Sima Qian attempted, as much as possible, to be a rigorous scholar, we can trust that his account faithfully records the emperor's sacrificial activity, as well as his memorials and some conversations with his advisors. However, the text is not free from bias, and Sima Qian's comparisons of Emperor Wu's sacrificial program with that of previous rulers, with the First Emperor and Emperor Wu, leads the reader to judge the emperor accordingly. Sima Qian's greatest objection is to the emperor's reliance on what he believed to be shady characters in his pursuit of immortality. The *fangshi*, coming from outside the established traditions of learning (i.e., the Ru), and largely deriving their knowledge from traditions based in the former states of Yan and Qi, in the east, may have been seen by the historian and his colleagues at court to have more influence over the emperor and his policies than they were comfortable with. Sima Qian's account leads the reader to believe that all of these *fangshi* were charlatans: on several occasions he refers to the fact that these men were unable to offer any proof of their claims, of the failures of the magicians, and their subsequent resorting to tricks, and

[290] Shiji 28.1404; the translation is modified from Watson, *Han II*, 52.

of the extreme lengths the *fangshi* would go to to gain the ear of the rulers, competing amongst each other for prominence.[291] However, the emperor chose to employ these men, and while at times suspicious of them, he continued to heed their advice. Why was this the case? It is easy to believe that the emperor surrounded himself with "yes men,"[292] but perhaps an alternative explanation is that the emperor chose to listen to the spiritual advice that aligned most closely with his own goals. While we know from later discussions that the Ru scholars would have preferred the emperor to base himself in the capital, and to have the spirits come to him, as would be the case in the late Western Han with the establishment of the suburban sacrifices outside the capital, it is clear that Emperor Wu, like the First Emperor before him, preferred to maintain a mobile court, and to force not only the court to travel with him, but the regional lords and kings to travel to meet him wherever he might be holding his court, and to witness the most important sacrifices of state.[293] While Sima Qian's account is critical, Emperor Wu was in fact building on sacrificial traditions dating back to the state of Qin, and following the precedent of previous rulers, not only the First Emperor, but also Emperor Wen, attempting to incorporate, or take over, important cult sites across the empire, and achieve a unity of empire, by personally sacrificing at all Five Sacred Peaks, that had not been seen since the time of the sage kings of antiquity. It was not so much the constant travel of the court that Sima Qian objected to, but the emperor's reliance on the advice of outsiders.

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[291] *Hanshu* 25A.1203-4; *Shiji* 28.1369. Deceiving the emperor was, of course, a dangerous game, and several of the *fangshi* were executed. However, the rewards could also be great, as successful *fangshi* attained rewards and titles, particularly Luan Da and Gongsun Qing.
[292] Sima Qian essentially attributes the longevity of Chancellor Ni Kuan in office to the fact that he never criticized the emperor. *Shiji* 121.3125.
[293] On the regional lords witnessing the sacrifices, see Chapter Six.

The sacrificial programme of Emperor Wu was very flexible and adaptable to the needs of the emperor and state. It was characterized as much by experimentation as it was on traditional precedent. While the emperor attempted as much as possible to offer the important sacrifices himself, he only did so when he was able to, and on many occasions left the task of sacrifice to his staff. The emperor's sacrificial tours were usually combined with other affairs of state,[294] and his sacrifices gave him the opportunity to present amnesties, gifts, and rank to the population at large. Additionally, the expansion of cult provided the emperor with an opportunity to travel the empire, to learn about its peoples and customs, and to incorporate knowledge of the supernatural into court practice. The emperor's willingness to bring in "outside" advisors on cult affairs is perhaps indicative of his frustrations with the "reformist" faction at court, and his unwillingness to be constrained by his advisors.[295] In his attempt to place himself at the centre of all cult activity, essentially in a role as high priest, the emperor recruited men from outside of the traditional fonts of knowledge, in order to advance his agenda. A similar trend can be seen in Rome, as Augustus, too, will restructure Roman cult around himself, and shift the balance of religious power in the city of Rome. While the early Chinese emperors expanded cult across their vast empire, inserting themselves into the far reaches of the realm, the Roman rulers focused on cult within the city of Rome itself, the site of the greatest contest of power.

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[294] *Shiji* 28.1399; Watson, *Han II*, 45. This passage is not included in the *Hanshu*.

[295] This characteristic of the emperor is evident from the earliest days of his reign, when he attempted to chart his own path in cult activity, only to be stopped by the empress dowager. After her death, the emperor faced no real opposition in his pursuit of his sacrificial programme.

Chapter Four: Religion from Republic to Empire

4.1 History of Cult Reforms in the late Republic

Religion in the Roman Republic was of a remarkably different character to what we know as religion in the Christian age. In fact, nearly every book on Roman religion contains a section or chapter seeking to differentiate what we call "religion" in the late Republic and early Empire from later, Christianized understandings of gods, worship, faith, and sacrality.[296] Indeed, it is impossible to separate religion in the ancient world from politics and culture, and, as in China, the focus of religious life in Rome was less one of individual piety, but of propriety, as religion was of fundamental importance to the welfare of the state. In fact, while there are many significant divergences between the two cases, in some respects the state religion of the Roman Republic bears more similarities to the religious practices of the Qin and Han than it does to later Christian practices. My focus in this chapter, as in the previous chapter on imperial cult in early China, is on the

[296] This debate is certainly not limited to the ancient Mediterranean, nor to debates over ancient versus modern societies. There are numerous debates within anthropology and religious studies as to the question of religion as a universal concept, or as a useful organizing category. See for example, Balagangadhara, who argues that religion is not a universal notion, and is merely a model of explanation, which loses its explanatory power when applied to non-western (or non-Christian) societies, versus Roy Rappaport, who argues that religion is a cultural universal, and one which is as fundamental to the development of mankind as the development of language. Others, such as Walter Burkert and David Sloan Wilson, seek to find the roots and evolution of religion in biology. Studies of Chinese religions, both ancient and modern, also seek to distinguish themselves from a Christianizing interpretation of religion (see Hall and Ames *Thinking From the Han*, for a comparison of Chinese and Western conceptions of self, Michael Puett, for the influence of Weber on the study of Chinese society). S. N Balagangadhara, *"The Heathen in His Blindness"--: Asia, the West, and the Dynamic of Religion* (Leiden, Brill, 1994); Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999); Walter Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996); David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002); Hall and Ames, *Thinking from the Han*; Puett, *To Become a God*.

performance and regulation of cult activity by the ruling élite, and particularly the *princeps*, at Rome, rather than on questions of individual, or collective, belief.[297] The question of individual belief in the gods was secondary to state religious practice in Rome: an individual could question the existence of the gods and still be an active participant in state cult. This sentiment is articulated most clearly by Gaius Aurelius Cotta, as narrated by Cicero, in *De natura deorum*:

> In an inquiry as to the nature of the gods, the first question that we ask is, do the gods exist or do they not? 'It is difficult to deny their existence.' No doubt it would be if the question were to be asked in a public assembly, but in private conversation and in a company like the present it is perfectly easy. This being so, I, who am a high priest [*pontifex*], and who hold it to be a duty most solemnly to maintain the rights and doctrines of the established religion, should be glad to be convinced of this fundamental tenet of the divine existence, not as an article of faith merely but as an ascertained fact. For many disturbing reflections occur to my mind, which sometimes make me think that there are no gods at all.[298]

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[297] Beard, et. al. argue that, unlike in Christianity, records of individual religious lives and beliefs were likely not a very important form of religious discourse. Mary Beard, John North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[298] Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 1.22. *Quaeritur primum in ea quaestione quae est de natura deorum, sintne di necne sint. 'Difficile est negare.' Credo si in contione quaeratur, sed in huius modi sermone et consessu facillimum. Itaque ego ipse pontifex, qui caerimonias religionesque publicas sanctissime tuendas arbitror, is hoc quod primum est, esse deos, persuaded mihi non opinione solum sed etiam ad veritatem plane velim. Multa enim occurrunt quae conturbent, ut interdum nulli esse videantur.*

Cotta goes on to say that he personally does, in fact, believe in the gods, but emphasis is placed on the importance of carrying out rituals of state, according to "the established religion," and it is implied that belief in the gods was not a prerequisite in order to successfully perform rituals of state.[299] For the elites of the late Republic, what was important was the fact that the rites were performed according to the traditions of antiquity,[300] and that they were efficacious in preserving the good fortune of Rome and its citizens. In the debates over religion amongst élites in Rome, the question was not so much one of impiety, but about propriety – one was not attacked on one's belief in the gods, but on the manner in which one served them.

While the question of individual belief could be fairly easily relegated by ancient scholars like Cotta or Cicero to merely a topic of intellectual inquiry, the emphasis on belief in Christianity that has so shaped religious studies has influenced studies of Roman religion (as well as Chinese), by seeking to find individualistic and salvific components of ancient

[299] Rüpke reads this as a "literary solution" to the problem of "cognitive dissonance," and while it is unlikely that Cotta so thoroughly ignored philosophical discussions on religion, the fact that he can make this claim suggests that correct practice of the rites was deemed most important for the well being of the Republic. Jörg Rüpke, *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 3. Note the similarities to *Analects* 3.12: 祭如在，祭神如神在。子曰：「吾不與祭，如不祭。」 "Sacrifice [to the dead] as if [they] are present, sacrifice to the spirits as if the spirits are present. The Master said: "If I do not [personally] offer sacrifice, it is as if there was no sacrifice." This passage is usually interpreted to mean that the form of the sacrifice and the comportment of the sacrificer is more important than existential questions over the existence or nature of spirits, especially when read in context with *Analects* 21.7 子不語怪，力，亂，神 "The master did not speak of oddities, [extraordinary] strength, chaos, and spirits."

[300] Cotta goes on to remark that he had "learnt more about the proper way of worshipping the gods, according to pontifical law and the customs of our ancestors, from the poor little pots bequeathed to us by Numa" than from Stoic debates of philosophy. *Meliora me didicisse de colendis dis inmortalibus iure pontificio et more maiorum capedunculis iis quas Numa nobis reliquit*. Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 3.17.

religious practice, and positing religion as something independent from collective social or political activity. Religion in the Roman Republic was carried out for the good of the *res publica*, and its importance for the collective outweighed individual practice or belief, the opposite of the focus on the individual in Christianity. Our understanding of religion as primarily based on individual faith is one which was shaped by the Protestant Reformation, and it is dangerous to apply these theories of religion to the study of pre-Christian cases.[301] This post-Reformation distinction obfuscates the interconnectedness of religion and politics in the ancient world,[302] and it does not account for the longevity of ancient religion in the absence of an emphasis on personal faith. According to John Scheid, "dans le culte public, ce qui était en cause, ce n'était pas la piété au sens moderne, (…) il ne s'agissait pas de piété intériorisée (…) mais d'actes matériels qui plaçait ou remplaçait les dieux au centre de la vie sociale romaine."[303] Cult was an important part of public life, but in the absence of individual piety, there needed to be another way of evaluating the efficacy of cult. This question has been addressed by Clifford Ando, who writes that the Romans "subscribed in matters of religion to an empiricist epistemology."[304] He argues that Roman

[301] Seligman, et. al. argue that while the post-Reformation emphasis on a division between ritual action and personal belief has "led to important exegesis of ritual's symbolism, but it also led to an emphasis on inner states like sincerity or belief that may not always be relevant to the social and cognitive contexts of ritual action." Or, in the case of the ancient world, a search for a personal faith in gods that is not necessarily relevant to collective understandings about the efficacy of rites. Adam B Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

[302] Price, 247.

[303] John Scheid, "Les restaurations religieuses d'Octavien/Auguste," in *Le principat d'Auguste: réalités et Représentations du pouvoir autour de la Res publica restituta*, ed. Frédéric Hurlet and Bernard Mineo (Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 125.

[304] Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009), xvii.

religion was an orthopraxy – based on the correct practice of the religion, rather than an orthodoxy – a religion based on conforming to doctrine: "cult addressed problems in the real world, and the effectiveness of rituals – their tangible results – determined whether they were repeated, modified, or abandoned." Knowing whether or not a ritual should be maintained or changed relied on *knowledge*, specifically, "the knowledge of giving the gods their due" (*scientia colendorum deorum*).[305] In this way, Roman religion was flexible, rather than rigid. If a ritual, after being performed according to past precedent, failed to accomplish its intended goal, it could be modified, repeated, or abandoned, and Roman religion thus changed along with the changing needs of the Republic and Empire.

What was most important in the relationship between men and gods in Rome was how to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship between the two groups. The gods were not considered to be so far removed from the human realm as to be closed to human influence: indeed, they were often considered to be a part of the civic community, and had responsibilities to it, like individual citizens.[306] This point is emphasized by Jörg Rüpke, in his recent monograph *Religion in Republican Rome*. Writing on public parades, games,

[305] Ibid., 13. Cic. *Nat. Deo*. 1.115-6. See also, John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, Janet Lloyd, trans. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), 18: Roman religion "was a religion without revelation, without revealed books, without dogma and without orthodoxy. The central requirement was, instead (…) the correct performance of prescribed rituals."

[306] Ando, *The Matter of the Gods*, 6. Ando argues that the role of the gods as citizens is directly related to the idea of reciprocity between the two groups; John Scheid, in his discussion of Ovid's *Fasti* argues that the gods were considered by the people to be citizens, albeit citizens of an elevated status: "Comment les Romains envisageaient-ils ce deuxième peuple, les peuples des dieux? La première réponse vient d'être apportée : comme des citoyens, mais d'un niveau très élevé, des patrons, une noblesse céleste ou mieux, un collège de magistrats suprêmes qui accepte de composer, sur le forum, avec le magistrat terrestre." "Numa et Jupiter ou les dieux citoyens de Rome," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 30, no. 59.1 (1985): 50-51.

and sacrifices, he argues that even when games and rituals did not take place in front of temples, the gods, statues of whom were carried in processions, were "spectators at the games and competitions following the procession. They had a front-row seat, so to speak."[307] In addition to being the focus of public spectacles, the gods were also recipients of offerings that did not attract the attention of the public eye. Every month, on the Ides, the Flamen Dialis (the high priest of Jupiter) sacrificed a white sheep to Jupiter, for the Ides were said to be his holy day.[308] That this rite was not performed in front of an audience beyond the priests suggests that in addition to rituals being of public importance at Rome, it was necessary for the human citizens of Rome to provide the divine citizens with worship and sustenance, in order to maintain the *pax deorum* – the state of harmony between gods and men.[309]

4.2 Priestly Colleges in the late Republic and early Principate

The origins of the priestly colleges were traditionally ascribed to the reign of Numa (trad. r. 715 – 673 BCE).[310] By the late Republic, there were three major colleges of priests, the *pontifices*, *augurs*, and *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*. Under Augustus, the college of

[307] Rüpke, *Religion in Republican Rome*, 30.
[308] Mac. *Sat*. 1.15-16.
[309] This state of peace between gods and men was maintained by ensuring that the correct ritual procedures had been carried out. The peace could be caused to end by failure to maintain the correct sacrifices, by errors in ritual, or any other transgression in the performance of cult activity. See John Scheid, "Le délit religieux dans la Rome tardo-républicaine," in *Le délit religieux dans la cité antique*, Mario Torelli, ed., (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981), 117-71.
[310] The origins of Roman religion with Numa was a question that was debated during the Republic, particularly with the discovery in 181 BCE of a chest containing writings, supposedly composed by Numa. These texts were destroyed, as it was feared they would challenge the authority of the senatorial elite. See Hans Beck, "The Discovery of Numa's Writings: Roman Sacral Law and the Early Historians" (unpublished manuscript).

epulones became a major college, increasing their number to four, and the *Arvales fratres* were "revived."[311] In addition to the major colleges, there were other priesthoods dedicated to particular gods, which were not always filled, as well as the Vestal Virgins, who guarded the sacred fire.[312] These groups fell under the jurisdiction of the pontifical college. Priests held their office for life, and a place in one of the priestly colleges was coveted by both patricians and plebians alike. While in the late Republic there was no rule as to whether or not a position in one of the *collegia* should be obtained before or after holding high office, it was standard practice that a member of the college would achieve a high rank within the *cursus honorum*, or that a magistrate without a collegial affiliation would hope to attain one during his life. While in the early Republic priests were only co-opted from the patrician class, the *lex Ogulnia* of ca. 300 BCE gave the plebs access to the priestly colleges,

[311] The designation of colleges as "major" (*collegia maiora*) is an expression dating to the imperial period, but reflects the perceived importance of the colleges in the late Republic.
[312] The *Flamines*, priests who were attached to a cult of an individual god, were under the supervision of the pontifical college, but due to the individual nature of their duties, did not form a college unto themselves. These *flamines* were often subject to various legal restrictions, and were primarily concerned with officiating rites to the object of their cult. See Mary Beard and John North, eds. *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World,* (London: Duckworth), 17ff; John Scheid, "Les prêtres officiels sous les empereurs julio-claudiens," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang de römischen Welt*, II.16.1 (1978). Women, while very important in a number of rituals, "could not take on any representative religious function on behalf of the state." (Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, 131). The exception to this being the Vestal Virgins, who were charged with maintaining the sacred fire of Vesta and with many other purification rites for important state sacrifices. However, given the Vestal's unique position, separated from society, their role is not representative of women in Rome in general. On the Vestal Virgins, see Mary Beard, "The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 70 (1980):12–27, and Robin Lorsch Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins: A Study of Rome's Vestal Priestesses in the Late Republic and Early Empire* (London, Routledge, 2006).

and from that time forward the colleges remained divided between the patricians and plebians.[313]

Attaining a position in one of the colleges was considered a high honour: the individual priest was given a prominent place in religious festivals, feasts, and games, important in the public theatre of Roman politics. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory that wealth can be transformed into power "only in the form of symbolic capital,"[314] Richard Gordon writes that "The sacerdotal colleges of Rome can be seen as the guardians of the alchemical transmutation of base wealth into inexhaustible prestige," and that, like the magistrates, the priests were able to accumulate social capital and maintain their high status in society, through expenditure on religious festivities.[315] Membership also provided him (or, her, in the case of the Vestal Virgins) with access to carefully guarded secret knowledge, as well as an opportunity to participate in conversations about public policy outside of the more overt structures of political authority. While membership in a college meant "the lifelong right to participate prominently in the processions at *ludi* and in public banquets,"[316] it also

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[313] Liv. 10.6.6-12; Jörg Rüpke notes that this law "did not diminish the number of patrician priests but simply added plebian pontifices and augurs," in *Religion in Republican Rome*, 13; See also Karl J. Hölkeskamp, "Das Plebiscitum Ogulnium de sacerdotibus: Überlegungen zu Authentizität und Interpretation der livianischen Überlieferung." *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*. Neue Folge, 131 (1988); Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 130-31; Martha W. Hoffman Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians: A Study of the Nobility from 44 B.C. to 68 A.D.* (Rome, American Academy in Rome, 1955).

[314] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977), 195.

[315] Richard Gordon, "From Republic to Principate: Priesthood, Religion and Ideology," in *Roman Religion*, Clifford Ando, ed. (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 77-78. This expenditure on religious ceremonies was in addition to the vast sums that magistrates would spend on public affairs as they climbed the *cursus honorum*.

[316] Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians,* 10.

gave the priest a lifelong right to participate in discussions of importance to the state that were not (or could not be) conducted within the Senate. As Jorg Rüpke has argued,

> Membership [in colleges] did not entail only the obligation to participate in a few cult activities; it was also associated with lavish meals and celebrations in members' private houses, and opportunities to discuss politically sensitive subjects, personal affairs, and the like. *The colleges were circles of communication within the political elite*, and their significance as informal venues for the establishment of consensus among senators should not be underestimated.[317]

While each of the three, and later four, major colleges had its own specific functions within the religious landscape of the Republic, each college also served as an informal committee, comprised of elites, but not exclusively senators, where questions of policy, and discussions over factional struggles, could take place "off the books."[318] This important role of the colleges will be discussed further below, but first, it is necessary to understand the composition and official functions of the priestly colleges during the transitional period.

In his speech before the Senate concerning the Response of the Haruspices in 56 BCE, Cicero provided a description of the historical roles of each of the colleges. Invoking the traditions and sagacity of Roman ancestors, he wrote:

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[317] Jörg Rüpke, *Fasti sacerdotum: A Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Religious Officials in the City of Rome, 300 BC to AD 499* (Oxford; New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), 57, italics added.

[318] Much of what we know of this function of the colleges comes from Cicero's writings, particularly *De Domo Sua*, and so our reading is necessarily influenced by his address to the *pontifices* during his struggle with Publius Clodius.

> In their [the ancestors'] view, all prescribed and liturgical ceremonies depended upon the Pontificate, and all regulations determining auspicious action upon augury; they thought that the ancient prophecies of the oracle of Apollo were comprised in the books of the seers, and all interpretations of prodigies in the lore of the Etruscans.
>
> *Qui statas sollemnesque caerimonias pontificatu, rerum bene gerundarum auctoritates augurio, fatorum veteres praedictiones Apollinis vatum libris, portentorum explanationes Etruscorum disciplina contineri putaverunt.*[319]

The Pontifical college was acknowledged to be the most prominent of the priestly colleges, and in addition to the *pontifices* themselves, the college supervised several other religious groups and functionaries. The college was chaired by the Pontifex Maximus, who was elected from within the college of *pontifices*; after Augustus' death, the position of Pontifex Maximus became, effectively, hereditary, passed down from *princeps* to *princeps*.[320] Prior to this change, however, the role of Pontifex Maximus was a highly coveted and influential position.[321] The Pontifex Maximus traditionally lived in the *domus publica*, near the *regia*,

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[319] Cic. *Har. Resp*. 9. The Etruscan Haruspices were not an official priestly college, they were to a certain extent organized, and they were ultimately organized as a profession under Tiberius. See Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 101, and R. M Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus* (New York, Norton, 1970), 67. The "ancient prophecies" refers to the Sibylline books, which could be consulted by the *quindecimviri*, discussed below.

[320] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, Vol. 2, 205.

[321] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, Vol. 1, 100; Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus*, 106-9; Rüpke, *Fasti sacerdotum*, 7; and for a general overview of the college, Françoise Van Haeperen, *Le collège pontifical: 3e s. av. J.-C.- 4e s. ap. J.-C. : contribution à l'étude de la religion publique romaine* (S.l., Institut historique belge de Rome, 2002).

in the Forum. This house was located near the house of the Vestal Virgins, and served as the archive for the pontifical texts, as well as the calendar.[322] Under the Pontifex Maximus' supervision were the regular *pontifices* (whose numbers increased from nine to sixteen (including the Pontifex Maximus) over the course of the Republic),[323] the Rex and Regina Sacrorum, the Pontifices Minores (three), the Flamines (three major and twelve minor), and six Vestal Virgins.[324] While many of these subordinate offices were often left vacant during both the Republic and Principate, the college of *pontifices* was charged with ensuring that the rites were not neglected.[325] The function of the pontifical college was primarily regulatory and advisory. They were responsible for ensuring that the correct rites were carried out for consecrations, burials, and other festivals, and for ensuring the correct behaviour of people at festivals. Until the first century BCE, they were concerned with the

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[322] Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus*, 106-9.

[323] After the *lex Ogulnia* in 300 BCE, their numbers were fixed at nine, this was increased to fifteen under Sulla, and up to sixteen under Julius Caesar, though the numbers of this college, like the others, were highly inconsistent throughout the years. See Rüpke and Glock, *Fasti sacerdotum*, 7, and Hölkeskamp, 1988. Hoffman Lewis suggests that in the early empire, there could be as many as 25 members in each of the major colleges, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians*, 12.

[324] John Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, 133.

[325] It was often difficult to find patricians who both met the requirements and were willing to fill some of these offices. Particularly in the case of the Rex Sacrorum and the major Flamines, there were very strict restrictions placed on the priest, making it very difficult for him to become a magistrate and advance through the *cursus honorum*. There is much debate over the origins of the *rex sacrorum*, with some arguing that the position was created as a ceremonial substitute for the kings at the beginning of the Republic. See Jesse Benedict Carter, "The Reorganization of the Roman Priesthoods at the Beginning of the Republic," *Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome* 1 (1915); Tim Cornell, however, suggests that the position may have been created prior to the start of the Republic, with power divided between a religious *rex* and a ruling tyrant (*magister populi*), see *The Beginnings of Rome*, 235-36.

development of both sacred and civil law,[326] and their role in relation to the Senate was primarily advisory. As possessors of specialized knowledge, in the form of the records of the *pontifices*, which were stored at the *domus publica*, they were able to advise the Senate on disputes over religious affairs, and instruct magistrates in the correct performance of ritual. According to Mary Beard, co-optation into the college immediately bestowed the status of religious expert upon the *pontifex*: "he *knew* things about religion that other men did not know and gained from that knowledge considerable authority (*auctoritas*)."[327] While it is not known if there were secrets into which *pontifices* were initiated, they likely had access to various writings that were off limits to those outside of the college,[328] and Plutarch suggests that the augurs, at least, were bearers of secrets which must be protected until death.[329] Rather than being possessors of secret knowledge, it is possible that the *auctoritas* of the *pontifices* derived from their role as senatorial consultants: the priests were able to have private discussions and render judgments (based on pontifical texts and precedent) that would have appeared opaque to outsiders. When a question was raised in

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[326] Olga Tellegen-Couperus, "Introduction," in *Law and Religion in the Roman Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1; Mary Beard, "Priesthood in the Roman Republic," in *Pagan Priests*, 36-7.

[327] Beard, "Priesthood in the Roman Republic," 36. See also Cic. *Dom.* 1-4, and on the ritual authority of the *pontifices*, Ibid., 136.

[328] Cic. *Dom*. 33. As Jerzy Linderski notes, the question of secret knowledge within the colleges is complicated: Cicero does not claim to know whether or not the augurs had secret books, only that "should the augurs have any books of recondite character, he is not prying into them." ("The *Libri Reconditi*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 89 (1985): 208). This suggests that Cicero suspected that the Augurs did have such texts, but that, as he had not yet been coopted into the college, he had no concrete knowledge of the existence of the texts, or what they contained. In addition to the *libri reconditi,* the colleges maintained their own archives, and these were likely "relatively accessible to interested scholars," Jerzy Linderski, "The Augural Law," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. II.16.3, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1986): 2245.

[329] Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 99; Linderski, "The *Libri Reconditi*," 221.

the Senate concerning religious matters, the Senate could refer the question to the *pontifices*, who would prepare a decision. The Senate could then choose to act based on this decision, but, while the college of *pontifices* spoke with a unified voice, each member (presuming he was also a member of the Senate) could vote according to his own proclivity, for there was a recognized division between judgment on religious issues, and the judgment of the law.[330] Knowledge of the actions of the *pontifices* was not confined solely to the Senatorial elite; in the early Republic, the *pontifex maximus* kept a *tabula dealbata* in front of his house, which "informed the public about his measures and doings."[331] While this practice was discontinued, the publication of various *tabulae* as a monograph took place in the mid-first century, and these *annales* were accessible to the public.[332]

Connected, but subordinate to the *pontifices* were the *flamines*: priests for individual gods. There were three *flamines maiores* and twelve *flamines minors*; the *flamines maiores* worshipped Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, and "enjoyed the highest prestige within the

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[330] Cic. *Att.* 74. "All the Pontifices who were Senators were called in. Marcellinus, who was very strongly on my side, as the first called upon, asked them to give reasons for their decree. M. Lucullus, speaking for all his colleagues, then replied that the Pontifices had been judges of the religious issue, but the Senate was judge of the law. His colleagues and himself had given their verdict on the former; on the latter they would decide in the Senate, as Senators." *Adhibentur omnes pontifices qui erant senatores. a quibus Marcellinus, qui erat cupidissimus mei, sententiam primus rogatus quaesivit quid essent in decernendo secuti. Tum M. Lucullus de omnium collegarum sententia respondit religionis iudices pontifices fuisse, legis esse senatum; se et collegas suos de religione statuisse, in senatu de lege statuturos cum senatu. Itaque suo quisque horum loco sententiam rogatus multa secundum causam nostram disputavit*. For an earlier example, see also the case of the *pontifex maximus* Cornelius Barbatus, who, in 304 BCE, was compelled, by the force of the people to instruct a magistrate (Cn. Flavius) on the correct way to dedicate a temple, although he had attempted to obstruct this (Liv. 9.46.6-7). See Eric M Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1997), 163-165.

[331] Hans Beck, "The Discovery of Numa's Writings."

[332] Ibid. See also the discussion on these *Annales Maximi* and their relationship with the *tabula dealbata* in Timothy J. Cornell, ed., *The Fragments of the Roman Historians* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), Vol. 1, 144-48.

pontifical college."[333] They were responsible for the particular rites offered to these gods: the *flamen Dialis* sacrificed a castrated ram to Jupiter on the Ides of every month, while the *flamen Marialis* sacrificed the October Horse.[334] The *flamines* were "taken" (*capti*) by the Pontifex Maximus,[335] and being one of these high priests came with many restrictions. The *flamen Dialis* had to be married in the traditional *confarreatio* way, which required the presence of both the *flamen Dialis* and Pontifex Maximus at the ceremony. If the wife of the *flamen*, the *flamenica*, died, the priest had to give up his office.[336] The *flamen Dialis* was subject to the strictest taboos, and for this reason we know more about them than for the other priesthoods.[337] Among other things, the *flamen Dialis* was prohibited from riding, or even touching, a horse, and he was forbidden from seeing an army outside of the *pomerium*.[338] These prohibitions effectively prohibited the *flamen* from holding office,[339] and, as a result, the priesthood was frequently left vacant, as it was difficult to find men who both met the qualifications (particularly the *confarreatio* marriage) and were willing to give up their political careers. During the late Republic, the office was vacant for over seventy years, and, according to Tacitus, the rites to Jupiter were performed by members of the Pontifical College.[340] Less is known of the taboos placed on the other two *flamines*

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[333] Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 8.
[334] Rüpke, *Religion in Republican Rome*, 36-7.
[335] Jens H. Vanggaard, *The Flamen: A Study in the History and Sociology of Roman Religion* (Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum Press, 1988), 56.
[336] Beard, "Priesthood in the Roman Republic," 22-5.
[337] A list of the taboos related to the *flamen Dialis* is contained in Aulus Gellius, *NA*. 10.15.
[338] Vanggaard, 90.
[339] Beard, "Priesthood in the Roman Republic," 25.
[340] "The pontifices had often performed the rites of Jove, if the flamen was prevented by sickness or public business. For seventy-five years after the self-murder of Cornelius Merula [in 87 BCE] no one had been appointed in his room, yet the rites had not been interrupted. *Saepe pontifices Dialia sacra fecisse, si flamen valetudine aut munere publico*

maiores, but it seems that they were only subject to taboos on the days on which they performed their rites, and not on a daily basis, as was the *flamen Dialis*.[341] Despite these restrictions, the *flamines maiores* "enjoyed the highest prestige within the pontifical college" and they were always filled with patricians.[342] Little is known of the *flamines minors* other than that there were twelve. Such little information is given in the sources that scholars have not been able to agree upon a list of the twelve gods that they served, or even if they were full members of the Pontifical College.[343]

While the *pontifices* were concerned with questions of sacred law and served as an advisory board to the Senate, the college of Augurs was able to directly intervene in the functioning of the state. The Augurs were considered to be secondary to the *pontifices*, although membership in this college gave the individual priest much more political power than the other colleges,[344] and only death could remove an augur from office. Cicero wrote that the augurs were the "interpreter and assistant of Jupiter the Best and Greatest," and that they were charged with taking the auspices "in order that he may obtain from them frequent assistance for the Republic."[345] Indeed, an augur could disrupt an assembly by reporting ill omens, indicating that the assembly was proceeding without the approval of the gods.[346] Augurs also had the power to designate a piece of land as a *templum*, a location which linked heaven and earth, and from which a magistrate could take the auspices.[347]

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impediretur. Quinque et septuaginta annis post Cornelii Merulae caedem, neminem suffectum neque tamen cessavisse religiones." Tac. *Ann*. 3.58.
[341] Vanggaard, 90.
[342] Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 8.
[343] Rüpke*, Fast Sacerdotumi,* 8.
[344] Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians*, 102.
[345] Cic. *Leg*. 3.19.
[346] Beard, "Priesthood in the Roman Republic," 40.
[347] Ibid., 39-40. On *templum* as link between heaven and earth, Varro, *Ling*. 8.8-10.

The Augurs also served to advise the Senate on questions relating to the auspices, though, like the *pontifices*, the final decision on how to act rested with the Senate, and, of course, many of the Augurs were themselves Senators.[348] The Augurs, too, likely had access to a set of secret texts, which only they could consult. Despite his already long and successful career, Cicero did not attain a position in the college of Augurs until 53 BCE (he had attained the consulship in 63), and so he indicates in his address to the *pontifices* on the question of his house that what he understands from Augural practice is derived from what he has seen and heard, rather than from any consultation of their sacred books; indeed, he even expresses doubt as to their existence.[349]

Far less is known about the two other major colleges, the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, and the *septemviri epulones*. However, over the course of the late Republic and early Principate, their importance and prestige increased. The *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, the college of fifteen men responsible for supervision of the sacred rites, were primarily responsible for the consultation of the Sibylline books, when ordered to by the Senate. During the reign of Augustus, they were responsible for the organization of the *ludi saeculares*, which will be discussed in Chapter Six. The college was said to have been created under the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, when he obtained the books from the Sibylline Oracle. Originally established as a college of two men (the *duumviri*), the college

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[348] Ibid., 40.

[349] Cic. *Dom*. 39. "I proceed now to the augurs, into whose books, such of them at least as are secret, I forbear to pry. I am not curious to inquire into augural regulations. There are some, however, of which I share the knowledge with the populace, which have often been revealed, in answer to inquiry, in mass meetings, and with these I am familiar." *Venio ad augures, quorum ego libros, si qui sunt reconditi, non scrutor: non sum in exquirendo iure augurum curiosus: haec, quae una cum populo didici, quae saepe in contionibus responsa sunt, novi*. See Linderski, "The *Libri Reconditi*,"on Cicero's knowledge of the *libri reconditi*.

was expanded in the fourth century BCE to ten (the *decemviri sacris faciundis*), and later grew to fifteen.[350] Like the *pontifices* and *augurs*, half the college of the *quindecimviri* was to be composed of plebeians after the *lex Ogulnia* in 300 BCE.[351] Although membership in this college was considered to be less prestigious than membership in the pontifical or augural colleges,[352] its prestige increased, and, as we will see below, it was of fundamental importance to the recentering of power under Augustus.

The *septemviri epulones*, originally the *tresviri epulones*, had been founded by a plebiscite in 196 BCE.[353] The college was expanded to seven men, likely under Sulla, and a further three were added by Caesar in 44 BCE, to reward his followers, bringing their number up to ten.[354] The *epulones*, "feast organisers," were responsible for the organization of the dinners and public banquets that followed sacrifices, festivals, and games. Cicero writes that the *epulones* were founded by the *pontifices*, who delegated the responsibility of organizing feasts to them, and they took their name from the great "Sacrificial Banquet of the Games," the *ludorum epulare sacrificium*.[355] This particular

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[350] While the historicity of the acquisition of the texts is impossible to verify, it testifies to the antiquity of the office (Dion. Hal. 4.62). The Sibylline Books themselves will be discussed further below. The expansion to ten men is recorded in Livy VI.42.12. Caesar added a priest *supernumerarii* in 44 BCE (Dio. 43.51.9). As the college was known as the *quindecimviri* during the times of Julius Caesar and Augustus, I use this name throughout. See also Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*, 183-85.

[351] Ibid., 184.

[352] See, for example, Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians*, 103, who ranks the *quindecimviri* as the third most prestigious college; Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 8, "these two [*pontifices* and *augures*] were always more prestigious" than the *quindecimviri*; Beard's discussion of the priestly colleges focuses only on the *pontifices* and *augures*, "Priesthood in the Roman Republic," 19-48.

[353] Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*, 184.

[354] Livy, 33.42.1, Dio, 43.51.9; Rüpke presents the possibility that the number was increased to seven under Sulla, Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 8.

[355] Cic. *Orat*. 3.9. "But just as the old pontifices owing to the vast number of sacrifices decided to have a Banquet Committee of three members, though they had themselves been

feast was attended by members of the Senate, who gathered on the Capitol; according to Aulus Gellius, this was an important opportunity for the senators to bond with each other, and form alliances.[356] Membership in this college was not prestigious until the time of Augustus; no high-ranking members are seen until the mid-first century BCE.[357] As the college gained in prestige, it may have forsaken some of its responsibilities: Ogilvie suggests that the administrative arrangements of organizing feasts were eventually re-delegated to "underlings, probably public slaves."[358]

A final college, though never listed as one of the major colleges, the Arval Brothers, was elevated to a high status under the Principate, though they had likely existed in some form during the Republic.[359] According to Ronald Syme, the "*Arvales* were revived, and all but invented"[360] by Augustus in 29 BCE.[361] Membership of the college was fixed at twelve, and this number would only be exceeded by the appointment of an imperial heir.[362] Unlike the other colleges, where it was unusual for a priest to hold a dual membership, the majority of the Arval Brothers were members of the other priestly colleges.[363] The men

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appointed by Numa for the purpose among others of holding the great Sacrificial Banquet of the Games." *Sed ut pontifices veteres propter sacrificiorum multitudinem tres viros epulones esse voluerunt, cum essent ipsi a Numa ut etiam illud ludorum epulare sacrificium facerent institute*.

[356] Gell. 12.8.

[357] "Septemviri - Brill Reference" Online.

[358] Ogilvie, *The Romans and Their Gods in the Age of Augustus*, 110.

[359] Varro *Ling*. 5.85.

[360] Ronald Syme, *Some Arval Brethren* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980), 2.

[361] On the difficulty of dating this revival, see John Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales: recrutement et origine sociale sous les empereurs julio-claudiens* (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1975), 335-36. Scheid argues that the revival of the Arvals took place alongside other religious reforms of 31/29, and must have been accomplished by 27, when the Octavian took the title Augustus.

[362] Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 8.

[363] For example, with the revival of the college in 29 BCE, nine out of the twelve members already held other priesthoods, fairly evenly distributed between the *ponifices*, *augures*,

who comprised the Arval Brothers were "drawn from the most prominent members of the senate" and primarily carried out sacrifices and ceremonies regarding the *princeps* and his family.[364] Comprised of members from the most powerful and prominent families, the college was thus both a group through which political consensus could be reached, as well as an honour bestowed by the *princeps*.[365]

While the colleges of the late Republic differed in their areas of expertise and jurisdiction, they had several similar characteristics. First, the colleges were comprised of both patricians and plebeians, and after 104 BCE, new priests had to be voted in by an assembly consisting of seventeen of the thirty-five voting tribes.[366] While there were no written rules to the effect, it was standard practice during the Republic that no individual would hold more than one priesthood. This was to change under Julius Caesar, who was a member of both the pontifical (co-opted in ca. 73 BCE, elected *pontifex maximus* in 63 BCE) and augural (47 BCE) colleges. Augustus would subsequently attain membership in each of the colleges, a precedent that was to be followed by subsequent rulers. The office

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quindecimviri, and *epulones*, and one member would attain membership in the pontifical college shortly thereafter. Following the membership lists in Ibid., 136. Of the seventeen members during the reign of Augustus, eleven held membership in another college. See Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*, 304.

[364] In this way, Scheid argues that the Arvals were a precursor to the later imperial priests. Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*, 340. See also Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome,* Vol. 1, 195; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979), 63.

[365] There are several comprehensive monographs on the Arval Brothers for the imperial period, particularly, Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*; John Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères: le collège des Frères Arvales, modèle du culte public dans la Rome des empereurs* (Rome, Ecole française de Rome, 1990); Syme, *Some Arval Brethren*.

[366] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 136. Potential members were nominated by the college, but then had to be voted in. In 81 BCE, Sulla, in his capacity as dictator, revived the practice of cooptation to the priestly colleges, but elections were later restored by Caesar.

of *pontifex maximus*, also became linked to the *princeps*, following Augustus' election to the post in 12 BCE.

The colleges all shared a similar role: as groups of religious experts, they were primarily seen as advisors to the Senate and magistrates, who would ultimately determine the correct course of action, or perform the requisite sacrifices. With the exception of the Augurs, the colleges did not directly mediate between man and the gods; they were utilizing their specialized knowledge to answer questions put to them, and to ensure that the traditionally efficacious rites continued to be performed. The *pontifices*, *augures*, and *quindecimviri*, each had their own texts, which contained the "accumulation of the Romans' religious observations,"[367] and could only be consulted by members of that college; their recommendations were often made on the basis of, or after discussion of, one of these texts.[368] Membership in any one of the colleges was coveted by men who sought power in Rome, and while this was surely due in part to the prominent role that priests played in the theatre of public festivals at Rome, it may also have been related to the importance of the priestly colleges as consultative bodies. Examining the transformations to the priestly colleges in the transition from Republic to Principate will help us to understand this important function of the colleges.

4.3 "Reviving" Colleges and Recentering Power in the Principate

Much has been said about the Augustan "revival" of religion in the transition period, primarily because of the rhetoric of the revival of tradition that was employed by Augustus

[367] W. Jeffrey Tatum, *Always I Am Caesar* (Malden, Blackwell, 2008), 68.
[368] Significantly, the *quindecimviri* could only consult the Sibylline books by order of the Senate.

and ancient scholars. Suetonius' biography of Augustus, in particular, emphasizes this theme of revival, detailing the numerous changes made during rule of the *princeps*. The emphasis is likely due to the fact that Augustus himself emphasized this during his reign, making it a central part of his rule. According to Suetonius, he collected and edited prophetic texts, he fixed the calendar, and changed the name of the month Sextilis to Augustus, he increased the number, and salary, of priests and vestal virgins, and he revived numerous ancient cults, rites, and festivals, including the *ludi saeculares*. In addition to concerning himself with religious affairs, "Next to the immortal gods he honoured the memory of the leaders who had raised the estate of the Roman people from obscurity to greatness," not only emphasizing the (purportedly) ancient roots of the religious traditions he had revived, but also placing himself in that line of the great leaders of Rome.[369] In his autobiographical *Res Gestae*, Augustus himself places emphasis on the religious honours that he held in his lifetime, placing his membership in all of the priestly colleges on par with his status of *princeps senatus*.[370] Writing in the third century CE when the emperorship had been more firmly established, Dio Cassius attributes the supreme power of the ruler, in part, to his occupation of all of the priestly colleges, and position as *pontifex maximus*, which gave him "supreme authority over all matters both profane and sacred,"

[369] Suet. *Aug*. 31.5. *Proximum a dis immortalibus honorem memoriae ducum praestitit, qui imperium p. R. ex minimo maximum reddidissent.*

[370] *Res Gest*. 7. "For ten years in succession I was one of the triumvirs for the re-establishment of the constitution] To the day of writing this I have been *princeps senatus* for forty years. I have been pontifex maximus, augur, a member of the fifteen commissioners for performing sacred rites, one of the seven for sacred feasts, an arval brother, a sodalis Titius, a fetial priest." *(Princeps senatus fui usque ad eum diem, quo scrip)seram 45(haec,) ‖ (per annos quadraginta. Pontifex maximus, augur, quindecimviru)m sacris (faciundis,) | (septemvirum epulonum, frater arvalis, sodalis Titius, fetiali)s fuí*.

along with the ability to appoint new priests.[371] Indeed, Augustus was the first Roman citizen to hold a priesthood in each of the colleges, though as we have seen, attempts were made by both Sulla and Caesar to accumulate priesthoods. Following the death of Augustus, *princepes* would hold office in each of the colleges, along with the position of *pontifex maximus*, though it is not until the reign of Titus (r. 79 – 81 CE) that a *princeps* was automatically co-opted into *omnia collegia*.[372]

Much of Augustus' success in establishing his dominance in religious affairs has to do, quite simply, with his long life. While he had attained a priesthood in each of the colleges by 29 BCE, he was not the leading member of each until the death of Lepidus in 12 BCE.[373] While the priestly colleges were not hierarchical, with the exception of the position of *pontifex maximus*, the annual lists of the colleges were usually "arranged in order of entrance to that college,"[374] and so it was only by outliving his peers that Augustus rose to become the senior member of each college.[375]

In this instance, Augustus did keep with tradition, and it was only after his death that his successors violated the standard progression through the priesthoods, and succeeded

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[371] Dio, 53.17.9.
[372] Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 58.
[373] The approximate dates for Augustus' co-optation are as follows (all dates BCE): Pontifical College, 47; Augural College, 43; *quindecimviri*, 39 or 37; *epulones*, 29, Arval Brothers, 29, and Sodalis Titii, 30.
[374] Martha W. Hoffman Lewis, "The College of Quindecimviri (Sacris Faciundis) in 17 B. C.," *The American Journal of Philology* 73, no. 3 (1952): 289. While evidence for this exists in the *quindecimviri* lists, the Arval lists frequently deviate from it. Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 19 n.6.
[375] With the exception of the colleges of *quindecimviri* and *Arvales*, which were revived in 29 BCE, with Augustus as a founding member. While there was no formal position of prominence in the Augural College comparable to the *pontifex maximus*, the most senior member of the Augurs did have some influence. Tacitus notes a case in 22 CE when the senior Augur, Cn. Cornelius Lentulus entered into a dispute with the *pontifex maximus* (Tiberius) over the question of a Flamen Dialis receiving a province. Tac. *Ann*. 3.58-59.

him as the *pontifex maximus*.[376] Augustus, as we can see from his handling of the case of Lepidus, was clearly very careful to avoid making dramatic changes in the well-established priestly colleges, just as he avoided enacting radical change in other areas. While Augustus did appoint some men to the colleges, during the period of civil war, but did not alter the structure of the colleges, nor outright change their method of co-optation, as Sulla had done.[377] Rather, he maintained the status quo of the Pontifical and Augural colleges, even declining the "priesthood of Lepidus" when it was offered to him by the people.[378]

The Augustan "revival" of neglected religious traditions was, in many respects, truly a revival, but because so much of ancient tradition had been lost, there was much room for innovation. The increase in the number of priests, the elevation of the Epulones, and the revival of the Arval Brothers were all part of a larger programme to re-centre political and religious authority around Augustus.[379] Rather than attempt to enact change in the most well-established colleges, the pontifical and augural colleges, the most important modifications were made in less-contested arenas, the colleges of the *quindecimviri*, *epulones*, and *Arvals*.

Augustus began by increasing enrolment in the *quindecimviri*. Registration in the college had not been maintained in the late Republic, and with the deaths of Dolabella and

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[376] While it had been voted that Caesar's heir should succeed him as *pontifex maximus,* through the negotiations of the triumvirs, Lepidus was given this honor, and it would not be until the death of Augustus that the office became hereditary. Dio 44.5.3.

[377] Many of these awards of priesthoods were the result of military negotiations, notably Sextus Pompeius (Augur) at the Treaty of Misenum (39 BCE), who was also promised a future consulship, and Valerius Messalla (Augur, enrolled *supernumerari* in 36 BCE, later to be co-opted into the Arval Brothers (20 BCE)). Dio 48.36; 49.16.

[378] In 36 BCE. Dio. 49.15.

[379] See Scheid, "Les restaurations religieuses d'Octavien/Auguste," 125; and on the role of the Arval Brothers, Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*, 344; 348-51.

Cassius Longinus (in 43 and 42 BCE, respectively), the college was emptied of members. While it is not always possible to tell if the lacunae in the membership lists of the colleges is simply due to poor record keeping during a period of civil war, it is clear that at the very least the record keeping of the colleges improved dramatically after Augustus joined, and that their numbers were filled. The college of the fifteen had long been considered to be the least prestigious of the major colleges, and members had a far less prominent place in society. They were only consulted by the Senate in connection with extraordinary events, so it is perhaps unsurprising that the membership was not diligently maintained. Augustus thus effectively had carte blanche to fill the college with his friends and colleagues, and to transform this lesser major college into an important organization. Unsurprisingly, his son-in-law, and likely heir apparent, Marcus Agrippa, joined the college shortly after Augustus himself. Of the eleven members who were likely co-opted in 39 BCE, only two would fail to achieve the rank of consul,[380] and many, it seems, were given a position in the priesthood due to their participation in the battles leading up to the Treaty of Misenum in 39 BCE.[381] All of the eleven men who joined the college in 39 BCE lived to participate in the *ludi saeculares* of 17 BCE,[382] and by the time of the games, their numbers had expanded to twenty-one. The second round of co-optations took place in 29 BCE, at the end of the war with Antony and at the same time as the revival of the Arval Brothers and Augustus' entry

[380] Licinius Calvus Stolo, who perhaps attained the Praetorship, and Mucius Scaevola, who is unknown outside of the list of *quindecimviri* of 17 BCE. See Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 766; 804.
[381] This is true, at least, for Licinius Calvus Stolo, Marcius Censorinus, Mucius Scaevola, C. Sosius, and Norbanus Flaccus; these last two also received a future consulship as a result of the treaty.
[382] Though one, Marcius Censorinus, was unable to participate due to ill health. Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 788.

into the Epulones. At this time, approximately five men were added to the college,[383] with a subsequent five men added in the period between 29 and 17 BCE. It is clear from the fact that the numbers of the college were allowed to decline in the period following the *ludi saeculares* that the men co-opted above the regular sixteen were intended to bolster the ranks of the college as they prepared for a spectacle, "such as they had never witnessed, and never would again."[384]

The *ludi saeculares* themselves will be discussed further in Chapter Six; here I would like to raise the question as to why this lesser college was given the task of performing such an important ceremony of state. The simple answer is obvious: while Lepidus still held the position of *pontifex maximus*, the actions of the pontifical college had to be restricted as much as possible. Indeed, G. W. Bowersock has remarked that the Pontifical College, and particularly its leader, were embarrassingly absent from the games,[385] which were led by Augustus and Agrippa in their roles as *quindecimviri*, and holders of tribunician power. Lepidus, in exile from 36 until his death in 13/12 BCE, had not been stripped of his title of Pontifex Maximus, out of respect for the office.[386] Bowersock has convincingly argued that Augustus' hesitation to take the title was not due, as others, notably Syme, have argued,

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[383] While there are no lists for this year, given the position of the men in the lists for 17 BCE, both Rüpke and Hoffman Lewis agree that 29 BCE was the likely co-optation date for Aelius Lamia, M. Lollius, Sentius Saturnius, Fufius Strigo, and L. Arruntius. Given the attention paid to other colleges in this year, it is reasonable to assume that the *quindecimviri* co-opted the five men necessary to complete the college in this year.

[384] Zos. 2.6. See Chapter Six.

[385] G. W. Bowersock, "The Pontificate of Augustus," in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, Kurt A. Raaflaub, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 382.

[386] See above. While there was no rule that *pontifices* could not be stripped of their office in the case of exile (as with the Augurs), Augustus deemed it prudent to wait until Lepidus died to take the office.

to the fact that he did not particularly care about the position (having already been named *princeps senatus*), but rather because he believed the "priesthood was simply too important to tamper with."[387] Bowersock goes on to argue that achieving the position of *pontifex maximus* was the high point of Augustus' career, and it is his inaugural procession as *pontifex maximus* in 12 BCE that is depicted on the Ara Pacis. He writes that it "was in the majesty of the pontificate that Augustus presented himself as the conqueror who brought peace."[388] However, it was as a holder of tribunician power and as a *magister* of the *quindecimviri* that he inaugurated the new *saeculum*.[389]

This suggests that the symbolism of the *pontifex maximus* was actually more important than the office itself. The priesthood *was* too important to tamper with, as it was held by the highest religious official in Rome, and to do so would be to disrespect not only the traditions of the Roman Republic, and, indeed, this is the language that Augustus and his biographers most frequently use, but also perhaps to the gods themselves. While there was certainly no conception in the minds of the Romans that the priests were divinely appointed, as Augustus had to maintain the façade of Republican institutions, as much for the gods as for the people. In order to do so while simultaneously transforming the Republic into something unrecognizable by the ancestors, Augustus needed to shift the focus of religion away from the *pontifices* and away from the worship of Jupiter. For this, he employed the

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[387] Ronald Syme, "Augustus did not strip him [Lepidus] of that honour [the *pontifex maximus*], ostentatious in scruple when scruple cost him nothing. He could wait for Lepidus' death. Better that he should – in recent history the dignity of *pontifex maximus*, in no way the reward of merit, was merely a prize in the game of politics." *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 447; Bowersock, "The Pontificate of Augustus," 380.

[388] Bowersock, "The Pontificate of Augustus," 72.

[389] The importance of the inauguration of the new *saeculum*, as well as the timing, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

quindecimviri, and through the language of a revival of tradition, he quietly reshaped religion, political influence, and popular support in the first decades of his rule.

This is not to suggest that the pontifical college or its duties were neglected. On the contrary, the college maintained its usual schedule of sacrifices, and the role of *pontifex maximus* was filled by the oldest member of the college, Calvinus. Calvinus, in his sixties at the time of the reforms to the colleges, was close to Augustus, and had been enrolled in the Pontifical College prior to 44 BCE.[390] As acting *pontifex maximus*, he would have ensured that the correct sacrifices to Jupiter were taking place in the absence of a *flamen Dialis*, as well as maintaining the regular activities of the Pontifical College. Additionally, he was instrumental in assisting Augustus in establishing the Arval Brothers, and was one of the founding members.[391] However, the college was prevented from making any major changes, such as fixing the calendar, and it was rendered politically quite impotent. Indeed, after 44 BCE, the Senate only consulted the college on issues concerning political matters on four occasions, none of which occurred during the Augustan period.[392] The impotence of the college was deliberately maintained by Augustus, who, despite being a member of the college himself, refused to let the college undertake any major acts while Lepidus was still at its head.[393] The position of *flamen Dialis*, which was to be filled by the Pontifex Maximus, was left vacant until Augustus replaced Lepidus. His decision to revive the

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[390] Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*; Val. Max. 8.11.2 records him as being a pontiff on the Ides of March, 44, though the exact date of his co-optation is unknown. He was consul in 53 and 40 BCE, and celebrated a triumph in 36.

[391] See Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*, 40-43; and Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères,* 690-732.

[392] They were consulted in 38 BCE (Dio, 48.44; Tac. *Ann*. 1.10; in 37 BCE, (Dio, 48.53.4-6); in 47 CE, (Tac. *Ann*. 11.15); and in 49 CE, (Tac. *Ann*. 12.8), though they continued to advise on affairs concerning family religion and burials. See Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion*, 63.

[393] See Scheid, "Les Restaurations religieuses d'Octavien/Auguste," 126-7.

priesthood after the office had been vacant for over seventy years drew parallels between Augustus and Numa, the second king of Rome, who had established the priesthood in the first place.[394] The parallels between Augustus and Numa become more apparent when we look at the calendrical reforms, in the next chapter.

The impotence of the pontifical college was not restricted to exclusively religious affairs: a survey of the consular lists from the Treaty of Misenum, when the college of *quindecimviri* was revived, to the death of Lepidus reveals that members of the pontifical college did not dominate the consular lists in the early years of the Principate. While only 48.6% of consuls between 39 to 13 BCE concurrently held priesthoods, the highest college of priests made a poor showing in the consular lists. In fact, the priests of the *quindecimviri* far outnumbered their colleagues in the Pontifical College in the highest magistracy (see Table 1). 21% of the consuls in this period belonged to the college of *quindecimviri*, while only 4% held membership in the most prestigious college. In the years in which Augustus held the office of *pontifex maximus* (12 BCE to 14 CE), this dominance decreased, with 5% of the consulships being held by *pontifices* and 11% belonging to the *quindecimviri*. While the percentage of priests who held consulships in the two periods remained fairly constant (48.6% versus 40.7%) the *distribution* changed dramatically, seeing the newly restored colleges gain much more importance in the political sphere.

[394] Tac. *Ann.* 3.58; Gordon, "From Republic to Principate: Priesthood, Religion, and Ideology," in *Pagan Priests*, 183. Gordon notes that this evocation of the religious activity of Numa is also connected to Augustus' closing of the temple of Janus in 29 BCE.

Table 1: Consulships held by Priests[395]

	pontifices	*augures*	*quindecimviri*	*epulones*	*Arvales* [396]	Priests out of Total Number of Consuls[397]
39 – 13 BCE	3 (4%)	11 (14.9%)	16 (21.6%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	36/74 (48.6%)
12 BCE – 14 CE	4 (5%)	7 (8.75%)	9 (11%)	9 (11.3%)	4 (5%)	33/81 (40.7%)

While it is true that the highest magistrates of the Roman Republic were drawn from the same social group as the priests, that is, the elites, this was far from a cohesive group, and competition was rife, both in the case of elections and in discussions in the Senate.[398]

Here is where the secondary role of the priestly colleges comes into importance: while the colleges all had their assigned duties, and the priests were entitled to participate in public festivities in priestly dress,[399] they also had the opportunity to meet as a group, on the orders of the Senate to discuss a question, to take care of priestly business, or simply to

[395] These numbers do not include members of the imperial family (Augustus, Tiberius, Germanicus, or Gaius) who were members of multiple colleges. They are also excluded from the total number of consuls.
[396] As this college only came into existence in ca. 29 BCE, I have only included members who held consulships after that date. An additional two men held consulships prior to the formation of (and their cooptation into) the Arvals. See Scheid, *Romulus et ses frères*, 690-703 on the dating of the formation of the Arvals.
[397] Including suffect consuls, but excluding the imperial family.
[398] Alexander Yakobson, demonstrates that the élites were often divided at the polls, and that it was therefore necessary to gain the support of the lower classes. While the elections in the Augustan period were far less open than in the earlier Republic, competition and rivalry amongst the elites remained fierce, and it was necessary for Augustus to try to control the conversation. See Yakobson, "Petitio et Largitio: Popular Participation in the Centuriate Assembly of the Late Republic," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 32–52.
[399] Displays of this sort were useful in demonstrating one's importance in a highly competitive, public setting. See Wilfried Nippel, *Public Order in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32.

banquet together.[400] It was on these occasions that the colleges could discuss, informally, affairs of state, and perhaps reach consensus on certain issues. While Augustus would have been entitled to participate in the meetings of all of the colleges, influence seems to have been wielded through the *quindecimviri*, comprised in large part of long-time supporters of Augustus. Like the Arval Brothers (and *epulones*), the *quindecimviri* was composed of nobles from different groups in order to "weld the senatorial elite into a homogenous bloc"[401] in order to achieve a unity of ideology which could be enacted by the *princeps* and his consuls.

In a recent study of the consulship under Augustus, Frédéric Hurlet has shown that although there were no "fundamental institutional modifications of the consulship under Augustus,"[402] there was a marked change in the way in which the office was employed. Augustus was to use his tribunician power to govern civil affairs, and while the consuls retained their imperium, they used this power "in a spirit of perfect collaboration with the *princeps*."[403] During the period of civil wars, many of the consulships had been assigned, as part of treaty and alliance negotiations, but beginning in 28 BCE, the consulship was again determined by an election, albeit with a very different character. Rather than being

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[400] According to Rüpke, banquets had long been an important part of the priests' functions. Rüpke, *Religion in Republican Rome*, 83-4. The banquets of the rich, according to John H. D'Arms, were theatrical performances, where elites would display their wealth and status. Participation in these banquets was thus a mark of status, and exclusion from them representative of a loss of power. John H. D'Arms, "Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, Bettina Ann Bergmann, et. al., eds., 301-19 (Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 1999).

[401] "Ce rapprochement fut d'après nous dans l'intention de souder en un bloc homogène la nobles sénatoriale en réunissant ses "chefs de file"." Scheid, *Les Frères Arvales*, 351.

[402] Frédéric Hurlet, "Consulship and Consuls under Augustus," in *Consuls and Res Publica: Holding High Office in the Roman Republic*, ed. Hans Beck et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 329.

[403] Ibid.

a competition between aristocrats that took place entirely in front of the people, the competition was now arbitrated "above all by the *princeps*."[404] While Augustus did have the right to intervene in the choice of consul, as well as a lot of informal pressure, the elections themselves still took place in front of the assemblies, and as such, maintained the façade of a fair and competitive election.[405] That over 20% of the consuls between 39 and 13 BCE were also members of the *quindecimviri* (only 4% of the consuls were *pontifices*) suggests that this college rose in stature, not only in religious affairs, but also in prestige and in affairs of state. While there was by no means a monopoly of power within the college, by recruiting consuls from this college, the college of the *quindecimviri* may have functioned as a sort of unofficial advisory body, populated by long-term supporters of Augustus, where politics could be discussed. When Augustus was not present in Rome, which was a frequent occurrence during the early Principate, care of the state was left in the hands of Marcus Agrippa, the second member to join the revived *quindecimviri*, and Augustus' most trusted advisor.[406]

While extant sources do not permit us to recreate the day-to-day activities of the college of *quindecimviri*, one of their most important functions during both the Republic and the early Empire was to consult the Sibylline books. These texts, said to have been obtained at the beginning of the Republic were consulted with some frequency, over fifty

[404] Ibid., 331; cf. Yakobson, "Petitio et Largitio," for the importance of the lower orders in consular elections.
[405] Hurlet, "Consulship and Consuls under Augustus," 331-32.
[406] On the distribution of authority amongst the priestly colleges, see recently Frederico Santangelo, "Enduring Arguments: Priestly Expertise in the Early Principate," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (2016), 349-76.

times between the fifth and second centuries BCE.[407] As the "original books," which had supposedly been purchased by Tarquinius, had been destroyed in a fire in 83 BCE, the Senate appointed a commission in 76 BCE to collect a new set of oracles, which the *quindecimviri* were charged with editing, to ensure that all of the oracles were authentic.[408] We do not know how the college actually used the oracles, but there is indication that Senate may have encouraged the *quindecimviri* to find a particular solution from the books:[409] as the oracles themselves could often be interpreted in various ways, it was the task of the *quindecimviri* to find a suitable response within the texts, and to provide the Senate with a decision as to what rites should be performed to resolve the situation.[410] During the Principate, the *quindecimviri* were once again charged with editing the Sibylline books, in 18 BCE, as, according to Dio, the verses had become "indistinct through lapse of time."[411] In 12 BCE, the books were transferred, on the authority of the new Pontifex Maximus, Augustus, to the Temple of Apollo, which was connected to his house. At the same time, Augustus collected and destroyed all publicly-held prophetic writings, ensuring that the Sibylline books were the sole collection of prophetic writings held in Rome, and

[407] Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic*, 79; H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*, B. C. McGing, ed. (London, Routledge, 1988), 137.
[408] Cicero (*Div*. 2.112) records that the texts were determined authentic based on whether or not they used an acrostic.
[409] Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic*, 82-83.
[410] E.g. Liv. 42.2.
[411] Dio 54.17: "the Sibylline verses, which had become indistinct through lapse of time, should be copied off by the priests with their own hands, in order that no one else might read them."

could be consulted only by the *quindecimviri*, a college of which he was the senior member.[412]

4.4 Conclusions

By the time Augustus assumed the title of Pontifex Maximus in 12 BCE, he had fundamentally changed the ways in which the public priesthoods functioned in Rome, and this had several implications in the construction of a new and enduring ruling order. While the colleges continued to act as consultative bodies to the Senate, they, particularly the *pontifices*, were consulted with far less frequency on affairs of political significance (see above). The colleges, as bodies separated of the Senate, became an additional venue in which Augustus could promote allies and foster consensus on affairs of state religion. When the diverse members of the colleges did meet to discuss an affair of state, cult, or family religion, one individual was, potentially, in attendance at each of the colleges, and it was around the person of the *princeps* that religion had been re-centred. In addition, by virtue of being a member of each of the colleges, Augustus was the only person who had access to the secret texts of all of the colleges, and was thus perhaps able to influence their interpretation. As each of these colleges was called upon to advise the Senate, having one common member in each may have ensured that the advice given by the colleges would be in agreement with the Augustan agenda.

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[412] Suet. *Aug*. 31. "After he finally had assumed the office of pontifex maximus (…) he collected whatever prophetic writings of Greek or Latin origin were in circulation anonymously or under the names of authors of little repute, and burned more than two thousand of them, retaining only the Sibylline books and making a choice even among those; and he deposited them in two gilded cases under the pedestal of the Palatine Apollo." *Postquam vero pontificatum maximum, (...), quidquid fatidicorum librorum Graeci Latinique generis nullis vel parum idoneis auctoribus vulgo ferebatur, supra duo milia contracta undique cremavit ac solos retinuit Sibyllinos, hos quoque dilectu habito; condiditque duobus forulis auratis sub Palatini Apollinis basi*.

The enlargement of the priesthoods also increased access to these high honors among the elite. With the increased enrollment and elevated prestige, it became possible for more men to attain this high status symbol, all the while diluting the individual power of individual priests: as the colleges grew in size, the influence that could be exerted by any one member, with the exception of Augustus, decreased. The priests still achieved great stature through their participation in religious celebrations, for the Augustan revival of religion was not simply limited to the expansion of the colleges.

This enlargement and restructuring of the priestly colleges was done within the language of "reviving traditions," a powerful rhetorical tool. Yet through this language of tradition and restoration of the Republic, Augustus was able to radically transform the role of the priests in the city of Rome. In addition to minimizing the power of the *pontifices*, at least until he attained the title of *pontifex maximus* in 12 BCE, the reforms to religious institutions expanded the number of priesthoods available, incorporated new men into these roles, and shifted the power of the priestly colleges from the *pontifices* to the *quindecimviri*. As Augustus had a position in each of these colleges, his presence in *omnia collegia* reaffirmed his exalted position in political life, and prevented the colleges from becoming centres of resistance to the new ruling order. As these transformations were taking place publicly, given the nature of Roman political culture, the *princeps*' place in religious life was highly visible. The public and performative nature of religious festivities during this period will be the subject of Chapter Six.

While Emperor Wu's expansion of imperial cult took him across the empire on his lengthy inspection tours, Augustus' expansion of cult remained within the city of Rome, but inserted him into the centre of all of religious life in the city. Through his reforms to

the religious institutions, Augustus demonstrated that he held ultimate religious authority in Rome, and he obtained the ability to influence cooption into each of the priestly colleges. Ultimately, due to his long life, he would be the senior member of each of the colleges, and this would eventually set the precedent for the cooption of the *princeps* into *omnia collegia.* From his position within the colleges, Augustus was able to use the priestly colleges in his consolidation of authority, while maintaining the rhetoric of a return to tradition that was so central to his reforms.

Chapter Five: Comparing Calendars

5.1 Introduction

The expansion of participants seen in the changes made to the structure of the imperial religious systems can also be seen in the processes through which the early rulers created new calendrical systems. Reforms to the calendar were completed under Julius Caesar, in 46 BCE, with modifications by Augustus in 8 BCE, as well as by Emperor Wu in 104 BCE. In both the Han and Rome a new calendrical system was created – that is, a new way of structuring, and in the Han case, calculating, the dates in the civil year to align with the motion of the cosmos. While the reforms were based on astronomical observation, they were also steeped in each regime's dominant ideology, and these reforms are therefore inseparable from the political conditions of the time. While the Han and Roman rulers ultimately produced very different systems of calendrical reckoning, the processes through which they reformed the calendar were very similar, and in each society, the calendrical reforms were intimately tied to the consolidation of power around the person of the emperor.

The calendar reforms provide an excellent point of comparison, due in part to the fact that they were undertaken at similar points during these early empires: i.e., when the rulers were trying to consolidate imperial power and reshape political institutions. The calendar reforms are recorded in the sources for both Han and Rome, allowing us to see the general nature of the new calendars as well as their use in society. However, those documenting the reforms in Han and Rome were interested in a very different set of questions, and the ways in which these early writers chose to document the reforms has influenced subsequent historical writing on the subject. In both cases, the rulers were dealing with a very real and

immediate problem – how to create a new calendar which accurately aligned civil and natural time, and, in the case of the Han, accurately predicted cosmic phenomena. This problem could not be solved, however, in isolation from elite politics and cultural ideology. We will see how in both cases, the early rulers used the calendrical reforms in pursuit of their own political goals, and that the literature surrounding the calendars was also reflective of these patterns.

The Roman authors were primarily concerned with documenting the reforms from the perspective of politics, and the texts on calendars are exemplary of the narrative style which focuses on individual accomplishments contributing to the glory of Rome. In Han, the concerns of the historians were primarily in documenting the reform process, the calculations needed to produce new calendars, and with the manner in which the new calendrical system fit within the lineage of calendrical systems of legendary sage rulers. The historical records of Han and Rome thus lead themselves quite easily to comparison, as it is a natural step to interrogate one set of reforms about the areas of interest of the other. This chapter will attempt to do just that: to examine the ways in which reforms to the calendar in Han were politically motivated and contributed to the consolidation of imperial power over the regional lords, and to call into question the Roman narrative of the individual's role in shaping the new calendar, as well as the ways in which the mytho-historical narrative was shaped to lend greater legitimacy to the first family.

Calendars are fascinating documents: they are reflective of regional customs, yet remain irrevocably tied to the realities of the physical motion of the earth within the solar system. As such, the calendrical reformers encountered the same "data set" – the motion of the earth around the sun and the moon around the earth, not to mention the perceived

motion of the planets and stars, was the same in both the Han and Roman empires, yet the calendars produced diverge remarkably. The astronomical knowledge and technological capabilities were roughly similar in Han and Rome, suggesting that the differences in the calendars were in part due to diverging concerns over legitimating philosophy. As I shall argue below, there was the far less anxiety in Rome over the ability of the capital to align the civil year with the natural year; indeed, much of the concern over the calendar was manufactured by Caesar and later, Augustus. In Han, however, the ability to align the civil year with the cosmos was an important marker of legitimacy for both the dynasty and the individual ruler. In both cases, however, the calendar became an important tool in the hands of the ruler to establish his own authority over competing factions at court.

The calendars themselves have very different historical trajectories following the deaths of their architects, with the Julian calendar remaining in use until the sixteenth century CE with few modifications, and the Han *Taichu* calendrical system lasting only until the first century CE. However, both calendars were the result of the victories of one ruler over his political rivals, and significantly, the processes through which the rulers undertook these reforms is remarkably similar. It is not my intention in this chapter to provide a detailed analysis of the calculations of the respective calendrical systems; these have been studied in detail by historians of science.[413] Rather, this chapter will examine the ways in which calendar reforms were conceived of and enacted by the early rulers of Han and Rome, as well as how these reforms were written about by ancient authors. In my discussions of ancient calendrical science, I rely on the work of recent scholarship on the

[413] For the study of Chinese calendars, see the works of Christopher Cullen. In Rome, Jörg Rüpke's *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine* (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) provides a good introduction to the calendar's evolution.

subject and my focus will thus be on the actors involved in the production and employment of astral science, and the subsequent ideological implications, rather than on the technical details of calendrical computation. The calendars produced by Han and Rome were technically quite different, and it is not my intention to argue for any similarity in technical matters. Rather, I hope to show how the similarities between the processes through which the reforms were made, and to understand the role of these processes, as well as the subsequent historiography on calendrical reforms, within the context of the rulers' consolidations of power. In this discussion, I am interested in the immediate impact of the new calendars, rather than their ultimate futures. While the Julian calendar continued to be in use until the Gregorian reform of 1582 CE, the Han *Taichu* calendar was replaced in 85 CE. However, both calendar reforms influenced the way people thought about the relationship between imperial authority and cosmic time. Prior to discussing the calendrical reforms, a few comments will be made about the place of calendrical reforms in establishing regimes, and on the social organization of time. Following this, I outline the role of the calendar in each society, as well as the history of reforms made to calendars.

For a regime to attempt to assert its authority by establishing a new calendar is not unique to the ancient world. Calendars are a fundamental part of a regime's attempt to assert control over the social construction of time, and to shape that sense of time in ways that reinforce the desired organization of society. Time, as a social code, is communicative; and a language of time can be used and manipulated by societies and individuals as a means to convey social messages.[414] We see this in calendrical experiments in revolutionary

[414] Eviatar Zerubavel, "The Language of Time: Toward a Semiotics of Temporality," *Sociological Quarterly* 28.3 (1987):354.

societies: the French Revolutionary calendar, with its ten-day week, or the Soviet calendar, with five and six-day weeks, were attempts to re-organize time in a fashion that represented the new cultural order, and to shape the temporal rhythms of the people in ways which corresponded with it. According to Eviatar Zerubavel, these contrasting temporal rhythms "can be used not only to substantiate abstract conceptual contrasts but also to help accentuate actual social and political ones."[415]

The calendrical reforms of the Han and Roman empires did not, so far as we can tell, alter the way common people experienced time day-to-day: both societies remained "profoundly premodern and preindustrial in terms of the impact of time structures on the individual's lived experience."[416] But they did serve to align the government, its civil time, with the religious and agricultural cycles. The impact of these calendrical reforms would have been felt most clearly by the elite, who may have understood the symbolic impact of the changes. Social time, and the mythico-ritual systems connected to it, "tends to fulfil, even more effectively than the division of space, a function of integration in and through division, that is, through hierarchization."[417] The changing of the calendars in both societies, the changing of the flow of civil and religious time, required the submission of the elite to these temporal rhythms. While the calendar reforms did not have a dramatic impact on the way people lived their lives, as they did with the introduction of the ten-day week in France, these early calendrical reforms did serve to align time with the empire, and communicated this message to the elites.

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[415] Zerubavel, 344.
[416] Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007), 2, who is writing exclusively about the ancient Mediterranean, but the same can be said for the early Chinese.
[417] Bourdieu, *Outline*, 163.

5.2 "Granting the Seasons" in early China

There are at least three different types of calendrical documents from early China: official calendrical systems (*li* 曆), monthly ordinances (*yue ling* 月令), and day books (*ri shu* 日書). While there has not yet been a study of the ways in which these three types of calendrical documents were related to each other, the documents reveal that there was some overlap across genres. Official calendrical systems were created by the government, and rather than being simply a calendar in our modern sense of the word, they were computational systems, from which calendars could be produced. These *li*, discussed in greater detail below, eventually came to be included in dynastic histories, and were closely linked to ruling legitimacy. The Monthly Ordinance-type documents stipulated what types of activities could be carried out in each month, in order to maintain a correct balance in the cosmos. The prescriptions are directed at the court and officials, and have survived in a variety of different texts. The *Liji*, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, and *Huainanzi* all contain chapters of this type, and there is one example of this type of document as a wall inscription, recently translated and studied by Charles Sanft.[418] The final category, day books, are primarily known from excavated documents, and these hemerological documents provided their reader with information on what types of activities would be auspicious or inauspicious on certain days, and these were likely of the three, the furthest removed from imperial production.[419] The multiplicity of these documents, and the fact that numerous examples

[418] Charles Sanft, "Edict of Monthly Ordinances for the Four Seasons in Fifty Articles from 5 C.E.: Introduction to the Wall Inscription discovered at Xuanquanzhi, with Annotated Translation," *Early China* 32 (2008-09): 125-208.

[419] The day books do not feature in the debates over calendrical reform at court, and will thus not be discussed in this dissertation. For a broad overview of the day books from discovered at Shuihudi, see Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy*, 214-35; Marc Kalinowski, "Les traités de Shuihudi et l'hémérologie chinoise à la fin des royaumes-

of each type have survived in various forms, indicates that in the pre- and early-imperial period, there was an immense concern over the ability to predict cosmic events and to understand how cosmic cycles could influence human life. If one correctly understood cosmic time, and was able to regulate one's activities according to it, then it would be possible to avoid misfortunes.[420] These three types of calendrical documents would have been consulted for different purposes, and by different peoples, but it was the calendrical systems which received the most attention at court and it was these documents that were written about in the canon of received texts.

Calendar reforms, and writing about them, have had a long history in China, and the desire to record astronomical information itself contributed to the development of writing in early China.[421] Historiography on calendars and astronomy seems to have settled into a standardized narrative at least by the time of the Han. Both the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu* follow the mythical origins of the calendar which were developed in the "Yaodian" 堯典 and "Shundian" 舜典 chapters of the *Shangshu* 尚書. According to Marc Kalinowski, these chapters were probably composed during the Eastern Zhou period, developed from myths inherited from the Shang dynasty.[422] In his survey of pre-Han writings on calendrical

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combattants." *T'oung Pao* 75.4 (1986): 175-228; Kalinowski, "Les livres des jours (rishu) des Qin et des Han: la logique éditoriale du recueil A de Shuihudi (217 avant notre ère)." *T'oung Pao* 94.1 (2008): 1-48.

[420] The importance of proper timing for political affairs has been emphasized by James D. Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals = Lüshi Chunqiu* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2002). The Monthly Ordinance chapters go so far as to indicate what disasters might occur if the ordinances are carried out in the wrong season.

[421] See David Pankenier, *Astrology and Cosmology in Early China: Conforming Earth to Heaven*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), 149-90.

[422] Marc Kalinowski, "Fonctionnalité calendaire dans les cosmogonies anciennes de la Chine," *Études chinoises* 23 (2004): 94-5. See also Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle : Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1991), 67-85, and Aihe

myths, Kalinowski notes that, in the second half of the fourth century BCE, a particular genre of cosmological stories emerged, "pour introduire, expliciter, et finalement légitimer des pratiques et des conceptions ayant cours à cette époque."[423] These histories present a very linear development of both calendrical systems and astronomical knowledge, presenting the development of calendrical knowledge in a fashion that aligned with the cyclical progression of dynasties. This picture is complicated, however, by evidence from archaeological discoveries. In his study of intercalation practices from the Shang to Han, Liu Xueshun argues for a non-linear development of the calendars, showing that, rather than there being a progression from year-end intercalation to in-year intercalation (the superior system), there were many reversals.[424] This non-linear development, he argues, was due in large part to the fact that the various states of the Zhou used their own calendars, particularly in the Eastern Zhou; while the Zhou had nominal authority over the states of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, they employed their own calendars,[425] developed by astronomers and mathematicians working independently from those of the Zhou kings. The historical narrative presents a linear history of the origins of the calendar due to the fact that calendrical science was so closely linked to political legitimacy, and it

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Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 28-37.

[423] Kalinowski, "Fonctionnalité calendaire" 119.

[424] Specifically, that in the late-Shang, in-year intercalation was in use, but this was discontinued by the Zhou, whose calendar still used year-end intercalation. During the Spring and Autumn period, in-year intercalation was used by some calendars, but year-end intercalation became dominant once again with the dominance of the Qin calendar, and this practice remained until the institution of the *Taichu* calendar. Liu Xueshun, "Non-Linear Development of Early Chinese Calendars," in *Time and Ritual in Early China*. Thomas O Höllmann and Xiaobing Wang, eds., (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 115-122.

[425] Liu Xueshun, 123. See also James Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ëw with the Tso Chuen*, (Taipei, Wenxing shudian, 1966 (1872)), 97.

was necessary to present not only universal adoption of particular calendrical systems, but also to see each system as being superior to the last. With that caveat, the following section presents the historical narrative of the development of calendrical science, as recorded in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, in order to situate Emperor Wu's *Taichu* reform within this context. We will see, in section 5.4, how the historians chose to maintain this narrative of linear development by occluding minor changes made to the calendar in the early Han.

According to the histories, in very ancient times the calendars were in disorder: the intercalary months and the names of the months were wrong, so the sage-king Yao commanded the Xi He 羲和 brothers to reverently bestow the [correct] seasons to the people (*jing shou min shi* 敬授民時). This tradition was passed on through time, so that

> 自殷周，皆創業改制，咸正曆紀，服色從之，順其時氣，以應天道.
>
> From the time of Yin [Shang] and Zhou, all have initiated the reform of the system, all have made right the calendrics of the era; the colours of the clothes come from this, from following the seasonal *qi*, and thereby respond to the Way of Heaven.[426]

However, after the fall of the Western Zhou in 771 BCE, the descendants of the "hereditary astronomers" (*chou ren* 疇人) all abandoned the central states to live amongst the barbarians, and the contending states each established their own calendrical system.[427]

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[426] *Hanshu* 21.973.

[427] *Hanshu* 21.973. The *Shiji* states that this is due to the fact that the princes no longer declared the beginning of the month, and the astronomers no longer calculated the seasons. With the licentiousness of King Zhou of Shang, the music masters similarly abandoned the central court, and sought employment outside of court. Music was an important means through which the ruler was able to harmonize the empire, and his ability to attract the

During the period of division (771 – 221), there were six different calendrical systems in effect, but, according to the *Hanshu*, knowledge of these systems was lost in the Qin biblioclasm, and the only system that remained was the Qin *Zhuanxu li* 顓頊曆.[428] While these calendars are lost to us today, we now know that they would not have been directly targeted in the burning of the books in 213 BCE,[429] and that calendrical science continued to flourish under the early empires. The calendrical system that was in place throughout King Zheng of Qin's reign, the *Zhuanxu li*, was named after a grandson of the Yellow Thearch), from whom the Qin claimed descent, and who, legend tells us, was responsible for the creation of the first Chinese calendar. It was a quarter-remainder (*sifen* 四分) system[430] and, although reasonably accurate, after a period of approximately three hundred years, the calendar would be wrong, and predictions of new moons and eclipses would be incorrect, even while the mathematics remained sound.

Establishing a correct calendrical system was considered, in the Han, to be an important task for the emperor. First, as seen above, there was historical precedent for

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proper musicians to court, and his appreciation of the proper styles of music, was a mark of his virtue. *Hanshu* 22.1039. On music and politics, see Erica Fox Brindley, *Music, Cosmology, and the Politics of Harmony in Early China* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2011). The *Shiji* chapter has been translated by Edouard Chavannes, *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien* (Paris, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1967).

[428] The term *li* 曆 refers to not only the calendar, as calculated and promulgated by the state, but also to the mathematical system used to calculate it.

[429] The Qin did burn privately held copies of certain types of texts, but retained copies in the imperial library. More damage was done during the civil war following the Qin, when the library was set on fire. Writings on calendrical science were not included in the list of proscribed knowledge, see Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books *did* the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On the meaning of *Pai Chia* in Early Chinese Sources," *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995).

[430] I.e., a year was calculated to have 365.25 days, 0.0078 days longer than the actual tropical year. See Christopher Cullen, *Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient China: The Zhou Bi Suan Jing* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 27.

reform, dating back to the sage-kings of antiquity. Implicit in this precedent was the idea that it was not only the system itself that was important, but also the ability of the ruler to attract competent astronomers to his court, something that rulers since the fall of the Western Zhou had failed to do. During the Han, the ability to create a new calendrical system became closely tied to political legitimacy; it was important for the emperor to demonstrate that he had received the Mandate of Heaven 天命 by correctly aligning his rule with the patterns of heaven. In the words of Marc Kalinowski, the calendar,

> Fondé sur la croyance en une corrélation intime entre l'ordre de la nature et de la société, ce rôle conférait aux cycles calendaires l'autorité d'une loi naturelle, chargée de puissance éthique.[431]

Cosmological phenomena, such as eclipses, visible planets, or comets could be interpreted as heavenly omens, commenting on the worthiness of the ruler, and, as such, failure to predict the appearance of omens was politically dangerous.[432] According to Nathan Sivin, "Mathematical astronomy was the art of transforming the ominous into the predictable and therefore no longer threatening."[433] Not only was it important to establish a system which was able to predict cosmological phenomena, it was also essential for the ruler to institute a ritual program for the court and nobles. Not only did seasonal sacrifices need to be

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[431] Kalinowski, "Fonctionnalité calendaire," 88.

[432] According to Liu Tseng-kuei, omens were supposed to appear at specific points within a dynastic cycle, and were taken to be symbols of the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of not only the calendar, but also of imperial policies. Liu Tseng-kuei, "Calendrical Computation Numbers and Han Dynasty Politics: A Study of Gu Yong's Three Troubles Theory," in *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*. Michael Nylan and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds. (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2015), 294.

[433] Nathan Sivin, *Granting the Seasons: the Chinese Astronomical Reform of 1280, with a Study of Its Many Dimensions and a Translation of Its Records: 授時曆叢考* (New York, Springer, 2009), 41.

scheduled, but so did visits from the regional lords, and imperial sacrifices. A new calendrical system was an emblem of legitimacy and renewal for founding emperors, and, in conjunction with other institutional changes, both an important symbolic and practical reform. By the time of Emperor Wu, a new calendrical system was needed not only for the practical purpose of ensuring that the beginnings of months aligned with the lunar cycle, but also in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of Emperor Wu's reign, and the Han house, along with his expansionist and centralizing policies.

5.3 Priests and the Calendar in early Rome

The calendar in Rome was an equally important political tool, but with remarkably different characteristics than its early Chinese counterparts. What we refer to when we discuss the calendar in Rome is the *fasti* lists, lists of "court settings" which dictated the days of the week, the days on which business could be carried out and days on which it was prohibited, the dates of religious festivals in Rome, as well as the market days.[434] Ultimately, the calendrical *fasti* and consular *fasti*, a record of the consuls for each year, became closely associated with each other. The years were thus marked not numerically, but with the names of the consuls. As such, these "calendars" were not methods of chronological computation, but markers of time,[435] and an important marker of status within the highly visible theatre of politics in Rome – to have one's name inscribed on the *fasti* was a very high privilege. With the transition from Republic to Principate, the *fasti*

[434] Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Constantine to Numa*, 1; 8-10.
[435] Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 171.

became increasingly dominated by the imperial family, with the name of Augustus prefacing the list, regardless of the consuls for that year.

While the *fasti* were not systems of computation like the *li* of the Qin and Han, calculation was still required to have a working calendar, though the Romans displayed far less anxiety about aligning the civil year with the cosmos. The calendar at Rome was closely linked to political authority, though we know far less about the history and origins of the early Roman calendar. During the Augustan age, the roots of the Roman calendar were traced back to the founding of the city by Romulus. According to Ovid, Romulus, who was "better versed in swords than stars" decreed that there should be ten months in the year.[436] Numa, the second king of Rome, added two months to those established by Romulus, arriving at the final number of twelve.[437] Numa did not perform any calculations himself, rather, according to Ovid, he learned that the year required an additional two months from the Greek Pythagoras,[438] and thus added the months of January, dedicated to the god Janus, and February, a month of purification and rites to the dead, to the beginning of the calendar year. The reform added a total of fifty days to the calendar, bringing the length of the year to 354 days, which was the equivalent of twelve lunations. Because of the Roman preference for odd numbers, an additional six days were added (and later one

[436] Ovid offers as a reason for this that ten months is the period of gestation of a child, and that a wife mourns her husband for ten months (this was also related to pregnancy – a woman was forbidden to remarry within ten months of her husband's death so that there could be no chance of paternity disputes). Another interpretation of this calendar is that the activities of the people only needed to be regulated for ten months of the year, and so a calendar was only necessary for those months. The remaining un-calated months were "rest" months (O.E. Hartmann, cited in Frazer, trans.)

[437] Ovid, *Fasti,* 1.29-44.

[438] Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.151-54. The possibility of any such meeting was already discredited by both Livy and Plutarch.

more) so that months could be designated as containing either twenty-nine or thirty-one days, with the exception of the month of February, which contained an even number of days.[439]

Little is known about the details of the early Republican calendar: only that it comprised twelve lunar months, six of which were named after the gods, and six of which had numerical names.[440] In addition to these twelve months, it was necessary to occasionally insert an intercalary month, in order to reconcile the lunar months with the solar year. The creation of an intercalary month was attributed to Numa, who likely followed the Greeks in its usage, but its insertion was determined by the pontifical college.[441] According to Macrobius, because of the extra day added by Numa, to create months containing odd numbers of days, there was no way to properly calculate a standard for the insertion of an intercalary month, and so it was often done on a somewhat ad hoc basis.[442] The only stipulation was that the intercalary month was to be inserted in the calendar after February 23rd, so that it did not disrupt the festivals to the dead during that month. Without any further regulations, the ability to determine in which year it would be inserted eventually became an important political tool. Intercalary months were, like in the Han, considered to be outside of the official days of the year, and in Rome they were declared to be interest-free. This created a financial advantage for moneylenders and tax collectors, an advantage which would be abused in the late Republic. Additionally, it had

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[439] Mac. *Sat*., 1.13. Even numbers were associated with the female and finite, whereas male numbers were associated with the male and the infinite, in the Pythagorean tradition.
[440] Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Constantine to Numa*, 23.
[441] There is some dispute as to whether or not the pontifical college was given responsibility for intercalation from earliest times, or if this power was given them in the *Lex Acilia* of 191 BCE. See Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Constantine to Numa*, 68-70.
[442] Mac. *Sat*. 1.13.

the effect of prolonging a magistrate's term by a full month.[443] Given the fact that the priests were often magistrates themselves, this system created the potential for much abuse. In addition to all of these computational difficulties, because the role of the *fasti* was to mark time rather than to ensure correct computation, the civil year soon began to drift from the natural year, and despite a few revisions, the "calendar was still erratic down to the time when Caesar took it, like so much else, in charge."[444]

5.4 The Grand Inception Reform

According to the Han authors, a new calendrical system would ideally have been implemented by each founding emperor. However, the histories do not record any major changes to the calendar at the beginnings of the Qin and Han Dynasties. According to the *Hanshu*, Qin Shi Huang changed only the first month of the year upon founding the Qin empire, perhaps because he did "not have much free time" (秦兼天下，未皇暇也（…）乃以十月為正), and he otherwise maintained the Qin *Zhuanxu* calendar system, which had been established before his reign.[445] Sima Qian states that there was still something incorrect about this calendar, and despite Qin Shi Huang's efforts, the First Emperor could "still not clearly see what was true,"[446] yet no further reforms were undertaken, and the calendrical system of the Qin remained in place. The *Hanshu* indicates that reforms should

[443] Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Constantine to Numa*, 81-84. Mac. *Sat*. 1.14 is explicit in his accusation of the priests for altering the length of the year to serve the interests of the money lenders.
[444] Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.155-56.
[445] *Hanshu* 21.973. The Qin calendar began the year with the tenth month. There is no direct evidence for the introduction of the Qin calendar, though it was in place at least as early as 246 BCE.
[446] *Shiji* 26.1259. It is unclear how much of this is Sima Qian's criticism of the First Emperor.

have been implemented by the founding emperor of Han, Gaozu, however, he instead chose, on the advice of the former Qin official Zhang Cang,[447] to continue the Qin *Zhuanxu* system, as well as the Qin colour of black. The calendar was not the only remnant of the Qin to be kept under the new regime: Gaozu also maintained most of the Qin sacrificial program, along with many of the administrative institutions. Like the First Emperor of Qin, Gaozu is said to also have not had free time in which to initiate these reforms, and while it is likely that he made some changes to the calendar, he did not implement an entirely new method of calendrical computation.[448] Reforms to calendar and cult were also proposed by advisors under Emperor Wen, but were rejected.[449]

This narrative of the late Qin and early Han is complicated, however, by archaeological evidence. Rather than presenting a linear progression of calendrical reforms, from the sage kings of antiquity to the Qin, and finally to Emperor Wu, calendrical documents excavated from Zhangjiashan 張家山 Tomb 247 demonstrate that there were some changes made to the calendar system during the transition from Qin to Han.[450] These changes were likely undertaken by either Han Gaozu or Empress Lü 呂后, but while the administrative records reflect this change, no calendrical reforms were recorded in either the *Shiji* or *Hanshu*. Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence, it is impossible to conclude if this represents a

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[447] See Michael Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han, and Xin Periods, 221 BC-AD 24* (Leiden, Brill, 2000), 675-76.
[448] *Hanshu* 21.1030. The *Shiji* attributes the decision to maintain the Qin calendrical system to both Gaozu and Empress Lü, but she does not appear in the *Hanshu* chapter. *Shiji* 26.1260.
[449] See above, Chapter Three.
[450] Zhang Peiyu 張培瑜 and Zhang Chunlong 張春龍. "Qin dai lifa he Zhuanxu li" 秦代曆法和顓頊曆, in *Liye fajue baogao* 里耶發掘報告 Hunansheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed. (Changsha: Yuelu, 2006), 735-47. See also Huang Yi-long 黃一農, "Qin wangzheng shiqi lifa xinkao" 秦王政時期曆法新考, *Huaxue* 5 (2001): 143–149.

new computational system, but the fact that these reforms were not included in the *Shiji* suggests that it does not. The calendar implemented by Emperor Wu was the first to be included in the historical records, and the lineage of calendrical reforms created by the historians must be viewed as an attempt to enhance the monumentality of Emperor Wu's reform.[451] The received narrative thus obscures the reality of a much more complicated system in favour of a linear narrative that places at its centre the calendar reforms of Emperor Wu and his quest for immortality.

While we now know that the *Hanshu* claim that the Qin Zhuanxu calendar remained in use up until the time of Emperor Wu is not entirely accurate,[452] regardless of the changes that had been made, at the time of Emperor Wu, the calendar had begun to lose its accuracy, and it was no longer able to predict the cycles of the moon, much less eclipses or planetary motion:

> 而朔晦月見，弦望滿虧，多非是
>
> The moon would make its appearance on the days [designated as] Shuo 朔 (new moon) or Hui 晦 (last day of lunar month), and [in the predictions of] crescent and full moon, in the waxing and waning, there was much that was wrong.[453]

A reform to the calendrical system was long overdue, and could be used to celebrate the emperor's achievements in expanding the territory of the empire, and pacifying dissent,

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[451] As the *Taishi*, director of astrology, Sima Qian was not only trained in astronomy, but would likely have also had access to astronomical documents and administrative records from the earlier Han. It is important to remember that although Sima Qian is primarily known for his work of history, he was first and foremost an astronomer, and a very talented one at that. On his work as astronomer, see Bo Shuren 薄樹人.

[452] Zhang and Zhang, 743.

[453] *Hanshu* 21.974.

both within the empire and on its borders. In 105 BCE, the Grand Astrologer, Sima Qian, along with the Emperor's advisors, Gongsun Qing and Hu Sui 壺遂 informed the emperor that the current calendrical system was incorrect and should be abandoned, and that it was appropriate to change the first month of the year.[454] Emperor Wu consulted with his Imperial Counselor Ni Kuan 兒寬, who informed him that:

> 帝王必改正朔，易服色，所以明受命於天也
>
> The emperor should change the calendar[455] and change the colour of [his] clothes; this is the means by which he can show that he has received the mandate from heaven.[456]

Additionally, Emperor Wu was informed that, after the Yellow Thearch had harmonized the cosmos, he had attained immortality, which became a major motivating factor in his reform, and was intimately tied to his modifications to the imperial sacrifice program.[457] All agreed that it was time to initiate a new system, and that system should be based on the calendar of the Xia, with the year beginning in the first month rather than in the tenth. Emperor Wu ordered Gongsun Qing, Hu Sui, Sima Qian, along with the *Shiliang* Zun 尊 and the Grand Master of the Stars She Xing 射姓 to discuss and create a new *li.* The men performed their observations and calculations, but eventually they had to return to the emperor and declare to him that they were unable to do the mathematics (*bu neng wei suan*

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[454] *Hanshu* 21.974.
[455] Literally, "change the first month of the year and the date of the new moon"
[456] *Hanshu* 21.974.
[457] On the calendar and its relationship to Emperor Wu's quest for immortality, see Christopher Cullen, "Motivations for Scientific Change in Ancient China: Emperor WU and the Grand Inception Astronomical Reforms of 104 B.C.," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 24, no. 3 (1993).

不能為算) required to create a new calendrical system.[458] As a result, calendrical specialists were recruited from across the empire to produce their own systems which were to be evaluated by the court astronomers. Over twenty men were recruited, and of them, eventually both Luoxia Hong 落下閎 and Deng Ping 鄧平 individually came up with identical systems, based on the mathematics of the pitch-pipes. These two systems were deemed superior to the others proposed, and Emperor Wu ordered Sima Qian to establish a new calendrical system based on these calculations, promoting Deng Ping to the office of Assistant Grand Scribe.[459] This calendrical system was called the *Taichu li* 太初曆 (Grand Inception Calendrical System), and it was to remain in place until the next reform in 85 CE, when the calendar was once again out of synchronization with the natural year, and Emperor Zhang 章帝 (r. 75 – 88 CE) was willing to pursue reform.[460]

While the reform of the calendrical system was a massive undertaking and considered by all present to be one of the highest achievements of Emperor Wu's reign, it is important to consider what impact the calendar that was so carefully calculated by the state had on the empire at large. The calendar was primarily concerned with calculating the timing of months (and the seasonal sacrifices), as well as predicting lunar eclipses. Various types of official and unofficial calendrical documents have been found from across the Qin and Han empires, and these quasi-official documents are similar enough to suggest some sort of

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[458] *Hanshu* 21.975 While these men were able to make certain calculations and establish the crucial "system origin" date, they were not able to create an entirely new method of computation, which is what Emperor Wu desired. It is possible that this "inability" was actually an unwillingness on the part of Sima Qian to participate in this reform.
[459] *Hanshu* 21.975-6.
[460] In 78 BCE, a Grand Clerk, Zhang Shouwang, suggested that the calendar was in need of modification, but subsequent observations proved that the *Taichu* system remained accurate, and Zhang's proposal was not put into effect.

centralized model from which they were copied.[461] We also know, primarily from received sources, that throughout the pre- and early-imperial periods, it was expected that the ruler would promulgate the calendar to the regional lords, so that they, in turn, could announce the new moon and the rituals to be performed to their constituencies (discussed below).[462] However there is no evidence to suggest that the calendar promulgated by the state had a significant impact on the lives of the common people. Based on the classical texts' insistence on the fact that by promulgating the calendar and "granting the seasons" the Son of Heaven was giving the common people a calendar by which to schedule their planting and harvesting, subsequent historians have, until recently, continued to view the calendar in this light. However, aside from the fact that pre-modern societies certainly did not need a schedule to know when to plant or harvest their grain, the Chinese calendar, preoccupied as it was with lunar cycles over the sun, would have been little help to the peasants. As Daniel Patrick Morgan has argued, "the point was not so much the micromanagement of peasant farmers as it was the alignment of the state's ritual schedule with the rhythms of nature and spirits."[463]

This characteristic of the calendrical system allowed for the possibility of a large number of different ways of calculating the heavenly numbers, as well as the possibility that a perfectly mathematically sound system could be rejected for failing to align with the ideological interests of the court. The system that was established under Emperor Wu in

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[461] Daniel Patrick Morgan, "Knowing Heaven: Astronomy, the Calendar, and the Sagecraft of Science in Early Imperial China." PhD Diss. University of Chicago (2013), 200; Yoshimura Masayuki 吉村昌之. "Shutsudo kandoku shiryō ni mirareru rekiku no shūsei" 出土簡牘資料にみられる暦譜の集成 in *Henkyō shutsudo mokkan no kenkyū* 邊疆出土木簡の研究, ed. Tomiya Itaru 富谷至 (Kyōto, Hōyū shoten, 2003), 511-13.

[462] Evidence for this abounds in the *Zuozhuan*, *Huainanzi*, *Liji*, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, and *Hanshu*.

[463] Morgan, 237.

104 BCE was chosen as much because it agreed with Emperor Wu's conceptions of the his place in history as the heir to the Yellow Thearch, a vision that was very much influenced by Gongsun Qing, as it did to its technical achievements.[464] Indeed, mathematical considerations may even have been considered secondary, as the *Taichu* calendar was calculated to begin on the winter solstice, based on the calculations of the faulty system it was intended to replace![465] This calendar reform then, while responding to a very real need to produce a new mathematical model that would align the civil year with the cosmic year, resulted in a system that was very much influenced by the emperor's own quest for immortality, along with further concerns about harmony between different resonant cosmic systems.[466]

According to the *Shiji*, before establishing the new calendrical system, changing the names of the officials, and completing the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices (see Chapter Six), Emperor Wu issued the following edict:

> 乃者，有司言星度之未定也，廣延宣問，以理星度，未能詹也。蓋聞昔者黃帝合而不死，名察度驗，定清濁，起五部，建氣物分數。然蓋尚矣。書缺樂弛，朕甚閔焉。朕唯未能循明也，紬績日分，率應水德之勝。今日順夏至（。。。）自是以後，氣復正，羽聲復清，名復正變，以至子

[464] See Cullen "Motivations for Scientific Change."
[465] Morgan, 239.
[466] The argument for reading the 104 reform in terms of Emperor Wu's quest for immortality is made by Cullen, "Motivations for Scientific Change," but no studies as yet have considered the relationship between the calendar and harmonic systems, on which the *Taichu* reform was supposedly based.

日當冬至，則陰陽離合之道行焉。十一月甲子朔旦冬至已詹，其更以七年為太初元年。

Now, the officials have declared that the degrees of the stars have not yet been determined, I have broadly extended an invitation in order to open the question, by means of examining the degrees of the stars, [but still] they fail to align. I have heard that formerly, the Yellow Thearch [was able to] harmonize [the stars and calendar] and did not die. The names were regulated and the stellar degrees were verified, [the Yellow Thearch] was able to determine the pure and the turbid, and establish the five departments. He instituted the names and numbers of the [24] Qi and the [myriad] things. These reforms belong to high antiquity, but the documents are deficient and the music has lapsed, We are very upset. We have not been able to achieve compliance and brilliance. By combining the divisions of the sun, it is responding to the lead of the triumph of the power of water. Now we are in concordance with the summer solstice, (…) From this time forward, the [divisions of] Qi have been made correct, the note *yu* has been made pure, the names have once again been made correct, this has been done [to the extent that] the day *zi* will fall on the winter solstice, and *Yin* and *Yang* will separate and reunite along the path of the Way. The eleventh month *jiazi* day, which is the first day of the new moon, correctly occurred on the winter solstice, I therefore change the seventh year (of the current reign period) to be the first year of [the] *Taichu* [reign period].[467]

[467] *Shiji* 26.1260-61. See also the translation in Chavannes, *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien,* Vol. 3, 179-80. A modified version of this memorial is recorded in *Hanshu*

The calendrical reform, according to Sima Qian, was primarily enacted so that Emperor Wu could attain immortality, a quest of which the historian was quite derisive. Indeed, Sima Qian, despite being best known for his work of history, held the position Director of Astrology, which made him responsible for the production and maintenance of a calendrical system, yet he wrote himself out of the *Taichu* reform in his record, giving credit instead to the Gongsun Qing, Tang Dou, and Luoxia Hong, the *fangshi* of whom he was so critical. The calendrical system was calculated by mathematicians, but they were at the same time versed in the classical texts and contemporary philosophical systems. As the reforms were spearheaded by Gongsun Qing, it is likely that he had the final influence over the emperor over which system to implement, giving him the ability to choose the one which most closely aligned with his own cosmic vision for the emperor.

Aside from predicting cosmic phenomena, such as eclipses, and ensuring that the civil year remained in accord with the natural year, the calendar was important for maintaining the correct relationships between the Son of Heaven and the regional lords. The calendar was used as a tool to coordinate sacrifices, and ensure that the regional lords knew what was expected from them from the court. The ancient texts offer various explanations of how the calendar was to be promulgated to the regional lords: according to the Guliang Commentary on the *Chunqiu*, the ritual announcement of the New Moon, and thus the rites for the month to the regional lords was to be performed by the Son of Heaven every month. However, as Morgan has argued, following He Xiu's second century CE commentary on the Guliang that:

21A.974-5, and has been translated in Cullen, "Motivations for Scientific Change in Ancient China," 191.

> for the announcement of new moons to be of any practical use in coordinating regional lords, it would have had to reach them in time and, thus, been made in significant advance of hearing and sighting. The logical solution (and indeed the only solution for which there is historical precedent) would be to announce them all at once before/at the beginning of the calendar year.[468]

This view of an annual announcement of the calendar appears in several texts; in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, a text compiled at the behest of the Prime Minister of Qin, Lü Buwei, ca. 239 BCE, it is said that the Son of Heaven gathers together the regional lords in the last month of autumn (季秋), along with the hundred officials, so that he can give them the dates of the first day of each month for the year (為來歲受朔日).[469] However, a distinction is made in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* between the announcement of the dates of the new moons and the announcements of the seasonal ordinances, which was to occur in the last month of winter (季冬). This is echoed in the *Huainanzi*, a text produced at the court of Liu An during the reign of Emperor Wu, and perhaps more representative of the situation in the Han:

> 天子乃與公卿大夫飾（飭）國典，論時令，以待嗣歲之宣。
>
> The Son of Heaven calls together his sires, the lords, and the great officers to promulgate the statutes of the realm and to discuss the seasonal ordinances, in order to plan what is suitable for the coming year.[470]

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[468] Morgan, 244-5.
[469] *Lüshi Chunqiu* 9/1.4.
[470] *Huainanzi* 5.12, John Major, et. al., trans., *The* Huainanzi: *A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York, Columbia, 2010), 199. The *Lüshi Chunqiu* text reads slightly differently: 天子乃與卿大夫飭國典，論時令，以待來歲之宜 "The Son of Heaven *with the assistance of* his dukes, ministers, and grand officers, revises the codes of regulations for the state and evaluates the orders to be given at various

This proclamation was to be made in the last month of winter, the twelfth month of the year. According to the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, the sovereign for this month was Zhuanxu (其帝顓頊),[471] the legendary emperor who was credited with creating the first calendar, and for whom the Qin calendar, and that used by the early Han, was named. Along with the annual proclamation, according to the texts, each season, the Son of Heaven was to hold court in the *mingtang*, and promulgate to ordinances for that season (e.g. 朝於總章左个，以出秋令), which are detailed in earlier chapters of the texts.[472] The texts do not specify who was to be present for the announcement of seasonal ordinances, and this vision of imperial ritual was certainly idealized: there is no evidence to suggest that any of the Han emperors held court in this manner in a hall called a *mingtang*. While Emperor Wu held court on several occasions at the newly constructed *mingtang* at the base of Mt. Tai, and did require the regional lords to attend, it is unlikely that this type of court took place four times per year. However, the new calendar, the *Taichu li* was announced to the spirits at the *mingtang* at Mt. Tai on the winter solstice of 104 BCE.[473]

As mentioned above, the calendar was not required for the common people to successfully perform their agricultural duties, but the calendar was still an essential part of governance. Not only was it important to show that the Son of Heaven had indeed received his position from Heaven, and not from man, according to the *Baihu tong* 白虎通, written

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seasons in order to prepare appropriately for what may come in the following year." (Knoblock and Riegel, trans., 260)

[471] *Lüshi Chunqiu*, 12/1.1

[472] *Huainanzi* 5.7.

[473] *Shiji* 130.3296. 十一月甲子朔旦冬至，天曆始改，建於明堂，諸神受紀. The texts do not indicate how the calendar was transmitted throughout the empire.

in the Eastern Han,[474] but it was also important to show the Son of Heaven's supremacy over the elites and regional lords. The announcement of the year's regulations in the twelfth month was not a mere promulgation of the newly calculated calendar, it was also an opportunity for the Son of Heaven to bring the regional lords together, and inform them of their obligations for the coming year. Both of the "Monthly Ordinances" chapters of the *Huainanzi* and *Lüshi Chunqiu* agree that in the last month of winter, the Son of Heaven, with the assistance of his officials, particularly the Grand Scribe, ranked the regional lords, and stipulated what types and quantities of sacrificial animals they were required to provide him, so that he could sacrifice to Sovereign Heaven (皇天), the Shangdi, and the altars of soil and grain (社稷). The lords who shared a surname with the Son of Heaven were also required to provide feed for the sacrificial animals that were used at the imperial ancestral shrines. Finally, all members of the Han polity, regardless of their rank, were required to assist in the provision of sacrificial items for the sacrifices made to Sovereign Heaven, the High Gods, the altars of soil and grain, and the mountains, forests, and named rivers (凡在天下九州之民者，無不咸獻其力，以供皇天上帝社稷。寢廟山林名川之祀).[475] The *Guanzi*, a composite text, parts of which predate both the *Lüshi Chunqiu* and the *Huainanzi*, also supports this reason for promulgating the seasons: "announce the seasons to the kings, announce the [sacrificial] preparations to the kings" 告時于王，告備于王. In this way,

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[474] *Baihu tong* 28; Tjan Tjoe Som, trans., *Po Hu T'ung: The Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall* (Westport, Hyperion Press, 1973), 548.

[475] *Lüshi Chunqiu*, 12/1.3 (Knoblock and Riegel, trans., 260). *Huainanzi*, 5.12 (Major, et. al., trans., 199). The phrasing in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* and *Huainanzi* is not identical in this section, but the intention is the same. The *Huainanzi* states only the regional lords are to provide sacrificial goods for Huangtian and Shangdi, and that "the lords, knights, and great officials to the common people" are to provide for the mountains, forests, and rivers (199). 卿士大夫至于庶民，供山林名川之祀。

imperial sacrifice became something that required the participation of All under Heaven: each individual who provided sacrificial goods, whether or not against their will, was at least indirectly assisting the empire in maintaining the most important of state sacrifices.

While it seems likely that the calendar and seasonal ordinances were only announced to the regional lords once per year, there was likely a ceremony at court to announce the new moon of each month. According to the *Analects*, this was one of Confucius's favorite rituals:

> 子貢欲去告朔之餼羊。子曰：「賜也！爾愛其羊，我愛其禮。」
>
> Zigong desired to eliminate the sacrificing of a sheep for the [ritual of] announcing of the new moon. Confucius said: "Ci! You begrudge the sheep [but] I love the ritual!"[476]

This ritual announcement of the month could be traced back at least to the Spring and Autumn period, as mention of it is made in the *Chunqiu* when Duke Wen did not perform the rite to announce an intercalary month (*run yue* 閏月). The commentaries on the *Chunqiu* are not in agreement about whether or not this was a ritual failure. According to the *Zuozhuan*, not announcing the intercalary month was against ritual principles, whereas the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* commentaries inform us of the opposite: that the intercalary month should not be announced, because Heaven (Tian) did not have such a month 天無是月也.[477] While it is impossible to resolve this conflict in the sources, it seems likely that the intercalary month was considered to be outside of the standard calendar, and so there was debate as to whether or not it should receive the same ritual treatments as the formal

[476] *Lunyu* 3.17.
[477] *Zuozhuan*, 6.6.8, *Gongyang*, 6.6.9.

months. This confusion may have continued on into the Han, as the *Hanshu* treatise on the calendar discusses the problem observed in the *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan*, siding with the *Zuozhuan's* opinion that it was necessary to announce the new moon of intercalary months. However, the intercalary month remained in a somewhat liminal position in the year.

An intercalary month needed to be inserted in the calendar seven times in nineteen years,[478] and there was no fixed regulation as to when it should be inserted. Generally speaking, prior to the 104 BCE reform, it was inserted sometime after the ninth month, and because it was not counted in sequence (i.e., there were no years with thirteen months), it doubled the length of the month it followed.[479] One possible reason for the insertion of the intercalary month towards the end of the year was to ensure that the winter solstice would arrive at the correct time in the correct month.[480] As the winter solstice was one of the most important dates for sacrifice in the Han, it would have been important to ensure that the calendar was able to correctly predict its date.

Both the Han and pre-Han sources clearly demonstrate that control over the calendar and over rituals associated with it were of great importance to the court. This importance was to continue, and eventually, in the third century CE calendrical science was deemed to be so important to the state that private individuals were prohibited by law from practicing

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[478] Cullen, "Motivations for Scientific Change," 186. A cycle of nineteen years was known as a *zhang* 章 cycle, equivalent to the Greek Metonic cycle. Nineteen years is the shortest period in which the lunar and solar cycles can be reconciled (nineteen years is the equivalent of 235 lunations).

[479] Jean-Claude Martzloff, *Le calendrier chinois : structure et calculs, 104 av. JC-1644 : indétermination céleste et réforme permanente : la construction chinoise officielle du temps quotidien discret à partir d'un temps mathématique caché, linéaire et continu* (Paris, Champion, 2009), 70. In the excavated Qin slips the intercalary month always appears "later ninth month" 後九月, but there is no document that specifies that this must always be the case.

[480] *Hanshu* 21.984.

it.[481] The *Hanshu* provides a detailed enough account of not only the history of calendar reforms and the debates under Emperor Wu, but also a technical description of the calendrical system, so that subsequent calendars could be produced from it. Ban Gu's account of the calendar reform gives us insight into the process by which a new calendar was developed, as well as giving us some insight into the motivations of those involved in the reform. We see that the calendar reform was a collaborative effort – the court reached out to men of talent throughout the empire in order to create a new calendar which was suitable for the empire – an empire which included men from diverse regions. The men involved in this reform were recruited from outside the court, and perhaps even outside of the ranks of the elite, although we know very little of the backgrounds of these individuals. It is clear that the promoters of reform were not Ruist; indeed, as Cai Liang has recently demonstrated, only 7.8% of the officials at court employed by Emperor Wu can be classified as Ru.[482] Additionally, even those most closely associated with the imperial court and with the calendar reform did not approve of the project, necessitating Emperor Wu's turn to outside talent. As seen above, Sima Qian, the official who held the post responsible for calendrical regulation, was very critical of Emperor Wu's use of the calendar in pursuit of immortality. He went so far as to erase himself from the project in the *Shiji* chapter on calendars, instead attributing it to Gongsun Qing and others. This

[481] It has often been assumed that this prohibition on calendrical study was also prohibited by the Qin and Han (e.g., Qu Anjing 曲安京, *Zhongguo shuli tianwenxue* 中國數理天文學 (Beijing Kexue chubanshe, 2008), 21), in part due to the assumption that texts containing astronomical knowledge were burned by the First Emperor. However, as Emperor Wu's reforms reveal, this prohibition would not have been in effect in the Han.
[482] Cai Liang, 1-3.

erasure is possibly due to Sima Qian's displeasure with the way in which the reforms were undertaken, and because the emperor did not implement his own proposals.[483]

In comparison with the Roman sources, discussed below, the Han historians provide us with an immense amount of detail about the technical details of the new calendar, as well as the process through which it was created, and the reasons why the reform was undertaken. However, they are largely silent as to the use of the calendar, or the ways in which it was used beyond the court. The calendar reform of 104 BCE can certainly be seen as part of the struggles of Emperor Wu to assert his own authority both at court and over the elite families and regional lords, but the Han histories are largely silent as to how the calendar was able to assert Emperor Wu's authority throughout the empire. The importance of the calendar becomes more visible when we look at other types of calendrical documents, such as those of the Seasonal Observance type, as well as the ritual and sacrificial program that was being developed concurrently with the calendar reform. It was through the gathering of the regional lords and the importance of the sacrificial program that the calendar was disseminated and used as a tool to promote temporal unity amongst the regional lords of the empire.

5.5 Creating and Implementing the Julian Calendar

On several occasions throughout the Roman Republic, failure to correctly intercalate meant that the civil calendar was dramatically "off" from the cosmic year. In the second

[483] *Hanshu* 21A.974 implies that Sima Qian and the Imperial Counsellor Ni Kuan disagreed about how to implement a calendar reform, with the Emperor choosing to side with Ni Kuan. *Hanshu* 28.2633, however, suggests that the emperor ordered the two men to work together on the reform, after Sima Qian had presented his advice.

century BCE we know that the civil calendar was almost four months ahead![484] While measures were introduced to correct this error, over time, and with the failure to correctly intercalate, the civil year again drifted, and by the time of Julius Caesar, there was again a marked discrepancy between the cosmic and civil year. We see in Plutarch that:

> For not only in very ancient times was the relation of the lunar to the solar year in great confusion among the Romans, so that the sacrificial feasts and festivals, diverging gradually, at last fell in opposite seasons of the year, but also at this time people generally had no way of computing the actual solar year.[485]

The reform initiated by Julius Caesar as Pontifex Maximus in 46 BCE was intended to solve several of these problems. By inserting sixty-seven days to the year (creating a one-time year of 443 days), the calendar would be placed back in line with the cosmic (this time, exclusively solar) year. The reform also defined both the cosmic and civil year as having 365.25 days, thus eliminating the need for an intercalary month by intercalating one day every four years.[486] This reform was a dramatic change in the functioning of the calendar, and, as discussed in the introduction, this reform is the first order of business that Caesar took in his "reorganization of the state." The reform was only possible due to Caesar's extraordinary dictatorial powers, as well as his position as Pontifex Maximus. In changing the system of intercalation, he removed this power from the pontifical college,

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[484] Livy, 47.4.4 records a solar eclipse on 11 July 190, whereas it in fact occurred on 14 March, see Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 68.
[485] Plutarch, 59. At the time of Caesar's reform, the civil year was over two months ahead of the cosmic year.
[486] Mac. *Sat*. 1.14.

and for the first time in its history, the Roman calendar measured time solely according to the sun.[487]

However, the implementation of this system did not go so smoothly. Due to a poorly-worded passage in the decree, intercalary days were inserted once every three years rather than every four, even though the priests in charge of the calendar certainly knew better.[488] Jörg Rüpke attributes this error not to malice or stupidity, but to the desire to follow the decree to the letter: "Not stupidity then, but *sacrificium intellectus*. Caesar's rules were followed to the letter, against better knowledge of their intent: nothing strange about that, for people schooled in the law."[489] This error, however, opened up the possibility of further reforms; while maintaining the calendrical system dictated by Caesar, Augustus initiated his own reform in 8 BCE. While all recognized that the intercalary day was being inserted incorrectly, no reforms could be made while the Pontifex Maximus, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, was in exile. It was only after the death of Lepidus, in 12 BCE when Augustus assumed the title of Pontifex Maximus, that reforms to the calendar could once again be initiated. Technically, all that was required was to skip three leap days over the course of twelve years, until the civil year was again on track. However, Augustus used

[487] Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 194. With this reform, it finally became possible to describe astronomical events by civil dates in Rome; see Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 112.
[488] The passage stipulated that an intercalary day be inserted at the conclusion of the fourth year, and before the beginning of the fifth. However, as intercalation occurred in February, it was impossible to intercalate before the beginning of the fifth year. The passage was thus interpreted to mean that intercalation should occur "not at the end of the fourth year but at the beginning" (*quarto non peracto sed incipiente intercalabant*). Mac. *Sat*. 1.13-15. See also Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 115-16.
[489] Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 116.

this as an opportunity to re-orientate the civil calendar around the imperial family, writing the Caesars into the flow of time and Roman history.[490]

Although in principle, the calendar would have been ubiquitously accepted at Rome, aside from the failure to correctly employ the intercalary day, there was a degree of confusion about the changes made to the dates of religious festivals amongst the population, with the result that some festivals continued to be marked on the old days by some, and on the new date by others. The prime example of this is the Saturnalia, which as a result of the confusion over the calendar reform, eventually grew from a one-day to a three-day festival. While there were conflicting opinions on which date was correct for the festival, Augustus, in order to resolve the question, took the advice of one Mallius who lent credence to the antiquity of a multi-day festival, and ordered that all three days should be kept as rest days.[491]

Augustus used this opportunity to make important, but non-technical changes: the fifth month, Iulius, had already been dedicated to Caesar before his death, and the Julian reform included *feriae* to celebrate his most important victories as well as Caesar's birthday (July 13th). With the Augustan reform, the sixth month, Sextilis, was renamed "Augustus," and he used the new calendar to disseminate the new regime throughout the empire:

> The range of Augustus' attempts to make all time revolve around himself is breathtaking: he penetrates all corners of the calendar of festivals around which the Roman religious and legal year is structured, he provides the evangelistic

[490] According to Werner Eck, it was at this point, too, that "Caesar" was first used as a surname, effectively creating a new family comprising only of Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar. Eck, 57.
[491] Mac. *Sat*. 1.10.

> hinge of a new common calendar for the cities of the east, and he sets himself at the heart of a representation of cosmic order (…) To publish the Augustan *fasti,* town by town, was to celebrate the new order, reflected in 'the power of dates'.[492]

The power of the calendar extended from beyond merely including the imperial family in the flow of time, the new calendar provided "a new venue for innovation within an increasingly structured system of honors:"[493] having one's name inscribed in the *dies natalies* became a coveted honour, and this was especially significant under the new regime where the traditional path to honour, political power, was now reserved for one family. After the calendrical reforms, there was a surge in production of marble *fasti* under the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. According to Rüpke, they emerged in this period as important sites for inscriptions within the epigraphic culture of the period, and the proliferation of calendars also coincides with the dramatic increase in imperial building projects under Augustus.[494] The *fasti*, connected to the glory of the Augustan Principate and the revival of traditional religious institutions and values, demonstrated one's participation and connection to the glories of Rome. While there was no single "central edition" of the calendar that was distributed from the centre to the periphery, there is a

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[492] Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 245.
[493] Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 188; see also Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 126.
[494] Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 14. For the use of architecture in the Augustan period, the definitive account is Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1988); see also, Diane G. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998); T.J. Luce, "Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum," in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, Kurt A. Raaflaub and Mark Toher, eds., (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990); Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*.

remarkable amount of uniformity in the calendars that are extant from the Augustan and Tiberian periods,[495] suggesting, perhaps, that producers of marble *fasti* were themselves very concerned with their accuracy. Despite being privately produced, the *fasti* were highly visible, public documents.

This much, at least, is agreed upon by ancient and modern scholars alike. Both the ancient sources and modern historians grant that the reforms to the calendar were primarily political in nature, there is very little discussion about the ways in which these decisions were made. Both Caesar and Augustus are said to have initiated their reforms, and our discussions of the reforms remain focused on a centrally determined, top-down reform, initiated and thought-out by one man. What this analysis obscures, however, is that neither Caesar nor Augustus were operating alone. These calendrical reforms did not take place while either emperor had "free time," to borrow a phrase from our Chinese historians; indeed, Caesar's reform of 46 BCE took place in the midst of a civil war and it is highly unlikely that he would have been able to effect it single-handedly, but the other participants in the reform are seldom discussed in either ancient or modern writings.

This omission stems primarily from lacunae in our sources, and, as a result, has not been sufficiently explored. We know something of Caesar's advisors for the reform of 46 BCE, but, depending on the source, these advisors are sometimes mentioned, but more often ignored altogether. Additionally, different sources name different architects of the reform. We find in Pliny that Caesar selected his calendar after evaluating several different systems:

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[495] Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine*, 120.

> *tres autem fuere sectae, Chaldaea, Aegyptia, Graeca; his addidit quartam apud nos Caesar dictator annos ad solis cursum redigens singulos Sosigene perito scientiae eius adhibito*
>
> There were three main schools, the Chaldaean, the Egyptian, and the Greek; and to these a fourth system was added in our own country by Caesar during his dictatorship, who with the assistance of the learned astronomer Sosigenes brought the separate years back into conformity with the course of the sun.[496]

Sosigenes is mentioned in two other locations in Pliny, once as the author of three treatises, now lost to us, but Pliny was able to comment on their erudition, and once as a scholar who worked on the orbit of Mercury.[497] In Plutarch, we lose the names of the architects of reform, but learn more about the consultative process:

> But Caesar laid the problem before the best philosophers and mathematicians, and out of the methods of correction which were already at hand compounded one of his own which was more accurate than any. This the Romans use down to the present time, and are thought to be less in error than other peoples as regards the inequality between the lunar and solar years.[498]

Other historians, like Suetonius, attribute the reform exclusively to Caesar:

> *Conversus hinc ad ordinandum rei publicae statum fastos correxit iam pridem vitio pontificum per intercalandi licentiam adeo turbatos, ut neque messium feriae aestate neque vindemiarum autumno conpeterent.*

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[496] Pliny, *Hist* 8.57.210-11.
[497] Pliny, *Hist*, 6.2
[498] Plutarch, 59.

> Then turning his attention to the reorganization of the state, he reformed the calendar, which the negligence of the pontiffs had long since so disordered, through their privilege of adding months or days at pleasure, that the harvest festivals did not come in summer nor those of the vintage in the autumn.[499]

Dio states merely that he had learned how to fix the calendar in Alexandria, the home of Sosigenes.[500] Macrobius writes that Caesar fixed the calendar with the assistance of a clerk named Marcus Flavius, "who provided him with a list of the several days so arranged so that their order would be easily found [so that] the position of each day would remain constant."[501] The poet Lucan even goes so far as to claim, using Caesar's own voice as he boasts of his achievements in Egypt, that all of the calculations were made by the dictator himself.[502] It is, of course, quite unlikely that Caesar would have developed this calendrical system by himself, and while we know that he relied on specialist astronomers to assist him, their role is dramatically minimized or even eliminated all together in the sources. In this way, due to choices made by the ancient historians and the fact that modern historians have not pursued these questions, the calendar reform of 46 BCE was, effectively, rendered unto Caesar.

Augustus' reform was far less technical in nature, and therefore would not have required the assistance of experts, foreign or otherwise. In order to avoid future confusion over the insertion of intercalary days and perhaps to avoid any further changes to the festivals and names that he had inserted in the calendar, Augustus engraved the calendar

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[499] Suet. *Lives*. I.40.
[500] Dio, 43.26.
[501] Macrobius, *Sat*. 1.14. I have not been able to find any further reference to Marcus Flavius.
[502] Lucan, 10.

on a bronze tablet "to ensure that it should always be observed."[503] While no such bronze has survived to the present day, its inscription on bronze is reminiscent of another monumental bronze inscription from the Augustan age: the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*. While the calendar reform is not mentioned in Augustus's funerary inscription, that the calendar was itself also cast on a bronze tablet marks it as one of his most important achievements.[504]

Due to the nature of the sources and the historiographical tradition, it is unlikely that we will ever determine whether or not the calendrical calculations were made by Caesar himself, his assistant, Sosigenes, or were adopted wholesale from another school. However, it is clear that like Emperor Wu, Caesar sought the solution to his calendar problem outside of the city of Rome and relied on the assistance and expertise of non-Roman astronomers to create the Roman calendar.

These dramatic changes made to the structure of the calendar were to have a fundamental impact throughout the Roman world. The Julian calendar was the first purely solar calendar in Rome – unlike the Qin and Han, the calendar made no attempt to "reconcile the irreconcilable" – a necessary challenge if one wanted to continue the use of lunations in an otherwise solar calendar. From this time forward, the month would be completely divorced from the cycles of the moon. Despite the variety of calendars in existence in the Mediterranean world, Greek and Egyptian calendars had already given up attempting the use of a luni-solar year in favour of a purely solar calendar.[505] With the

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[503] Mac. *Sat*, 1.14.
[504] It is somewhat surprising that the calendrical reforms are not listed in the *Res Gestae*. A possible explanation may be that Augustus did not want to take credit away from Julius Caesar.
[505] See Otto Neugebauer, "The Origin of the Egyptian Calendar" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1.4 (1942).

replacement of the clumsy system of intercalary months that could be inserted on short notice and on the whims of the pontifices by a stable system of leap-years, dates of civil and religious festivals could be determined ahead of time with a high degree of accuracy. While many of the religious festivals were tied closely to the city of Rome itself, and were not celebrated throughout the empire, the ability to accurately determine dates became more important for administrators as the empire expanded. Despite the fact that standardized Roman time was not forced on peoples throughout the empire, for the first time it became *possible* to have a civil calendar that could be promulgated throughout the empire. This calendrical system was so accurate that it required no modification after the Augustan reform: despite suggestions that other months might be named after subsequent emperors, and some temporary changes to names of months under Caligula (r. 27 – 41 CE), Nero (r. 54 – 68 CE), Domitian (r. 81 – 96 CE), and Commodus (r. 180 – 192 CE), the calendar remained largely unchanged until the Gregorian reform in 1582.

The court at Rome did not insist that other regions had to adopt the calendar of Rome; indeed, because religious festivals were closely tied to local places, the calendar of Rome itself, being primarily a religious document, might have made little sense in other parts of the empire. Additionally, there was a long history of regions maintaining their own civic calendars. But the calendar *did* spread, through several channels.[506] It was an important document for the military: not only did it regulate the movement and actions of the army,

[506] The calendar was not uniformly adopted throughout the empire, and it was sometimes modified to fit the local context. For an overview of dates of adoption and modifications made, see E.J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1968), 47-49. Particularly, the Eastern provinces tended to maintain their own systems of calculating time, and finding ways to synchronize with the Roman calendar, when necessary. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 209-10.

it was a powerful connection to the centre for men living at the frontiers, and a reminder of where their loyalties should lie. Evidence from the later empire suggests that the army observed the same religious ceremonies as those observed in Rome, and it is likely that a religious calendar, such as the *Feriae Duranum* (ca. 223 – 227 CE) was distributed to every unit of the army in the field.[507] As mentioned above, having one's name inscribed in the calendar, or erecting a marble *fasti* of your own, was a high marker of status, and of the owner's connections with the *Imperium* at Rome. It was common practice for local authorities in the Roman Empire to promote the image of the emperor in order to bolster their own authority,[508] and it is likely that the spread of the calendar throughout the Roman Empire was a combination of both this factor and the transmission through the military. What began as a reform intended to rectify the civil and cosmic year, and to limit the power of the pontifical college over intercalation, resulted in a new calendar which had the inadvertent, but useful, result of disseminating imperial ideology throughout the empire.

5.6 Writing the Calendar in the Han and Rome

In reading the accounts of the ancient historians and poets, we find something of an ambivalence towards the calendar itself, which is surprising given the importance of astrology in the late Republic.[509] Like astrology, the calendrical sciences were not a Roman

[507] John Helgeland, "Roman Army Religion," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. II.16.2 (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 1481. See Ibid., 1481-86 for a transcription and translation of the calendar.
[508] This phenomenon has been recently studied with regard to numismatics in the Western Roman Empire by Carlos Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West*.
[509] Augustus published his horoscope (Suet. *Lives Aug.* II.94), but the relationship between the *princeps* and astrology was complicated. See Steven J. Green, *Disclosure and Discretion in Roman Astrology* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014).

invention, though they were adapted, both successfully and unsuccessfully, from neighbouring cultures to fit the needs of Rome. Additionally, there seems to be very little anxiety in Rome, unlike in the Han, about the state's ability to align the civil year with the cosmos. Indeed, as we have seen, on several occasions throughout the Republic, the civil year failed to align with the cosmos by several months, causing festivals to fall in the wrong season, and yet there was never a movement to completely overhaul the calendrical system. With the exception of the attribution of calendars to Romulus and Numa, there were no historical precedents to suggest that calendars had previously been used as a means to legitimate a new regime.[510] However, Julius Caesar, and later Augustus, discovered that it could be used as a tool, and by reforming the calendar, they could positively invoke Rome's founding fathers.[511] As in the early Chinese states, the task to establish or reform the calendar fell to the founding figures: Romulus, in the pre-historic period, Numa, as the second king, responsible for the establishment of several political and religious institutions, and finally, this practice was revived by Julius Caesar and Augustus, with the foundation of a new political order in the first century BCE.[512]

Calendrical reform is not emphasized as being important politically until the age of Caesar. The sources rarely mention the calendar in the context of politics until the reforms of Caesar and Augustus. The lack of alignment between the civil and cosmic years was a

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[510] The exception to this being the publication of the calendar in response to plebeian demand by Gnaeus Flavius in 304 BCE. However, while the publication of the calendar was certainly a calculated political move on his part, it was within the context of the traditional *cursus honorum*, and was not an attempt to legitimate a lineage of rulers, as with the Caesars. Livy 9.46.5.

[511] A similar parallel can be seen between Augustus and Numa, as Augustus, like Numa, ended war and closed the temple of Janus.

[512] There were, of course, slight modifications made to the calendar, but no changes to the calendrical system itself were implemented between Numa and Julius Caesar.

cause of embarrassment, it seemed, but so few attempts were made to produce a system that was capable of regulating time without constant adjustment that we must conclude that, at least for the ancient writers, there was not the same type of anxiety of the calendar as there was in the Han. The increased visibility of the calendrical reforms in sources from the Principate suggest that the calendar was, from that time forward, associated with the state's ability to govern. Additionally, and like their Han counterparts, reformers of the calendar had to turn to advisors to help them construct a new system: both Numa and Caesar turned to the Greek sciences in order to develop the Roman calendar, and there is little evidence to suggest that there was an interest in pursuing these types of studies at Rome. Julius Caesar, and the historians, reframed the question of calendrical reform as one of neglect – the priests had abused their role as calendrical officiants to serve their own interests, and it was his task to take the calendar, like so many other institutions, under his personal care. With Augustus, the calendar joined so many other cultural institutions in a larger agenda of "cultural revolution," an attempt to initiate radical reforms within the discourse of a return to traditional values.[513]

The calendar reforms under Caesar and Augustus serve to highlight a number of interesting facets of political ideology in the late Republic and early Empire. In comparison with the sources from the Han, several questions begin to appear in the traditional accounts. First, it becomes apparent that, although there was far less concern about the legitimacy of a government which was unable to align the civil calendar with the solar year, a failure to do so could still result in criticism. The reform of 46 BCE, and Augustus's subsequent adjustments, was done within the context of criticism of the current administration, and the

[513] Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 239.

argument that the priestly colleges had failed in their task to maintain the calendar, and were therefore not worthy of maintaining their authority in the capital. However, this wresting away of the calendar from the clutches of the priests was not done by Julius Caesar alone, rather, he had to turn away from the traditional font of knowledge, the *nobiles*, and seek the calendrical know-how of the Greeks. While the time of Numa must be relegated to legend, it is significant that Ovid, and later Macrobius, indicates that Numa's calendrical knowledge also came from consultation with non-Romans, despite the fact that both Livy and Plutarch had already discredited the possibility of contact between Numa and Pythagoras, purely on chronological grounds.[514] The narrative of calendrical reform that was developed in the Augustan era and beyond places the calendrical reforms within the narrative of imperial legitimacy. The ancient, mythical calendar, invented by Romulus, but perfected by Numa, can be seen in parallel with the new Julian calendar, invented by Caesar, and filially corrected by Augustus.

Second, while the calendrical reforms of the first century BCE were clearly an attempt to remove power from the priestly colleges and consolidate said power within the person of the *princeps*, they were also a response to a very real problem: the failure of the civil year to align with astronomical phenomena, and, as such, the removal of this power from the *nobiles* had to be done in such a way that a radical and functional solution could be proposed. For this, the Roman reformers, like Han Emperor Wu, had to seek the assistance of men outside the court – men who both had the technical knowledge required for the computation of a new and effective calendrical system, but who were also not directly

[514] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.18; Plutarch, *Numa Pompilius*. In Plutarch's account, Numa made the calculations himself.

invested in the political power struggle at the capital. Given the individual nature of politics and political reform at Rome, it is natural that these advisors were written out of the histories, but when they are reinserted into the narrative, it provides us with an image of a world in which technical knowledge was able to circulate across borders, and of a political struggle where the leading figures actively sought the advice of those outside of the political elite. The reforms made to the calendar in Rome were thus not only a project to fix the problems in calculating time that had been inherent in the earlier Republican calendar; with the new mythology surrounding the calendar, the calendrical reforms became part of the narrative legitimating not only Caesar's usurpation of power, but also of Augustus' succession. Given the importance of calendrical reforms in the new imperial narrative, it becomes clear why it was so important for the foreign architects of the reform to be written out of the histories, or at least given a much more subordinate role in the production of the calendar.

5.7 Conclusions

The above discussion of the calendar reforms attempts to situate the changes made to the respective calendars within their broader social and political contexts. These reforms were not isolated projects which attempted to create a civil calendar based on mathematics which would correctly align with the natural year. Rather, the reforms, and the calendars that were produced were closely linked to the ongoing political struggles at court, as well as to considerations of the cosmos, and the empire's position within it. The reforms were multifaceted, and while they are primarily remembered for the calendars they produced, and in the Han case, of the emperor's pursuit of immortality, the reforms were, at the

moment of their inception, closely linked to immediate political struggles, with Julius Caesar and Emperor Wu attempting to assert their authority over the entrenched elite at court. The literary records of the reforms also wove a narrative of tradition, connecting the reforms with sagacious ancient rulers, seeking to justify not only the reforms, but the unprecedented wielding of power by the rulers who undertook the reforms.

Despite the very different problems facing the early emperors, and the very different documents produced by the reform, the above discussion has demonstrated that the reform processes, and the subsequent literature about them, bear a number of important similarities. In both the Han and Roman cases, the rulers chose to recruit men of talent from outside of the standard pools of elite knowledge. Julius Caesar relied primarily on the mathematical skills of the Greeks, bypassing the pontifical college which had previously been responsible for maintaining the calendar, and created a new calendrical system, which, if instituted correctly, would require no further changes, thus removing the calendar as a site of future struggles over elite power. In the revolutionary reforms of Caesar and Augustus, the calendar became "fixed;" repeatable in perpetuity, and with its origins traceable to the founders of the new political order. In similar fashion, Emperor Wu recruited men with mathematical and astronomical knowledge from across the empire, and challenged them to create a new system. Rather than rely on the calendrical expertise that surrounded him at court, the emperor notably bypassed the advice of Sima Qian. While we do not know what advice Sima Qian gave to the emperor, his opposition to the reform is visible in his writing, and given that there were no changes made to the official calendrical system during the Sima family's tenure as Grand Astronomers, it is possible that the Simas advised minor changes to the calendar, rather than a complete overhaul of

the system. Given that there were changes carried out during the early Han, as seen in the material record, and that these changes were likely carried out by the office of the Grand Astronomer, it is understandable that Emperor Wu chose to look for his new calendar outside of the officials at court. Like Julius Caesar, Emperor Wu was asserting his own right to determine not only how the calendar should be calculated, but who should be able to manipulate it. It is likely that the *Taichu* calendar was intended to replace alternate regional calendars that were in use in the Han kingdoms, and this new imperial time served to mark the beginning of a new age, and to demonstrate the dominance of imperial power.[515]

The centering of the calendar around the empire and the emperor himself fit with the other patterns of centralization that were going on at the time, particularly in the field of cult institutions. As seen in Chapter Three, in both Han and Rome, imperial cult revolved around the person of the emperor, and with the calendar reforms, cultic time would do so as well. While the Han emperors were not written into the calendar in the same way as the Roman rulers, the institution of era names, begun by Emperor Wu, associated cycles of time with a particular ruler, and any future reference to Han-era historical events would be directly linked to the reigning emperor. In Rome, while the emperor's reigns were not codified in the counting of years, the reign of Augustus was referred to as the Augustan Age, a proposal put forward after his death.[516]

The importance of the calendar reforms is also visible in the ways of writing about the calendars. Discussions of calendars in the literary record had a long history in early China,

[515] See Zerubavel, on the semiotics of temporality.
[516] Suet. *Lives* II.100.

and the Han era historians connected Emperor Wu's reforms with the calendrical projects of antiquity, extending this tradition, and establishing their importance in the dynastic histories. The *Shiji* chapter on the calendar includes a brief history of calendar reforms, along with an example of the *Taichu* calendar, but it is the *Hanshu* chapter that developed the genre of writing about calendars. Subsequent dynastic histories followed the *Hanshu* model in treating the pitch-pipes and the calendar together (Lüli zhi 律曆志). The Han histories chose to memorialize the major changes in calendars – the creation of new calendrical systems – rather than record any modifications that may have taken place to extant calendars. The occlusion of the modifications made by Gaozu and/or Empress Lü emphasizes the monumentality of a new calendrical system, and emphasizes the legitimacy of Emperor Wu's reign.

The calendar entered into popular literature in the Augustan Age and beyond, through poets such as Ovid and Macrobius. While there had not been a long tradition of writing about the calendar in Rome, Augustan literature emphasized, if not created, the legendary roots of the calendar with the founding of the city of Rome. The connection between Romulus and Julius Caesar as creators of the Roman calendar, and of Numa and Augustus as having refined these systems, was an important contribution to the cultural programme of the Augustan Age. The reforms made to the calendar are celebrated by Suetonius amongst the highest achievements of both emperors,[517] demonstrating the importance of the calendrical reforms to the re-ordering of the state. In the Augustan narrative about the history of calendars in Rome, the calendar was transformed from a public document, the

[517] Suet. *Lives* 1.40; II.31.

publication of which was the hard-won right of the plebians, to an imperial document, which was reverently bestowed to the people by sage rulers.

The Julian calendar was established, as far as we know, without much fanfare, though the impact of Caesar's reforms may have been subdued due to the subsequent outbreak of civil war, while Augustus's corrections to the calendar were certainly overshadowed by other elements of his spectacular programme. For Emperor Wu, however, the presentation of the calendar to the regional lords was a solemn occasion, and was related to other elements of his highly visible sacrificial program. The role of spectacle in the reforms to religious institutions and ideology will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Spectacular and Communicative Power: The *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices of Emperor Wu and the *Ludi Saeculares* of Augustus

6.1 Introduction

Comparisons between the early Chinese and Roman empires are often frustrated by the perceived impossibility in reconciling the importance of the Roman rulers' performing in front of the people with the Chinese emperors' invisibility. The Roman rulers, in the Republic as in the Empire, performed their role in front of the people: they had audiences with the people, they shared their triumphs with the people, and the people came to them for assistance, highly visible by the lines of *clientelae* outside a patrician's home.[518] The elite were on display at the theatre and circus, often as sponsors of these public entertainments. As Harriet Flower has argued, "spectacle was one of the most typical features of life in the city of Rome itself."[519] The visibility of the rulers does not only include acts of physical performance; the Roman emperor was also visible on coins, and through monumental buildings dedicated to him or by him.[520] In China, however, the ruler was usually invisible. The population was not allowed to lay eyes on him, and he was

[518] On performance, see Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, "The Roman Republic as Theatre of Power: The Consuls as Leading Actors," in *Consuls and* Res Publica*: Holding High Office in the Roman Republic,* Hans Beck, Antonio Duplá, Martin Jehne, and Francisco Pina Polo, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge Press, 2011). On *clientelae*, see Ernst Badian, *Foreign Clientelae 267 - 70 BCE* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1958), Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, ed. *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London, Routledge, 1990), Richard P. Saller *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), and Martin Jehne and Francisco Pina Polo, eds. *Foreign Clientelae in the Roman Empire: A Reconsideration* (Stuttgard, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015).

[519] Harriet I. Flower, "Spectacle and Political Culture in the Roman Republic," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic*, Harriet I. Flower, ed. Second Edition (Cambridge, Cambridge Press, 2014), 378.

[520] On monumentality, Zanker is fundamental. Imperial ideology as disseminated on coins, Noreña.

concealed even in his own palace, where a system of covered passageways prevented anyone from knowing which building he occupied at any given time. The important imperial sacrifices, in particular, were off-limits to the common people, and access was restricted to the highest elites, officials, and others who accompanied the emperor.[521] However, while the emperor would have been invisible to the commoners, he was highly visible to the elite, the officials, and, sometimes, the regional lords; the groups of people over whom he most had to assert his authority. The fact that these imperial sacrifices were performances in front of an audience is often ignored.[522] In what follows, I argue for a vision of spectacular power in which the audience is just as important as the performer; where the mere physical participation of the spectators implied a submission to the imperial order, one which was communicated to the spectators and performers alike. I argue that the public performances in Rome, and the "exclusive" performances in early China were not solely a performance wherein the rulers were the leading actors and the observers a mere crowd of spectators. Rather, I suggest that the line between these two was not so fine, and that the observers were themselves active participants in the spectacle of power, and it was just as important that they be seen in their places as it was for them to see the ruler in all his glory.

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[521] Michael Loewe recreates the obstacles that a commoner would have potentially encountered in trying to view the sacrifices at Yong in *Bing: From Farmer's Son to Magistrate in Han China* (Indianapolis, Hackett, 2011), 62.

[522] This problem will be discussed further below. While the imperial rituals were not visible to the general population, as I will argue, the emperor's performance in front of elites and officials was an important part of his authority. Charles Sanft has argued that the spectacular power of the emperor would have been visible to the general population, who would have seen the inspection tours of the First Emperor, Sanft, "Progress and Publicity in Early China."

It becomes necessary at this point to outline some of the salient characteristics of rituals and ceremonies, and their relationship to imperial power. In the cases I will discuss below, the performances contained a number of multivalent rituals which communicated with men and gods alike. The *feng* and *shan* sacrifices performed by Emperor Wu and the *ludi saeculares* of Augustus were ceremonies which incorporated sacrifices to the gods, and celebrations by the people. It was necessary for the rulers, in both cases, to have received auspicious omens before initiating these ceremonies. Both ceremonies were rooted in ancient traditions, but due to their great antiquity, the "scripts" that were supposed to have been followed in their performance had been lost, allowing both rulers to innovate, and bring to the rituals their own understanding of how they should be performed. In both cases, the rulers intended to demonstrate their own exceptionalism, and, through the performance of these ceremonies, they not only proclaimed their power, but also solidified it, by attaining the tacit acceptance and submission of the spectators. While there are, of course, fundamental differences between the two ceremonies and the many reasons for their performance, the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices and the *ludi saeculares* provide an excellent point of comparison between the two rulers and their empires.

In his study of Balinese imperial rites, Clifford Geertz has argued that imperial power was not static: it was "an argument, made over and over again in the insistent vocabulary of ritual."[523] Through the performance of continual rituals and the creation of a symbolic

[523] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton, Princeton University Press., 1980), 102. James Laidlaw provides an excellent overview of the dangers of applying Geertzian theory to Imperial Chinese ritual, in "On Theatre and Theory: Reflections on Ritual in Imperial Chinese Politics," in *State and Court Ritual in China* Joseph P. McDermott, ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999). My reasons for arguing for a limited use of Geertz, in response to Laidlaw, will be outlined below.

order, the theatre state "construct[ed] a state by constructing a king."[524] Performance of rituals reminded the Balinese "that worldly status has a cosmic base, [and] that hierarchy is the governing principle of the universe."[525] Status was articulated and solidified through rituals. While the divine kingship and theatre state of nineteenth century Bali bears little resemblance to early Han or to Rome, some of Geertz's insights about the use of ritual in constructing imperial power can help us think through the ceremonies in the ancient world. In both Han and Rome, the performance of imperial rituals simultaneously articulated and reinforced the imperial regime, and, with the performance of the new "revived" rituals in Han and Rome, they provided the emperor's own commentary on the shape of imperial power. And, like the Balinese rituals, these ceremonies of power were expressed in the language of spectacle.

Spectacle has long been seen as an important tool of power; in both manifesting power and maintaining docile subjects. In the fundamental work on spectacles and spectacular power, Guy Debord argues that spectacles are intimately connected with negotiations of power, and in the discursive production of the social order:

> The root of the spectacle is that oldest of all social specializations, the specialization of power. The spectacle plays the specialized role of speaking in the name of all the other activities. It is hierarchical society's ambassador to itself, delivering its official messages at a court where no one else is allowed to speak. *The most modern aspect of the spectacle is thus also the most archaic*.[526]

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[524] Geertz, *Negara*, 125.
[525] Ibid., 102.
[526] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 8, emphasis added.

The spectacle "presents itself as a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned," a reality which is passively accepted by the spectators.[527] It is "the ruling order's non-stop discourse about itself, its never-ending monologue of self-praise."[528] The result of this discourse is that the "spectacle presents itself simultaneously as all of society itself, as part of society, and as *instrument of unification*."[529] While Debord's theories on the spectacle are deeply rooted in Marxist theories of alienation, as well as the technological capabilities that permit the spectacles, and spectacular power, of capitalist societies to permeate people's lives on an unprecedented scale, some of his observations are pertinent for the ancient world, and invite us to consider the spectacular performances of Augustus and Emperor Wu from a different perspective. In inviting the Romans to the *ludi saeculares*, heralds called them to a "spectacle, such as they had never witnessed and never would again."[530] The games were intended to awe the population with the power and majesty of Rome, and to announce the beginning of a new era, under the guidance of Augustus. While the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices made no similar claims, nor were ordinary people invited to witness them, Emperor Wu's sacrifices at Mt. Tai were performed with great splendor, and celebrations followed the sacrifices.

Although we have no records written by the spectators at both of these celebrations, we do know that an audience was present, and that the spectators did not disrupt the

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[527] Ibid., 4. The question of passive acceptance with regard to Rome and China will be discussed further below.
[528] Ibid., 24.
[529] Ibid., 2, emphasis in original.
[530] Zos. 2.6. The statement is made inviting people to the games of Claudius, and the invitation to a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle was mocked, as many people were still alive to remember the Augustan performance.

sacrifices and games.[531] What is important is that audiences were present for both events, and they not only witnessed the ceremonies of power performed by the rulers, but they were also able to observe other audience members and their participation in these events.[532] While most studies of these ceremonies have focused on the actions of the officiants of the ceremony – the rulers, the sacrificial officials, and priests, it is important to remember that they were performed in front of an audience, and that the spectators were themselves also on display. Michael Suk-young Chwe has argued for the importance of the production of common knowledge in establishing support for, or maintaining, a regime. Rituals, particularly public rituals, are "social practices that generate common knowledge."[533] A public ritual is thus "not just about the transmission of meaning from a central source to each member of an audience; it is also about letting audience members know what other audience members know."[534] Chwe's argument is that each individual is more likely to support, or submit to, a particular authority (or engage in open rebellion), if they know that many others are doing the same, and knowledge of other people's support is communicated through these public rituals.[535] In such a way, the spectacular performances of the *ludi saeculares*, and on a smaller scale, the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, invited audiences to

[531] Given the larger size and diversity of the Roman spectators at the *ludi saeculares*, there was more risk of some sort of disruption than at the sacrifices of Emperor Wu.
[532] While Emperor Wu performed the *feng* sacrifice in secret, accompanied only by Zi Hou, at the summit of Mt. Tai, he also performed the sacrifice at the base, in view of the officials, and following the sacrifice at the summit, a large celebration was held. These details will be discussed further below.
[533] Michael Suk-young Chwe, *Rational Ritual: Culture, Coordination, and Common Knowledge* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001), 3.
[534] Ibid., 4.
[535] Ibid., 19.

participate in the ruling order's "monologue of self-praise," where they not only witnessed the power of the rulers, but also the participation of their peers.[536]

The audience then became a fundamental part of the rituals, which both transmitted a message about the ruling order, and informed the participants of the collective receipt of that message. However, the question of the audience is problematic in comparing Rome and China. In Rome, the audience is ever-present in the sources, and we know something of the crowds that witnessed the major ceremonies of state. In imperial China, however, the audience was smaller, less visible, and, as James Laidlaw has demonstrated, some of "the most important rites were sometimes witnessed by hardly anyone."[537] Laidlaw is certainly correct in making this observation; in the Qin and Han the "people" were not permitted to witness the important ceremonies of state. However, while the imperial Chinese rituals were not, like their Balinese counterparts in Geertz's view, a complete programme for the (re)production of state power, parts of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices of Emperor Wu did have an audience, and our attention should thus be directed at who this audience was, and why it was important that they witness certain elements of the ritual. Angela Zito, in her discussion of Qing dynasty rituals, has argued that the intended audience for the important rituals of state were the literati themselves. It was the participation in "rituals of sacrifices [that] lay at the heart of the imperial effort to produce

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[536] While Chwe discusses public rituals and their generation of common knowledge in terms of one's acceptance of a regime, or resistance towards it, the reality is often not so black and white. Catherine Bell discusses the complexities of ritualization and power, as well as the capacity for resistance embedded within ritualization, even when one is perceived to be participating. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009 (1992)), 208-215.

[537] Laidlaw, 402.

and control both meaning *and the subjects who would interpret that meaning*."[538] While in imperial China, the "people" did not witness the most important rituals of state, many of the elites did witness and participate in them, and that the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices of Emperor Wu were witnessed by officials and elites is a part of what made them such an important act.

The Romans, on the other hand, had a long tradition of public political performance, and aristocratic competition during the Republic was often carried out in front of the people. Prior to the Augustan era, power needed to be constantly contested; because official position was attained through election, aristocratic status was never truly hereditary, and it was necessary to win over the people.[539] Karl-J. Hölkeskamp has argued that "it is simply not enough to exercise power by pulling strings behind the scenes – power only becomes real when and if it is seen to be exercised, it needs publicity and performance."[540] These performances that took place throughout the city of Rome were led, during the Republic, by the consuls, who were the "leading actors in a variety of public spectacles, punctuating the daily life of the city."[541] Hölkeskamp demonstrates that this spectacular performance was of fundamental importance to the city; civic rituals "constitute and continuously reconstitute an exclusively Roman civil ideology and a sense of collective indigenous identity based upon a broad consensus about political and social values."[542] The

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[538] Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/Performance in Eighteenth-century China* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997), 219. Emphasis added.
[539] Hölkeskamp, "The Roman Republic as Theatre of Power," 95. The amount of money required to enter into political competition, limited the number of "new men" who were able to enter the aristocracy. However, being born into a wealthy and politically powerful family was not enough to guarantee a man high office.
[540] Ibid., 165.
[541] Ibid., 166.
[542] Ibid., 164.

theatricality of Roman power was carried out throughout the city in front of the people; Andrew Bell has described the inhabitants of Rome who viewed these spectacles as an "integral interlocutor in the community's ritual dialogue."[543] Jörg Rüpke, agreeing with the importance placed on the spectator, has gone so far as to argue that the Roman spectator was passive in his observance of the spectacles – that it was important that he or she be there, but that the spectators were not themselves active participants in the ritual.[544] However, Bell, Hölkeskamp, and Rüpke while acknowledging the importance of the spectator, focus their discussions on the elite performers of these public rituals.[545] The fact that audiences, in a variety of contexts, do participate, and are seen to be a part of the ritual performances, has led Catherine Bell to argue that "ritualization both implies and demonstrates a relatively unified corporate body, often leading participants to assume that there is more consensus than there actually is;"[546] but, as Chwe has shown, the illusion of consensus can itself generate consensus.

Spectacular imperial rituals, performed in front of an audience, thus communicate a message about the ruling order both to the audience and amongst the performers and spectators. The audience, I have argued, matters as much as the performers in these rituals, yet they are not explicitly performed for these reasons. In both the cases considered below, the rulers wanted to awe their audience, and demonstrate their spectacular power. But they were also communicating their rule, and the beginning of an epoch to the world as a whole.

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[543] Andrew Bell, *Spectacular Power in the Greek and Roman City* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 173.
[544] Rüpke, *Religion in Republican Rome*, 30.
[545] On the role of the participants in processions in Rome, see Hans Beck, "Züge in die Ewigkeit. Prozessionen durch das republikanische Rom," *Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft*, 8 (2005).
[546] Catherine Bell, 210.

In both cases we see that the presence of the supernatural is of fundamental importance, and for Emperor Wu, the performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices was closely related to his pursuit of immortality, while for Augustus, the *ludi saeculares* would inscribe him in a privileged list of epoch-making men.

6.2 The *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices in the Qin and Han

One sacrifice, or pair of sacrifices, stands apart from all other early imperial sacrifices: the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices performed by Emperor Wu. These sacrifices were so important that Sima Qian's chapter on imperial sacrifice was named for them – the *fengshan shu*. All who spoke of these sacrifices during the Han knew them to be the most important sacrifices that a ruler could make, yet little else was known about them. The sacrifices themselves were shrouded in mystery, and would remain so, even after Emperor Wu's performance of them. Only six men are recorded in imperial Chinese history as having carried out these sacrifices: Qin Shi Huang, Han Emperor Wu, Emperor Guangwu, of the Eastern Han, Tang Gaozong 唐高宗 (r. 649 – 683 CE), Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (r. 712 – 756 CE), and Song Renzong 宋仁宗 (r. 1022 – 1063 CE).[547] It was understood by scholars of imperial China that the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices could only be performed by a ruler who had received the Mandate of Heaven, demonstrating his legitimacy, while simultaneously announcing to heaven and earth that the ruler had "unified the empire and brought peace to the world" thus fulfilling his mandate.[548]

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[547] Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985), 170.
[548] Ibid., 170.

These sacrifices were understood to be the most significant of the imperial sacrificial programme, yet little was known of them, and scholars throughout imperial Chinese history, and today, continue to debate their meaning and origin. While the Warring States and Han scholars claimed great antiquity for the sacrifices, asserting that they had been performed by the Yellow Emperor and many other sage rulers, little was known of their origins, or their performance. According to Mark Edward Lewis, the "enigma" of the sacrifices pointed to their antiquity, for the Han scholars, rather than to their novelty.[549] In part this mystery was due to the form of the sacrifice – at its heart, the ritual required that the emperor offer sacrifice at the summit of Mt. Tai, and bury a text.[550] Emperor Wu's decision to perform the sacrifices opened up a debate about the nature of the sacrifices, and how they should be performed. This debate is recorded in the *Shiji*.[551]

At the time when Sima Qian wrote, while legend stated that seventy-two rulers had performed the sacrifices, only the names of twelve rulers had been recorded, and there was no information about how they had actually performed the sacrifices.[552] Of the twelve rulers listed by Guan Zhong 管仲 (720 – 645 BCE), as related by Sima Qian, only the last, King Cheng of Zhou, is a historical figure, and, according to the text, the last to perform a legitimate *feng* sacrifice.[553] The lengthy passage recorded in the *Shiji* on the *feng* and *shan*

[549] Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices," 53.
[550] Ibid. While much has been made of the individual performance of the sacrifice, I have not found any documentation of a requirement that it be performed by the emperor in isolation. The sources do not indicate what was written on the text that was buried.
[551] Mark Edward Lewis separates out the various streams of thought that were involved in the early Han iteration of the sacrifice, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices."
[552] In *Shiji* Guan Zhong states that there were seventy-two rulers, of whom twelve names were recorded. By the time of the writing of the *Shiji*, Qin Shi Huang's name would have been added to this list.
[553] *Shiji* 28.1361, 1364.

sacrifices serves as a cautionary tale. In the *Shiji*, Sima Qian presents the history of the sacrifices through the voice of Guan Zhong, who is attempting to dissuade the hegemon Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685 – 643 BCE) from himself attempting the sacrifices.[554] Guan Zhong argues that the twelve rulers had all accomplished the sacrifices after receiving auspicious signs that they had received the right to rule, and that hegemony over the other rulers and territories was not a sufficient demonstration of the mandate, contrary to what Duke Huan believed. By demonstrating that Duke Huan of Qi had not received these auspicious omens, he was able to dissuade him from pursuing the sacrifices.[555] According to this, hegemony over the land was not sufficient to demonstrate that a ruler had received the Mandate of Heaven, it was necessary that he receive omens confirming that he had the right to rule. At the same time, the successful performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices would confirm the awarding of the Mandate.

Guan Zhong's description of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices is interesting not only for its moralizing component, but also because it represents the very real lack of information and consistency surrounding the sacrifices. While Guan Zhong states that the *feng* was to be performed at Mt. Tai and the *shan* at Liangfu, the performance of the *shan* was not consistent, and none of the twelve rulers performed the *shan* at Liangfu.[556] How the sacrifices were actually performed is not described by Guan Zhong, and as Duke Huan did not pursue the subject further, we do not know if any investigations were made into the

[554] The *Shiji* passage is the only account of this conversation between Guan Zhong and Duke Huan, and it is likely that this is a case of Sima Qian attributing his arguments to earlier figures in order to make them seem more authoritative.
[555] *Shiji* 28.1361.
[556] *Shiji* 28.1361. Alternate locations for the *shan* were Mts. Yunyun, Tingting, Kuaiji, and Sheshou.

structure of the sacrifices at that time, and by the time of Confucius, knowledge of the sacrifices was utterly lost.[557] No subsequent discussions about the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices are recorded until those describing those attributed to the First Emperor, and as early as the Liang Dynasty 梁朝 (502 – 56 CE), scholars began to assert that the sacrifices had, in fact been an invention of the Qin Dynasty.[558]

Three years after taking his imperial title, Qin Shi Huang began gathering information about the sacrifices. He brought together a group of seventy *ru* scholars and erudites from Qi and Lu at the base of Mt. Tai, in order to debate the proper format of the sacrifices. However, no consensus was reached, and their "recommendations were difficult to carry out," so they were all dismissed 始皇聞此議各乖異，難施用，由此絀儒生.[559] As a result, he chose to use the *jiao*-type rituals that were performed at Yong to perform the *feng* at the summit of Mt. Tai, and the *shan* at Liangfu. At the summit of the mountain, he erected an inscribed stone, so that all would know that he had succeeded in performing the rite.[560] However, he encountered a violent storm while ascending the mountain, and had to take cover under a tree. The recently unemployed *ru* scholars used this storm to mock him, and subsequent *ru* would take this to mean that his sacrifice had been unsuccessful.[561] Whether or not the First Emperor met with success in his sacrifice, his performance of the

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[557] *Shiji* 28.1363-64. Sima Qian then includes a modified quotation from the *Analects* III.11, referring to the Great Ancestral Sacrifice, though the connection between the *feng* and the *di* sacrifice is not clear. 或問禘之說。子曰：「不知也。知其說者之於天下也，其如示諸斯乎！」指其掌。 "Someone asked about the meaning of the Great Sacrifice. The master said: "I do not know. One who knew its meaning would be able to govern All under Heaven as easily as this!" as he pointed to his hand."
[558] Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices," 52.
[559] *Shiji* 28.1366.
[560] *Shiji* 28.1366-67.
[561] *Shiji* 28.1367.

sacrifice was the only one for which the Han had any evidence, and it was generally agreed during the time of Emperor Wu, that it had been a genuine *feng* sacrifice.[562]

In the fourth month of 110 BCE, the emperor performed the most important sacrifices of the dynasty, the *feng* and *shan*. The preparations for these sacrifices had been underway for some time; in the first month, as the grass had not yet grown, stones were dragged to the top of Mt. Tai in preparation for the sacrifice, the yellow sacrificial robes had been fashioned for the emperor, music was composed for the affair, and a special reed with three spines that grew at the convergence of the Jiang and Hui rivers was harvested to use for the mat used in the sacrifices.[563] However, up until shortly before the day of the sacrifice, there remained no consensus as to how the sacrifices should actually be performed. This was

[562] The discussion of Qin Shi Huang's performance of the *feng* is, in my opinion, quite unsatisfactory. We have nothing but Sima Qian's account of it, and the way in which it was described in the *Shiji* bears such similarities to the account of Emperor Wu, that is becomes suspect. Mark Edward Lewis has suggested that Sima Qian's account of the First Emperor's sacrifice is perhaps just a part of the critique of Emperor Wu, and that he had no real knowledge of the First Emperor's ritual (Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices," 64). While the First Emperor erected a stele at the summit of Mt. Tai (the text of which is included in *Shiji* 6), he left engraved stelae at the summits of all of the mountains at which he sacrificed on his inspection tours, and in the Mt. Tai inscription itself, there is nothing to indicate that this sacrifice was in any way different or more significant than the others. Martin Kern, while following Sima Qian in calling the sacrifice a *feng*, does indicate that there is still some question as to whether or not the Mt. Tai stele was in fact erected by the First Emperor, or his son, Er Shi. Kern, 4. If Qin Shi Huang did not perform a *feng* sacrifice, this would be in keeping with Michael Loewe's recent, though controversial, argument that the Qin did not consciously adopt a colour and power, as the empire saw themselves as something completely new and different from previous Chinese dynasties. (Loewe, *The Men Who Governed Han China*, 496-502). However, there is not enough evidence to refute Sima Qian's claim, and the fact remains that by the time of Emperor Wu, it was believed that the First Emperor had performed (successfully or not) this important sacrifice.

[563] *Hanshu* 25A.1235. According to Sima Qian, Guan Zhong specified that this reed must be used for the sacrifice, and used it as a reason to convince Duke Huan of Qi not to perform the sacrifice. The emperor was concerned with harming the grass on the mountain, and so it was important to prepare the sacrificial altar at the summit before it had grown. While the records do not mention it, it is likely that some kind of accommodations were established at the summit as well, as the emperor spent the night at the top of the mountain.

due, according to Emperor Wu's advisors, to the secrecy that necessarily surrounded the ritual, but in actuality, it was due to the fact that the *feng* and *shan* may never have actually been performed, and there was therefore a dearth of information as to what the sacrifice actually looked like. The location for the *feng* sacrifice was never up for debate: the summit of Mt. Tai was unquestionably the location from which to perform the *feng* sacrifice to Heaven. However, the *shan* sacrifice had been performed in several different surrounding locations, and over the course of Emperor Wu's reign, it would change location several times, though it was conducted with the most frequently at Mt. Liangfu, where the First Emperor was also said to have performed the *shan*.[564]

Like Qin Shi Huang before him, Emperor Wu asked both the *ru* and the *fangshi* about how the sacrifices should be performed, and similarly, they were unable to provide a concrete answer. The *ru* argued that there was not sufficient information in the ancient texts to provide a full schedule for the ceremony, but they attempted to piece together as much information as possible. Again, like Qin Shi Huang, Emperor Wu found this information to be unsatisfactory, and so he, too, dismissed the *ru*, choosing to determine the structure of the sacrifice himself. On the day *Yimao*, he ordered the *ru* to don the leather hats and silk sashes, and to shoot an ox, the only parts of the sacrifice that the scholars could agree on, while he himself performed the *feng* at the eastern side of the base of Mt. Tai, using the *jiao* sacrifice as it was performed to the Great Unity.[565] The emperor, along with his coachman, Zihou 子侯, ascended the mountain, where the emperor performed a

[564] While the First Emperor was said to have performed the *shan* at Mt. Liangfu, there is some debate as to whether or not the Mt. Liangfu stele was indeed erected at Mt. Liangfu, or also at Mt. Tai. See Kern, 1-2.
[565] *Hanshu* 25A.1235.

second *feng* sacrifice at the summit, this time, in secret.[566] The next day, the emperor descended via the northern road, and on the *Bingchen* day, he performed the *shan* sacrifice at Mt. Suran, near Mt. Tai. He used the rites for the sacrifice to earth at Fenyin to perform the *shan*. Following the sacrifice, a number of "strange beasts and flying birds," (奇獸飛禽) including a white pheasant, were let loose, adding to the spectacular nature of the sacrifice. Also in attendance were other large and exotic animals, including elephant and rhinoceros, but these were not let loose.[567] After the completion of the sacrifice, there was a bright glow at night and white clouds seemed to emerge from the sacrificial mounds. These were interpreted as favourable omens from Heaven after the successful completion of the sacrifice.

The emperor took up his position in the *mingtang* at the base of Mt. Tai, where the officials all submitted their congratulations and wishes of long life. He thereupon issued the following edict:

> 朕以眇眇之身承至尊，兢兢焉懼不任。維德菲薄，不明于禮樂。修祠太一，若有象景光，屑如有望，震於怪物，欲止不敢，遂登封太山，至于梁父，而後禪肅然。自新，嘉與士大夫更始，賜民百戶牛一酒十石，加年八十孤寡布帛二匹。復博、奉高、蛇丘、歷城，無出今年租稅。其大赦天下，如乙卯赦令。行所過毋有復作。事在二年前，皆勿聽治。

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[566] The coachman, Zi Hou, also performed a sacrifice, but fell ill and died shortly thereafter. *Shiji* 28.1398; *Hanshu* 25A.1235. It is significant to note that the sacrifice was performed twice – once for the benefit of the spirits, in secret, at the summit, and once at the base, where it was witnessed by the assembled officials and regional lords.

[567] *Hanshu* 25A.1235. The animals were brought to Mt. Tai for the sacrifice, but were taken away after.

> I, in my humble and insignificant person, have been accorded the position of highest honour; constantly I tremble with fear that I shall not be worthy of it, for my virtue is poor and slight and I have no understanding of rites and music. When I performed the sacrifice to the Great Unity, something which looked like a beam of light was seen faintly from afar. I was filled with awe at this strange occurrence and would have proceeded no further, but I did not dare to halt. Thus I ascended Mt. Tai to perform the Feng sacrifice, journeyed to Liangfu, and later performed the Shan sacrifice at Mt. Suran, thus renewing myself. In recognition of this new beginning which I and my ministers have made, I grant to every hundred households of the common people one ox and ten piculs of wine, and in addition, to all those over eighty and to orphans and widows, two bolts of silk cloth. Bo, Fenggao, Yiqiu, and Licheng shall be exempted from *corvée* labour and need pay no taxes this year. In addition, let a general amnesty be granted to the empire of the same kind as that ordered in the year *yimao* (120 BCE). None of the places which I have passed through in my visit shall be required to send labour forces, and no criminal charges dating from more than two years in the past shall be tried.[568]

A second edict quickly followed:

> 古者天子五載一巡狩，用事泰山，諸侯有朝宿地。其令諸侯各治邸泰山下。

[568] *Shiji* 28.1398. A slightly modified version appears in *Hanshu* 6.191. The translation is Watson's, *Han II,* 44.

> Of old, the Son of Heaven made one inspection tour every five years, using this to serve Mt. Tai, [and] the regional lords [all] had court residences there. Thus We order the regional lords to each maintain a residence at the base of Mt. Tai.[569]

While the regional lords were not present at the first iteration of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice, with the decree that residences be built near the mountain, they were present at the subsequent renewals of the sacrifice.[570] According to tradition, the *feng* sacrifice was to be performed once every five years. However, like the *jiao* sacrifice at Yong, this was not followed to the letter. Emperor Wu renewed the *feng* on five occasions, in 106, 102, 98, 93, and 89 BCE, but he also travelled to Mt. Tai in 109 and 105 BCE without renewing the *feng*.[571] In 106 (元封五年) and 98 (天漢三年) he both renewed the *feng* sacrifices and held court at the *mingtang*, where he "received the accounts" from the commanderies and kingdoms 受郡國計.[572]

In discussions of the *feng* sacrifice, emphasis is always placed on the secretive nature of the sacrifice. The emperor was supposed to perform the sacrifice at the top of the mountain, by himself, and the texts that were buried at the base were also secret communications with heaven. Howard Wechsler argues that it was only in the Tang dynasty that officials accompanied the emperor to witness the performance of the *feng*, in

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[569] *Shiji* 28.1398; *Hanshu* 25A.1236. The *Hanshu* attributes the edict to the "records of Wu" 武記.

[570] We are not given an explanation for why this is the case, but my suspicion is that, due to the fact that it was very possible for this sacrifice to "fail," as it had for the First Emperor, Emperor Wu did not want an audience until he was assured of his role. On failure in rituals in early China more broadly, see Michael David Kaulana Ing, *The Dysfunction of Ritual in Early Confucianism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

[571] He Pingli has suggested that the emperor performed the *feng* every time he visited Mt. Tai, but it is not specifically stated in the *Hanshu* biography that he performed a *feng* sacrifice, only that he sacrificed to Mt. Tai. (He Pingli, 168).

[572] *Hanshu* 6.196, 6.204. In 104 he received the accounts at Ganquan.

keeping with Tang dynasty trends towards increased participation and spectatorship, though the Eastern Han Emperor Guangwu's sacrifice included more participants than Emperor Wu's.[573] The reasons for the secretive nature of the *feng* are also open to debate: Wechsler argues that the emperor feared that any witness to the ceremony might gain information about the "mystery of immortality" or that someone other than the emperor might encounter the immortals at the summit.[574] However, this explanation fails to take into consideration several important factors in Emperor Wu's performance of the *feng* and in his overall quest for immortality. The *feng* was performed in secret at the summit of Mt. Tai, though the emperor was accompanied by his coachman, who may have witnessed the ceremony, but it was also performed in front of an audience, at the base. Sima Qian is explicit on the fact that the *feng* was performed twice:

> 封泰山下東方，如郊祠太一之禮 (…)禮畢，天子獨與侍中奉車子侯上泰山，亦有封。
>
> [He] performed the *feng* at the eastern side of Mt. Tai, using the rites from the Jiao sacrifice to the Great Unity. (…) After completing the rite, the Son of Heaven alone, accompanied by his coachman Zihou, climbed Mt. Tai, and *again* performed the *feng*.[575]

The performance at the top of the mountain was supposed to be secret, and we do not know whether or not Zihou assisted or witnessed the *feng* or if he waited to the side. His presence on the mountain was likely to serve the emperor, who spent the night at the top of the

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[573] Wechsler, 194. Guangwu Di's sacrifice is recorded in the *Hou Hanshu*; the relevant sections are translated in Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, 158-69.
[574] Wechsler, 193.
[575] *Shiji* 28.1398. *Hanshu* 25A.1235. Emphasis added.

mountain, descending the next day by the northern path.[576] However, the initial performance was conducted in front of, at least, the officials who had accompanied the emperor to Mt. Tai. The *Ru* scholars who were charged with shooting the ox were present, and the amount of spectacle that accompanied the sacrifice also suggests that there were many people in attendance – some as assistants, others as spectators. In addition to releasing, or displaying, a large number of exotic creatures, the emperor wore fine ceremonial yellow robes, and all of his ceremonies were accompanied by music, composed for the event.[577] After he had completed both the *feng* and the *shan*, the officials all offered their congratulations. In subsequent years, the Regional Lords would be present for the sacrifices (see above). Far from being a secret ceremony, the *feng* was a sacrifice which not only communicated the Emperor's exalted position to Heaven, it was also an assertion, and a celebration of his reign, and an assertion of his supremacy to the men in attendance. That the spectators were not permitted to see the sacrifice at the summit at the top of the mountain only contributed to the emperor's authority and to his mystique, for the gathered officials and lords, having witnessed part of the ceremony, were aware that there was a clear division between the emperor and all other men.[578]

While the *feng* ceremony was certainly a part of the emperor's quest for immortality, it was but one part of a much larger, and more complex, whole. While the emperor modelled himself on the Yellow Thearch, who not only corrected the calendar, but performed the *feng* sacrifice on the road to immortality, there is no evidence to suggest that

[576] *Shiji* 28.1398; *Hanshu* 25A.1235. It is highly implausible that the Emperor was expected to sleep at the summit of this dangerous mountain by himself.
[577] *Shiji* 28.1398; *Hanshu* 25A.1235.
[578] Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," 78-9.

he thought that any normal individual could perform the *feng* and gain immortality. Quite the contrary: the *Shiji* is clear that in order to succeed in the performance of the *feng*, one must have already achieved great things, so the secret nature of the *feng* cannot be so easily dismissed as the emperor's fear that some other individual might be able to gain immortality by imitating the emperor's sacrificial performance. Furthermore, as exhibited through the emperor's willingness to consult with the *fangshi* and others about the immortals, the emperor was well aware that others were in contact with these spirits, and the subject of immortality was not as taboo as Wechsler implies.[579]

If, as I have argued, the *feng* was not intended to be completely secret, and was intended to communicate the emperor's exalted position to the officials and lords, then we must still raise the question of the second, secret performance on the summit of Mt. Tai, and the burial of a secret text at the base. Barring the discovery of these inscribed tablets, we will likely never have a satisfactory answer to this question. However, it is possible to speculate on some of the reasons behind it. The performance of the sacrifice at the base of the mountain before the emperor ascended may give some clues: if the rites were to be performed as they were in a *jiao* type sacrifice to the Great Unity, this would require the sacrifice of, at very least, one animal, at most, a set of three sacrificial animals.[580] There is no evidence that the emperor, climbing the dangerous peak himself, would have brought these animals with him, much less the wherewithal to make the burnt sacrifice.[581] While

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[579] Wechsler, 193.
[580] "Jiao te sheng," *Liji jijie* juan 25, *Xuxiu siku quanshu* Vol. 104, 34. See Chapter Three.
[581] The *Hanshu* records that the paths the emperor had to travel for many of these sacrifices were dangerous (eg. *Hanshu* 25B.1243). On the geography of Mt. Tai more generally, see Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan,* Chapters One and Two. In the Eastern Han, Emperor Guangwu was recorded to have been carried to the top, rather than complete the climb himself. Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, 167.

some preparations had been undertaken in the winter, when the grass on the mountain would not be damaged, the preparation of animals for slaughter could not have been achieved several months before the actual sacrifice. I suspect, therefore, that the ceremony that took place on the peak took the shape of a private communication with heaven, after the sacrificial offerings had already been given. In this way, the *feng* sacrifice in its first iteration, communicated the supremacy of the emperor to his empire, while in the second iteration at the summit, demonstrated his mastery over the world, and communicated to heaven that the emperor had achieved this mastery. In many respects, the *ludi saeculares* of Augustus convey a similarly dual message.

6.3 Augustus' *Ludi Saeculares*

As the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices marked the pinnacle of Emperor Wu's reign, so the *ludi saeculares* marked the dawning of the Age of Augustus (*saeculum Augustum*).[582] The Secular Games, and the circumstances of their revival, bear many similarities to the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices. Like the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, the Games were a celebration with roots in the highest antiquity of the Republic, but their history was mired in mystery. The *ludi saeculares* were a celebration that few rulers could hope to preside over, and they were a celebration of both the past and future glory of the Roman state. As is evident in the name, the *ludi saeculares* were to be celebrated once per *saeculum*, a period defined by Censorinus as *spatium vitae humanae longissimum partu et morte definitum* "A *saeculum*

[582] While not an official designation for the Augustan period, the Senate suggested that the period of Augustus' life should be referred to as the *saeculum Augustum* in the calendar, Suet., *Aug*., 100.3: *ut omne tempus a primo die natali ad exitum eius saeculum Augustum appellaretur et ita in fastos referretur* (that all the period from the day of his birth until his demise be called the Augustan Age, and so entered in the Calendar).

is the lifespan of the longest lived individual of a given generation."[583] There was also a messianic element to the *saeculum*: Richard Beacham has argued that "the concept of a *saeculum* was linked with the notion of divine intervention in the form of a heaven-sent hero who would bring great victories and lasting peace marking the beginning of a new age."[584] The implication being that in each age, there could only be one such man worthy enough to usher in a new era. As such, there was competition over who might hold this honour, and there is some evidence that prior to Augustus, other men considered inaugurating a new *saeculum*, facilitated by the fact that the date for the games was not set in stone. During the Republic, there was debate over the length of a *saeculum*: whether it was one hundred or one hundred and ten years, but it was generally agreed upon that the event of the *ludi saeculares* was so rare that a person would only see one in his lifetime.[585] Historians agree that the first *ludi saeculares* were held in 249 BCE, initiated when strange portents caused the *Decemiviri* to consult the Sibylline Books during the Punic War.[586] Games were subsequently held in 146 BCE, after Scipio Aemilianus' victory over Carthage. The *ludi saeculares* were "revived" by Augustus in 17 BCE. Following these, games were

[583] Cens. 17.2, citation in John F. Hall, "The *Saeculum Novum* of Augustus and its Etruscan Antecedents," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II.16.3 (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 2567.
[584] Richard C. Beacham, *Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999), 114.
[585] On the debate over the length of a *saeculum* see John F. Hall, 2567-69; Pierre Brind'Amour, "L'origine des jeux séculaires," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.16.2 (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 1334-53.
[586] John F. Hall, 2570; Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971), 193.

performed by Claudius, in 47 CE,[587] Domitian, in 88 CE, and Septimus Severus in 204 CE, and these subsequent games were performed in the same manner of those of 17 BCE.[588]

During the first century BCE, the *saeculum* was due to be renewed, and there were attempts made prior to the reign of Augustus to initiate the new *saeculum* and thus declare the man who inaugurated it to be the "hero" of the new age. In 88 BCE, several omens appeared, including a prolonged "shrill and dismal note" as if sounded by a trumpet in the "cloudless and clear air," which the Etruscan haruspices, after being consulted by the Senate, interpreted as being indicative of the "advent of a new age."[589] This discussion in Plutarch suggests that Sulla had considered inaugurating the *saeculum* himself.[590] Other contenders included Cicero, who suggested that Pompey might fill the role of the new man (in tandem with Cicero), and the Consul of 71 BCE, P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura, tried to claim the title for himself.[591]

There is also evidence to suggest that Julius Caesar had begun to think of staging the *ludi saeculares*, but due to the civil war, and his untimely assassination, was unable to do so.[592] Games were due in either 49 or 46 BCE (given that the previous games had taken place in either 149 or 146), and a series of portents in the year before Caesar's death may

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[587] Claudius elected to hold games to celebrate the eight-hundredth anniversary of the city of Rome, but his decision to celebrate them was mocked, as Augustus' games had been held only fifty years prior.
[588] The calculation of the *saeculum* was clearly not firmly established at 110 years, though it is clear that an interval of approximately 100 years was necessary to give legitimacy to the games. On the chronology of the games, see also Brind'Amour, 1355-71.
[589] Plut. *Sull*. 7.7. Weinstock, 192. On the Etruscan roots of the *ludi saeculares*, see Hall, 1986. Brind'Amour also notes the possible Egyptian origin of the one hundred and ten year *saeculum*, 1335-39.
[590] Liebeschuetz, 84.
[591] Weinstock, 192-3.
[592] John F. Hall, 2577.

have encouraged speculation about the dawning of a new *saeculum*.[593] This speculation, according to Weinstock, set the foundation for the growing belief that it was, in fact, Augustus, who was to usher in the new *saeculum*.[594] For these great men, it was not simply enough to host the games and declare a new *saeculum* to have begun: in order to do so, sufficient omens were required, and the Sibylline books needed to be consulted, and produce an oracle that indicated the beginning of a new age.[595] Like the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice, there was the need to demonstrate that the *ludi saeculares* had been divinely sanctioned.

Because the *ludi saeculares* were performed so rarely, while there were certain elements of the games that were known, there was no script for the celebration, and so at the time of Augustus, it was both necessary and possible to reconstruct these games of antiquity. The confusion over the performance of the games is reflected in the discussions by the *Quindecimviri* prior to the Augustan games of 17 BCE. The *Quindecimviri* were tasked with determining how the games were to be conducted, and with consulting the Sibylline books to ensure that the performance of these games had been prophesied. The College determined that the games had been performed four times prior to the reign of Augustus: in 456, 346, 236, and 126 BCE, and that it was subsequently time in 17 BCE for the games to be renewed.[596]

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[593] Weinstock notes that there is no definitive evidence for this, but that a number of portents and discussions indicate that there was likely some speculation about the dawning of a new *saeculum* under Julius Caesar. See Weinstock, 191-98 for details.
[594] Ibid., 195.
[595] Of course, the Sibylline books could be read in such a way as to provide the desired response, see Chapter Four.
[596] John F. Hall, 2575. Other texts from the time site a different chronology, eg., Valerius Antias: 509, 348, 249, and 149. Varro rejects the possibility of games being held in 509 BCE. Palmer (Cited in Hall) suggests that the games were never fixed to a precise schedule

Like many of Augustus' other reforms to imperial cult, the language employed about the *ludi saeculares* speaks about a revival of traditions which had been neglected.[597] And while the *ludi saeculares* could only be performed once per century, according to Geoffrey Sumi "even though Augustus was constrained by tradition and custom, the length of a *saeculum* and the manner in which such *saecula* were counted afforded him some flexibility within certain parameters in determining in what year the festival was to be carried out."[598] But, like the revival of other religious institutions, the *ludi saeculares* were a mixture of ancient tradition and modern inventions.[599] The "revival" of the *ludi saeculares* was also closely linked to the revival of other religious institutions, particularly that of the College of *Quindecimviri*, who were responsible for orchestrating the games.[600] As is known from the inscriptions, twenty-one *Quindecimviri* were present at the games in 17 BCE: sixteen members and five *magistri*, and they were led by the main officiants of the festival, Augustus and Agrippa, both themselves members of the college.[601] During

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of either 100 or 110 years, and that they were to occur roughly once per century. The *Quindecimviri* date of 126 was likely a fabrication (with games actually occurring in 149 or 146) to provide a more exact sequence of repetitions every 110 years, leading up to the games of 17 BCE, though there is no explanation offered as to why they were celebrated in 17, rather than 16. John F. Hall, 2575-76. Dio 54.18.4 records the 17 BCE games as the fifth celebration of the games, though the sources only record two prior celebrations (249 and 149/6). See also Susan Satterfield, "The Prodigies of 17 B.C.E. and the *Ludi Saeculares*," *Transactions of the American Philological Society* (2016): 325-48, on the timing of the games in 17 BCE. Satterfield notes that 17 BCE also marked the ten years which had passed since Augustus had consolidated his power in 28-27 BCE.

[597] Suet. *Aug*. 31.4.

[598] Geoffrey S. Sumi, *Ceremony and Power: Performing Politics in Rome between Republic and Empire* (ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 243.

[599] Scheid, "Les restauration religieuse d'Octavian/Auguste," 122.

[600] Sumi, 244. On the *Quindecimviri*, see above, Chapter Four.

[601] *CIL* 6.32323. The relevant inscriptions are reconstructed in Ionnes Baptista Pighi, *De ludis saecularibus populi Romani Quiritium libri sex* (Amsterdam, Verlag P. Schippers NC, 1965), 107-19. See Martha Hoffman Lewis, 1952, on the reconstruction of the lists of *Quindecimviri*.

the discussions about the games, the college consulted the Sibylline books, and produced an oracle calling for the renewal of the celebration, specifying certain elements of the performance, and emphasizing the importance of the worship of Apollo in the celebration.[602] These actions are consistent with other elements of Augustus' religious revival, and further cemented his connection with Apollo. The privileged place given to Apollo suggests that the *ludi saeculares* were not simply a declaration of the dawning of the Age of Augustus, but also that of the supremacy of Apollo.

Following the discussions of the *Quindecimviri*, the Senate voted to hold the games on May 23, 17 BCE, to be conducted under the direction of Augustus and Agrippa, who held tribunician power.[603] At the same meeting, the Senate also issued a decree stating that due to the once-in-a-lifetime nature of the event, that the consuls of that year should ensure that columns of bronze and marble be erected, and engraved with a record of the games, in order to preserve "the memory of this great benevolence of the gods."[604] The Senate also decreed that unmarried individuals would be allowed to attend the games, in contradiction of the newly promulgated Augustan marriage laws.[605] Opened with a sacrifice of nine ewe-lambs and nine she-goats on the evening of May 31, the *ludi saeculares* went on for twelve

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[602] The Oracle is preserved in Zos. 2.6.

[603] *CIL* 6.32323:50-63, translated in Kitty Chisholm and John Ferguson, eds., *Rome: The Augustan Age* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986), 151-52.

[604] Ibid. *pe[rti]nere ad conseruandam memoriam tantae b[enuolentiae deorum commentarium ludorum] saecularium in colum[n]am aheneam et marmoream inscribe, st[atuique ad futuram rei memoriam utramque]*. Pighi, 112.

[605] Ibid. The *Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* of 18 BCE attempted to restore traditional republican *mores* through the regulation of marriage and encouragement of procreation. According to Beth Severy, this legislation was intended to not only increase the population, but to strengthen class lines, by discouraging the elite from marrying below them. Dio 54.30.1; Suet. *Aug*. 27; *Res Gest.* 6. On the marriage laws more broadly, Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York, Routledge, 2003), 50-56.

days, which included additional sacrifices, both day and night, Latin and Greek plays, chariot racing, and the performance of songs composed for the occasion, most notably Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*.[606] Presiding over the majority of the ceremonies, Augustus and Agrippa were the most prominent men, though the inscriptions record the presence of other members of the *Quindecimviri* in attendance at other parts of the festival. Augustus presented the evening sacrifices by himself, while the day-time sacrifices were presented by both Augustus and Agrippa. In addition to the festivals organized and sponsored by the College, Agrippa sponsored chariot racing on the final day, June 12th.[607]

The *ludi saeculares* were without question a celebration of the beginning of a new golden age, one which not only celebrated the power of Rome, but also "to proclaim with pomp and pageantry their own victory and the glory portended for Rome under the leadership of Augustus Caesar."[608] While the celebration was certainly a glorification of the victories of Augustus, it also demonstrated the different distribution of power under the new regime. The festival was not only a celebration of the renewal of Roman power, but also the era of peace that had been ushered in. The *ludi saeculares* were intended to represent this new era of peace, which would again be commemorated by the dedication of the *Ara Pacis* in 12 BCE.[609] There has been some speculation as to why Augustus did not wait until he had attained the office of Pontifex Maximus to hold the *ludi saeculares*; Bowersock has suggested that the games were hosted by Augustus and Agrippa "in the

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[606] *CIL* 6.32323:64-168. translated in Chisholm and Ferguson, 153-55.
[607] Ibid.
[608] John F. Hall, 2565.
[609] On the relationship between the *Ara Pacis* and Augustus' position of Pontifex Maximus, see Bowersock, 1990.

embarrassing absence of the *pontifex maximus*."[610] While it is true that none of the pontiffs presided over the games, though given the public nature of the spectacle, many were likely in attendance, the *ludi saeculares* had historically been the domain of the *Quindecimviri*, or *Decemviri* in earlier times, and there is no evidence to suggest the Pontifical College had ever participated in the celebration. The College of the *Quindecimviri* orchestrated and presided over this celebration, and were thus seen by the crowds to have taken a prominent stage in the new religious and political life of the Principate. Their position beside the inaugurator of the new *saeculum* also contributed to the symbolism of the shift from the Age of Jupiter to the Age of Apollo.

Several of the modifications that Augustus made to imperial cult in the early years of the Principate served to elevate the position of Apollo, and emphasize a connection between Augustus and this god. In addition to attaching the Temple of Apollo to his house, announced in 36 BCE and completed in 28 BCE,[611] and collecting and editing the Sibylline books, which had long been associated with Apollo, Augustus and the *Quindecimviri* gave Apollo, and his sister Diana, a place of prominence in the *ludi saeculares*. The poetic tradition certainly reflects the exalted place of the god, and his close connection with

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[610] Bowersock, 382.

[611] Hekster and Rich have argued that the announcement of his intention to build the temple in 36 BCE was the beginning of Augustus' propaganda associating himself with the god. The announcement of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus connected to his house was the result of a series of fortuitous circumstances, primarily a lightning strike on the hill which the *harsupices* interpreted as Apollo's wish to have a temple dedicated there. See Oliver Hekster and John Rich, "Octavian and the Thunderbolt: The Temple of Apollo Palatinus and the Roman Tradition of Temple Building," *The Classical Quarterly* New Series 56.1 (2006): 149-68. As Robert Gurval has demonstrated, there is little evidence that Augustus promoted this association prior to 36 BCE. Robert Gurval, *Actium and Augustus: The Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995), 91-113.

Augustus. Virgil, in the earliest reference to Apollo connected with a new *saeculum* proclaimed that this was the age of Apollo ("Your own Apollo now is king!" *tuus iam regnat Apollo*).[612] The major sacrifices and festivals took place at both ancient locations and new sacred sites, another example of Augustus' mixing of past tradition with innovative ceremony in the *Ludi*. Notably, the *Acta* have revealed that Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, which places much emphasis on the elevated position of Apollo, was performed at both the Temple of Apollo Palatinus and the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline.[613] While Augustus, accompanied by Agrippa, performed daytime sacrifices to Jupiter and Juno on June 1st and 2nd, respectively, the two men also offered sacrifice to Apollo and Diana, at the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine.[614] The *ludi saeculares* were also "modernized" through the night-time sacrifices offered by Augustus, on his own These night-time sacrifices reflected the Greek origins of the *ludi*, and they had been performed in the first historical *ludi saeculares* in 249 BCE. However, Augustus changed the orientation of the night-time sacrifices, not only adding day-time sacrifices to Roman gods, but changing the orientation of the night-time sacrifices "away from infernal expiation towards fecundity."[615] These sacrifices, presented to the Moriae (fates), Ilithyiae (childbirth), and Terra Mater (fertility) were an Augustan innovation, as in previous celebrations the opening sacrifices had been presented to the King and Queen of the dead. According to John Miller, in this way, the *ludi saeculares* were transformed "from

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[612] Vir. *Ecl*. 4.10; John F. Miller, *Apollo, Augustus, and the Poets* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), 254.
[613] Miller, 270.
[614] *CIL* 6.32323, translated in Chisholm and Ferguson, 153-4. See also Miller, 273.
[615] Denis Feeney, "The *Ludi Saeculares* and the *Carmen Saeculare*," in *Roman Religion*, Clifford Ando, ed. (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2000), 107.

expiation for the past to celebration of an abundant new age."[616] While these sacrifices were still offered at the Campus Martius near the Tiber River, the traditional location for the sacrifices, the meaning of the offering had been reinvented by the *princeps*. The day-time sacrifices, offered by both Augustus and Agrippa, were offered to Roman gods: Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina, Apollo, and Diana.[617]

The *ludi saeculares* were, perhaps unsurprisingly given Rome's culture of public performance, a very public event, attended by all men and women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Unlike the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, Roman *ludi* were entertainments enjoyed by rich and poor alike, and the strict laws on public morality that Augustus had imposed earlier in the Principate were relaxed so that unmarried men and women could view the spectacular performances.[618] This relaxation of the new morals which Augustus promoted so tirelessly is odd; *ludi*, according to Richard Beacham, were a time when the "constant pressures of piety and propriety" were temporarily relaxed, and the "stage settings provided an opportunity to indulge vicariously in acceptable excess."[619] This relaxation of the rules suggests, perhaps, that Augustus was trying to reach the widest possible audience, and achieve widespread popular support. While he had been without rival for power for over ten years, when he adopted the title Augustus in 27 BCE, within the theatre of Roman politics, displays of adoration from the *populus Romani* were still valuable currency, and hosting games was fundamental to obtaining urban popularity.[620] In addition to communicating his new *saeculum Augustum* to the largest possible audience,

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[616] Miller, 273.
[617] Feeney, "The *Ludi Saeculares*," 107.
[618] *CIL* 6.32323.
[619] Beacham, 28.
[620] Yakobson, "Petitio et Largito," 35.

the presence of a large, celebratory crowd communicated the message to the others in the crowd, as well as the political elite, that there was mass support for this new imperial order.

While the *ludi saeculares* were performed over a twelve-day period in front of the masses, the reinvention of the games and their political function shares many similarities with the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices of Han Emperor Wu. The antiquity and mystery of the games allowed for the 17 BCE performance to sit comfortably at the intersection of tradition and innovation, and Augustus took advantage of this situation to create a spectacle that at once spoke to the grandeur of the olden days of Rome as well as to the glory of the new social order that was inaugurated with the *Pax Augusta*. The *ludi saeculares* communicated this new order, on a number of different levels. First, the spectacle was a demonstration to the people. As men and women from all social classes were invited and encouraged to attend the games, the performances of sacrifices, songs, and contests were occasions on which people could see and be seen. The games were presided over by the *princeps* and his closest friend and son-in-law, Agrippa, leaving no question as to who held the highest authority in Rome. Places of prominence in the celebrations were occupied by the *Quindecimviri*, many of whom were *homines novi* (see Chapter Four), while members of the Pontifical College had no special place of ceremony, and their leader, Lepidus, remained absent from Rome.[621] While Augustus would later be elected to the highest priesthood, by choosing to hold the games before becoming Pontifex Maximus, Augustus once again demonstrated his exceptional position, and the absence of the Pontifices from the sacrifices further reinforced their impotence as long as Lepidus was at their helm. In

[621] On the absence of Lepidus in this period, see Ronald T. Ridley, "The Absent Pontifex Maximus," *Historia* 54.2 (2005).

these performances, it was obvious, at least to the elite, who was missing from the positions of prominence, both men and gods.

Second, the games indicated the introduction of a new symbolic order, which gave primacy of place to Apollo, Augustus' patron god, who had, until the time of Augustus, held less importance in Rome than Jupiter. The rise of Apollo was achieved through several means, including the erection of a new temple to Apollo at Augustus' own residence, but the sacrifices and dedications made to him during the *ludi saeculares* marked this god, alongside the *princeps*, as the pair that would usher in the new *saeculum*. While the games were intended to be a revival of ancient traditions, the prominence of this new god marks one of the greatest innovations in the Augustan games, and the precedents established by the 17 BCE games would be closely followed in later iterations.[622] Third, coins, with the head of Augustus on the obverse, and a detail of a sacrifice on the reverse, were issued to commemorate the games,[623] and the celebrations were thus inscribed in popular memory for both those who had been able to attend the games, and those who had not.

The *ludi saeculares* thus had the immediate effect of demonstrating the new political order, which was itself legitimated by the mass participation of the people. Participation in the festival indicated a submission to the ruling order, and participation, even as a spectator, demonstrated to others that this new order had been tacitly approved. That

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[622] Beard, North, and Price, Vol. 1, 206.

[623] Five types of coins were issued for the games in 17 BCE, in gold and silver. See John Scheid, "Déchiffrer des monnaies : réflexions sur la représentation figurée des Jeux séculaires," in *Images romaines: Actes de la table ronde organise à l'École normale supérieure, Tome 9*, C. Auvray-Assayas, ed. (Paris, Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1998). This type of iconography would be mimicked by later emperors (see Chapter Seven).

Augustus was able to conduct the games and inaugurate the new *saeculum* without holding the office of the Pontifex Maximus demonstrates not that he did not covet the office, but that his power was so great, and his other honours so many, that he was able to inaugurate the new *saeculum* and perform the important sacrifices to the gods, without holding the office. This, perhaps, may be read as a final, and devastating, snub at the *Pontifex-in-absentia*, Lepidus.

6.4 Conclusions

In his *Commentaire sur la societé du spectacle*, the follow-up to the 1967 *La societé du spectacle*, Debord remarked that some people accused him of having invented the spectacle "out of thin air."[624] However, the spectacle, and the spectacular power it produces, is neither new, nor the invention of a French Marxist in the 1960s: in the ancient world, the power of spectacle existed, and produced similar effects, though it goes without saying, on a much different scale. The *ludi saeculares* were such an important state-sponsored spectacle that Augustus was willing to relax his morality laws, so that all men and women could come and join in a "spectacle, such as they had never witnessed and never would again."[625] While the case for the power of public spectacle and mass participation can be made much more strongly in Rome, with its culture of public performance, a similar argument can be made for the Han, when we shift our gaze from the spectacle to the spectator. The audience of Emperor Wu's sacrifices were not the people, they were the lords, officials, and elites, who would perpetuate and enact power

[624] Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (London, Verso Books, 1998), 3.
[625] Zos. 2.6.

throughout the vast empire. Emperor Wu's sacrifice was performed in front of these men, as an assertion of his power, and the fact that they did not witness the most solemn moment of the sacrifice, at the summit of Mt. Tai, only contributes to the spectacular nature of the event; shrouded in mystery and sanctioned by *tian*, the ultimate sacrifice did not need to be observed to be efficacious, it was enough that it was known.[626]

As we have seen, the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices of Emperor Wu and the *ludi saeculares* of Augustus were carefully scripted performances, intended to affirm and communicate the reality of the new ruling order. In both cases, modern innovations were combined with ancient traditions to create performances that demonstrated the new reality of power, centered around the person of the emperor. The spectacles were, fundamentally, about demonstrating the power and glory of the reigns of Emperor Wu and Augustus. They demonstrated not only the supremacy of the ruler over the elites, but also that this supremacy had been divinely sanctioned; both the *feng* and s*han* sacrifices and the *ludi saeculares* were preceded by favourable divine omens, and the *feng* sacrifice was determined to have been successful following the appearance of further omens. While these spectacles differed in their medium, message, and audience, both were also epoch-making events, declaring to men and gods the triumph of the ruler, who had ushered in an era of unity and peace.

In both cases, the Emperor Wu and Augustus were not creating an imperial ritual out of nothing, but were bound to some traditions, based on what was remembered about the earlier performances of the sacrifices. As such, they were not able to completely invent

[626] It is interesting to note that this secrecy was not employed in the Tang dynasty *feng* sacrifice, and that it had become important for this solemn rite to be witnessed by the officials.

the rites, and were therefore constrained by their respective ritual traditions and layers of interpretation that these sacrifices, or types of sacrifices, held.[627] Given the very different histories of both the *ludi saeculares* and the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, as well as the differences in performance culture within each society, it is unsurprising that the two spectacles were performed with very different relationships with the people. It was necessary for Augustus to demonstrate his majesty to the entirety of the city of Rome, and the empire, with the circulation of commemorative coins, while for Emperor Wu, witnessing an imperial sacrifice was a privilege only given to those closest to the emperor, and who were part of the system of imperial power themselves.[628] The audience to whom these visions of the new order were presented, and who contributed to creating it, were thus representative of a longer history of political power in Rome and China. In Rome, consensus, or the appearance of consensus, was needed from the masses, while in the Han, it was necessary to demonstrate that the emperor was supreme amongst all of the regional lords, and for both, that they had received the sanction of supernatural powers.

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[627] This point is made most clearly by James Laidlaw: "This feature of ritual traditions – that their basic building blocks and reference points are acts, which are felt to have their own history and character and to be beyond the particular intentions and purposes of actors – effectively prevents ritual performances from being merely the expression of a meaning or a message." Laidlaw, 410.

[628] We know, for example, that Sima Tan was devastated to not be able to witness the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The biographies of the early emperors, Qin Shi Huang, Emperor Wu, Julius Caesar, and Augustus, record that each of these rulers undertook reforms to their state's calendar and religious institutions. In each case, these reforms are presented within the context of the ruler shaping his state, of demonstrating his right to rule, and of transforming institutions in order to better support their visions of empire. While the religious institutions and calendars of early China and Rome are so different that they seem to defy comparison, when we set aside the different institutional structures and belief systems, the processes through which the early rulers enacted reform reveal similar attitudes and strategies on the parts of the participants. The differences in the historical traditions, as well as in the institutions themselves, allow us to question our orthodox interpretations of these reforms, and their role in shaping empire.

In expanding his cult across the empire, Emperor Wu followed in the tradition of the Qin kings, and later the First Emperor of Qin, and the early Han emperors. His expansion was characterized not only by his search for immortality, as has so often been noted, but by an openness to adopt new cult practices and seek out new spirits, and, in so doing, a willingness to listen to the advice of those who claimed mantic knowledge, whether they came from within the court establishment or not. The sacrificial tours took the emperor from one end of the empire to the other, establishing his authority over contested, or newly conquered, territories, and claiming jurisdiction over any and all cults practiced by the people living within his domain. These tours not only had the emperor travel around the empire, but mobilized the nobles, who were required to witness some of his major sacrifices, and congratulate him on his successes. This expansion of cult culminated in two epoch-

making events: the inauguration of a new era with the *Taichu* calendar, and the achievement of the ultimate sacrifices, the *feng* and *shan*. In both of these declarations of the glory of the reign of Emperor Wu, men from various backgrounds and intellectual traditions were called upon to create a new, and cosmically-attuned calendar, and to reconstruct the legendary ancient sacrifices of the sage kings of the past. It is these men, rather than the Ru literati, who helped shape the reign of Emperor Wu.[629]

In Rome, the expansion of cult took place within the city, rather than in the empire at large, due to the different challenges facing Julius Caesar and Augustus. Like the early Qin and Han rulers, they began to claim authority over cult: not over individual cults, but by incorporating themselves into the major priestly colleges at Rome. While the priestly colleges had no official political role, membership in the colleges brought with it prestige and influence, as well as the ability to participate in informal conversations about affairs of the state, with other leading men. The reforms that were completed under Augustus were begun by Julius Caesar. In seeking to limit the power of the Pontifical College, who were abusing their power to declare the timing of intercalary months, Caesar enacted a major reform to the Roman calendar, seeking men with knowledge of calendrical science from the far reaches of the Roman world. In so doing, and with Augustus' later modifications, he initiated a system which incorporated the new imperial family into the flow of Roman time, punctuating the year with festivals related to the glories of the family. Prior to Caesar, it was almost unheard of for a man to be a member of more than one college; after the reign of Augustus it became the norm for the *princeps* to be a member of each of the colleges,

[629] While it had generally been assumed that the Ru came to dominate court during the reign of Emperor Wu, this has recently been refuted by Cai Liang.

and the position of *pontifex maximus* became, effectively, hereditary. Under Augustus, it became increasingly common for his closest supporters to belong to more than one college, and, as we have seen, with the "revival" of religion, the traditional ranking of prestige of the colleges shifted, with men from the college of *quindecimviri* holding high office more frequently during the Principate. The men who were incorporated into these roles, while previously not totally removed from the theatre of power, were men who were personal allies of Augustus, and represented the new order, rather than the old guard. These men helped Augustus bring about the once in a lifetime *ludi saeculares*, a grand display of the new imperial order, with the *princeps* at the helm. The Roman emperor's religious authority was diffuse, but ever present. There was no one ceremony or celebration that defined his religious or political authority, rather, it was manifest throughout the city, and the various annual ceremonies.[630]

Both Emperor Wu and Augustus, building on the work of earlier rulers, attempted to centre the empire, and its religious institutions, around their own person, and in order to do so, they employed those who could, and would, assist them. But following the convergence, there is a divergence. Readers familiar with the material will know that these reforms to religious institutions had different paths, east and west. The calendar and cult system implemented by Emperor Wu did not long outlast the Western Han; conversely, the Julian calendar remained current until in Europe until 1582,[631] and the religious system shaped by Augustus remained without much change until the reigns of the Christian emperors, in

[630] Beard, North, and Price, Vol. 1, 206.
[631] Though Protestant countries did not fully adopt the Gregorian calendar until the mid-eighteenth century.

the fourth century CE.[632] In this section, I will discuss the different trajectories of these religious institutions, before returning to the final comparisons and conclusions between the two cases.

The expansion of cult that began in the Qin and culminated in the extensive sacrifices of Emperor Wu was dismantled in the second half of the Western Han. The reasons for this are manifold, but primarily stem from the ongoing conflict between "modernists" and "reformists" at court, and the power vacuum which followed the death of Emperor Wu. The reformist faction, who ultimately came to dominate the court, argued for a return to traditional practices, as elucidated in the ritual texts, and disliked the extravagant imperial cult practiced by the Qin and early Han emperors. At the end of Emperor Wu's reign, a witchcraft scandal broke out in Chang'an, and for two years, 92 – 91 BCE, major political disturbances led to the execution of many high officials, as well as the suicides of Empress Wei and her son, the heir apparent, Liu Ju 劉據 in 91.[633] Following the death of Emperor Wu in 87 BCE, rather than being succeeded by his designated heir, Liu Ju, who was 38 at the time of his death and had extensive experience governing in Chang'an, the emperor was succeeded by his youngest son, the eight-year-old Emperor Zhao. A triumvirate of regents was appointed, with Huo Guang 霍光 at their head, and he effectively controlled the government until his death in 68 BCE, under the reign of Emperor Xuan, the grandson of Liu Ju, whom Huo Guang had selected to be emperor in 74. Emperor Xuan, after the

[632] The tradition of naming the emperor as Pontifex Maximus came to an end in 382/3 CE. On the change in the role of priests, see Françoise van Haeperen, "Des pontifes païens aux pontifes chrétiens. Transformations d'un titre : entre pouvoirs et représentations," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 81 (2003). 2003.

[633] Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict*, Chapter 2, provides the most comprehensive discussion of the witchcraft scandal, the political intrigues, and the shifts in power during this period.

death of Huo Guang,[634] continued many of the sacrifices performed by his great-grandfather, and ensured that the five mountains and four rivers all had regular sacrifices.[635] He also toured the empire, sacrificing on several occasions to the Great Unity at Ganquan, and to Houtu in Hedong, and periodically issuing amnesties on receiving favourable omens.[636] Emperor Xuan also held court at Ganquan, and with the final submission of the Xiongnu to the Han, caused the Shanyu to visit Ganquan.[637] Emperor Yuan initially continued the traditions established by Emperor Wu, but over the course of his reign, the sacrificial program saw a number of reversals: at times, influenced by the Ru scholars who maintained that the current sacrifices were not in accordance with antiquity, sacrifices were stopped, but after becoming ill, he reinstituted the sacrifices which had been cancelled.[638] This back and forth between maintaining the sacrifices performed by Emperor Wu and limiting the number and types of sacrifices continued until the end of the Western Han.[639] However, debates during the reign of Emperor Cheng would eventually set the precedent for the imperial sacrifices that existed in the Eastern Han, and resulted in the establishment of altars to Heaven and Earth to the north and south of the capital, and the end of the imperial sacrificial processions.

In 32 CE, the reformist Kuang Heng 匡衡 proposed a major reform of the imperial ritual system, that would eradicate numerous cults and move the major sacrifices of state

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[634] The *Hanshu* suggests that these sacrifices were opposed by Huo Guang, who exerted his influence over both the young Emperor Zhao and the early years of Emperor Xuan's reign. *Hanshu* 25B.1248.
[635] *Hanshu* 25B.1248. According to the *Hanshu*, Emperor Zhao did not travel the empire and perform sacrifices at all; this is likely due to his young age.
[636] *Hanshu* 25B.1248ff.
[637] *Hanshu* 25B.1252-53.
[638] *Hanshu* 25B.1253.
[639] *Hanshu* 25B.1253.

to the suburbs of the imperial capital at Chang'an. He argued that the sacrifices of the Qin and early Han had no precedent in the Zhou tradition, and that they were an invention of the Qin state, and thus did not need to be followed. He objected to the lavish expenditure on sacrifice and the elaborate altars, which had contributed to the ruin of the Han's finances. He protested that the roads to travel to these remote locations to offer sacrifice were perilous, and the processions brought hardship to the people of the empire.[640] The emperor permitted Kuang Heng to discuss the possibility of ritual reform with others. These men noted that the sacrifices themselves were taking place in the wrong locations, according to Yin-Yang theory: Heaven, dominant Yang, should be sacrificed to in the South, while the earth should be offered sacrifice in the north, associated with Yin. In so arguing, they not only revealed that the cult practiced by the early Han emperors was cosmically incorrect, but shifted the emphasis away from the Five Di and the Great Unity (representing Heaven) and the cult of Houtu (representing earth), to the worship of Heaven and Earth directly.[641] The reforms thus established shrines to Heaven and Earth to the South and North of the capital, respectively, where the emperor would personally offer sacrifice. According to Michael Loewe:

> The reforms were represented as restoring old and proper practices from which departures had been made; they were to uphold the position of the emperor and save him from unnecessary indignity and hardship; and they were to bring economies to

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[640] *Hanshu* 25B.1253-54.

[641] *Hanshu* 25B.1254. The *Hanshu* (25B.1253-57) contains lengthy transcripts of the responses submitted to the emperor, which have been largely translated in Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict*, 171-75. Loewe provides more detail about these debates and transformations to the cult, as does Tian Tian, *Qin-Han guojia jisi shigao*; "The Suburban Sacrifice Reforms and the Evolution of the Imperial Sacrifice."

> the state and reduce the exacting contributions of the populace to the maintenance of the ceremonies.[642]

Additionally, the reforms were perhaps intended to bring the imperial sacrifices once and for all under the domain of the *ru* scholars at court, and prevent any further usurpation of the role of ritual advisor by the *fangshi*.[643] Significantly, the reforms established, once and for all, that the emperor should be the one to offer the most important sacrifices of state, perhaps inadvertently reinforcing the precedent that had been established by Emperor Wu. However, Kuang Heng's reforms, while enacted by the emperor, were not met with unanimous approval. Many objected to the proposed reforms, and the spirits seem to have agreed: on the day the reforms were enacted, a major storm uprooted the Bamboo Palace at Ganquan, and uprooted over one hundred trees in the sacrificial area.[644] The emperor consulted Liu Xiang 劉向 (77 – 6 BCE), who informed him that many objected to his discontinuation of these sacrifices, and that it was dangerous to abandon cults that had been established by one's ancestors, particularly cults that had long pre-dated the Han.[645] In 14 BCE, the sacrifices were reinstated, and the emperor went to personally perform them.[646] Throughout the rest of the Western Han, the emperors' worship alternated between these two systems, but the reforms of 32 proved to be the death knell of the imperial cult

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[642] Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict*, 166.
[643] Fujikawa Masakazu 藤川正數, 漢代における礼学の研究, *Kandai ni okeru reigaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo, Kazama shobo, 1968), 204ff. According to the *Hanshu* (25B.1258), the *fangshi* who had been charged with seeking the immortals were dismissed and sent home at this time.
[644] *Hanshu* 25B.1258.
[645] *Hanshu* 25B.1258.
[646] *Hanshu* 25B.1259. The edict to reinstate the sacrifices was made by the Empress Dowager, and the *Hanshu* notes that this reversal of position was in part due to the fact that the emperor did not as yet have an heir.

worshiped under the Qin and Western Han: in the Eastern Han, imperial cult was established according to Kuang Heng's reforms, with altars to Heaven and Earth offered at altars to the south and north of the new capital at Luoyang.[647] As many scholars have argued, as the central government became better at governing the extremities of the empire, it was no longer necessary for the emperor to travel such great distances in order to demonstrate his authority,[648] but, the sacrificial tours of the early emperors did help to reinforce this authority, and, perhaps ironically, contributed to not only the centralization of government, but to the ultimate centralization of cult around the capital.

The *Taichu* calendar, too, saw changes not long after the reign of Emperor Wu. Debates over whether or not to modify the *Taichu* calendar took place in 78 BCE, and the calendar was changed in 5 CE, and again in 85 CE. There are, I believe, several reasons for this, both technical and ideological. First, the Han, as well as subsequent dynasties, were unwilling to give up the lunar component of their calendar, as the Romans had. As such, any lunisolar calendar will require frequent corrections, through the introduction of intercalary months, and will be prone to slippage. Second, while the institution of the Julian calendar was, as I have argued, connected to the legitimizing rhetoric of the Caesarian dynasty, it was much less symbolically so than its Han counterpart. The Chinese calendar was much more closely linked to ruling legitimacy, and had a longer history of sage rulers "granting the seasons." In some respects, the frequent reforms to the calendrical system in order to inaugurate a new era bear some resemblance to the performances of the *ludi saeculares* by subsequent Roman emperors (see below). When later emperors were

[647] Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict*, 179.
[648] Tian Tian, "The Suburban Sacrifice Reforms and the Evolution of the Imperial Sacrifice," 270.

presented with the opportunity to reform the calendar, based on its failure to align with the observed universe, they took this as a symbol that change needed to be made in order to renew the Mandate of Heaven, but also as an opportunity to demonstrate the receipt of said Mandate, and usher in a new era. As such, the *Taichu* calendar did not "fail," rather it set precedent for subsequent calendrical reforms, and their inclusions in the dynastic histories.

The *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, the ultimate sacrifices offered by Emperor Wu, were not seen again until the Eastern Han, when they were performed by Emperor Guangwu in 56 CE. While the specifics of Guangwu's sacrifice are not preserved, we know that he basically followed the model established by Emperor Wu, though he included more people in the *feng* sacrifice at the summit of Mt. Tai (see Chapter Six). The *feng* and *shan* sacrifices remained rare, and it was not until the Tang that they were performed again. They remained an important part of the mythology surrounding Emperor Wu and the Mandate of Heaven, and his ability to perform them with Heaven's approval testified to the glory of his reign.

In Rome, the system of priestly colleges was maintained without further change into the next centuries; indeed, the colleges themselves were of such antiquity that such a conclusion was inevitable. However, the Augustan precedent of establishing the *princeps* as a member of each of the colleges continued, and the Augustan system provided a "framework for the rest of the imperial period."[649] Both Gaius and Lucius, Augustus' adopted sons, were made members of the Augural and Arval colleges towards the end of the first century BCE, and likely would have been co-opted into the other colleges if not for their untimely deaths (Gaius in 4 CE, and Lucius in 2 CE). Augustus' eventual

[649] Beard, North, and Price, Vol. 1, 168.

successor, Tiberius, came to power at fifty-six years of age, with extensive experience in governing, and within the priestly colleges, unlike the case of succession in the Han. Tiberius had been added to the Pontifical college in 22 BCE, he became member of the Arval Brothers in 23/22 BCE, during its revival, and would go on to become an Augur in 4 CE, and a member of the *Quindecimvir* and *Epulo* colleges in 14 CE. Following the death of Augustus, he became Pontifex Maximus in 15 CE, and while his election to this post followed Republican procedures, paying heed to tradition, it was surely a foregone conclusion.[650] Tiberius was incorporated into each of these colleges over a long period of time, but it did eventually become precedent for the *princeps*, and his heir, to automatically become members of *omnia collegia*. The first literary reference to a *princeps* being incorporated as such does not come until the reign of Titus (r. 79 – 81 CE),[651] yet on the occasion of Nero's adoption by Claudius, in 50 CE, coins were issued with symbols indicating that he had been co-opted as a supernumerary member of each college, thus making visible the imperial family's claim over all religious activity in the city of Rome.[652]

Despite his membership in each of the colleges, Tiberius attempted to minimize his religious role, and avoided religious, and political, accolades, to the extent that Suetonius described him as being "somewhat neglectful of the gods and of religious matters."[653] According to Suetonius, he forbade the voting of temples and other honours to his person,

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[650] Danuta Musial, "The Princeps as the *Pontifex Maximus.* The Case of Tiberius," *Electrum* 21 (2014): 102; van Haeperen, "Des pontifes païens aux pontifes chrétiens," 150-53.
[651] CIL 6.40453. This co-option as a supernumerary member continued until at least the 230s CE. Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum*, 58.
[652] Beard, North, and Price, Vol. 1 188.
[653] Suet. *Tib*. 69. "*Circa deos ac religions neglegentior.*"

and would not allow his birthday to be recognized during the Plebian games.[654] Additionally, he ended the precedent of having a month of the year named after the *princeps*: he refused the month of September for himself, and October for Livia, Augustus' widow.[655] However, he was concerned with maintaining the "traditional" religious institutions; he attempted to abolish foreign cults, particularly those of the Egyptians and Jews, and he banished astrologers from the city of Rome, though he himself as said to have been "addicted to astrology."[656] He also sought to maintain the religious institutions, by ensuring that important priesthoods remained filled, and was willing to update outdated laws in order to do so. As he, like others before him, found it difficult to find anyone willing to serve as *Flamen Dialis*, the high priest of Jupiter, he modified the marriage requirements for the post, so that more men would be willing to occupy it.[657] Membership in the colleges was maintained, but, as in the late-Augustan period, the Pontifical College was still considered the most prestigious. The *princeps*, and later emperor, as a member of each of these colleges, and as the *Pontifex Maximus*, was present and visible at all important sacrifices and celebrations.

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[654] Suet. *Tib*. 26.
[655] Suet. *Tib*. 26.
[656] Suet. *Tib*. 36; 69.
[657] The *Flamen Dialis* was required to be born to parents who were married by the old *confarreatio* method of marriage, whereby the woman would be legally and economically subjugated to her husband. The requirement was changed under Tiberius so that women would only be subordinate to their husbands for religious affairs, thus encouraging more patrician women to marry in this way. Hans-Friedrich Mueller, *Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus* (London, Routledge, 2002), 1-2. However, he did not change the requirement that the *Flamen Dialis* must remain in Rome, thereby prohibiting the priest from leaving the city to take up a governorship. Tac. *Ann*. 3.58-9. On Tiberius' decision making process, see Musial 103-5.

The main development under the reign of Tiberius had its roots in the Augustan period, and that is the worship of the dead emperor's *numen*. While the worship of the divine emperor began with the deification of Julius Caesar, it was under Tiberius, with the worship of the divine Augustus, that emperor worship became a larger part of the state's religious affairs.[658] In 6 CE, Tiberius dedicated an altar on the Palatine to Augustus, next to his home there, to which all four colleges were required to offer sacrifices.[659] While Augustus had been worshiped as divine in the provinces prior to his death,[660] and Julius Caesar was sacrificed to in Rome, this was the first time that Augustus had been offered sacrifice in the city. During the reign of Tiberius, Augustus received a number of honours usually reserved for the gods: a temple was dedicated to him between the Capitol and Palatine, a *flamen* was appointed from Augustus' own family, and a new college, the *sodales Augustales*, was formed, staffed with the leading members of the senatorial elite.[661] Here, too, precedent was set, beginning with Augustus' promotion of the cult to Julius Caesar, and followed by Tiberius. According to Beard, North, and Price, here too,

> the practices of the Augustan age established the basic framework which prevailed for the rest of the imperial period. Emperors and members of their families were given divine honours by vote of the senate only after their death

[658] Julius Caesar had received divine honours prior to his death, which likely contributed to his assassination. Augustus, learning from Caesar's example, refused all such divine honours in Rome, but did ensure that *Divus Julius* received proper worship. The precedent to refer to the deceased emperor as *divi* was set by Julius, and reinforced by the Senate voting divine honours to Augustus after his death. See Gradel, 54-72; 109-39; Weinstock.
[659] Beard, North, and Price, Vol. 1, 207.
[660] On the worship of Augustus in the provinces, see Gradel.
[661] Beard, North, and Price, Vol. 1, 209.

> and then only in recognition of the fact (so the official version went) that they had, by their merits, actually become gods.[662]

Between Augustus and Constantine (r. 306 – 337 CE), approximately half of the new temples built in Rome were dedicated to deified rulers, establishing their prominence in marble in the city of Rome itself.[663] Ultimately, the worship of emperors became, according to Cassius Dio, one of the most important unifying factors in the empire.[664]

Although subsequent iterations of the *ludi saeculares* were based on some elements of Augustan precedent, the games were far too important a political tool to escape manipulation. While the discussions preparing for the Augustan celebration had determined the length of a *saeculum* to be one-hundred or one-hundred and ten years, the longest possible lifespan of a man, later emperors interpreted this differently, so as to be able to inaugurate their own *saeculum*. Claudius, initiating the games in 47 CE, argued that the *saeculum* designated a century, and thus held the games to commemorate the eight-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the city of Rome.[665] His celebration was mocked, however, when heralds invited spectators to "a spectacle such as they had never seen before," as the Augustan games were within living memory for many in Rome, and certain actors performed in both the Augustan and Claudian games.[666] Domitian (r. 81 – 96 CE), celebrated the games in 88 CE, following the Augustan designation of the *saeculum* and effectively ignoring the Claudian celebration.[667] Subsequent *ludi* were performed under

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[662] Ibid.
[663] Ibid., 253.
[664] Ibid., 318. Dio 51.20.7-8.
[665] Suet. *Claud*. 21.2.
[666] Pliny, *HN*. 7.48.159.
[667] Tac. *Ann*. 11.11.1; Suet. *Dom*. 4.3; Zos. 2.4.

Septimus Severus (204 CE) and Philip (248 CE).[668] While the interval of a *saeculum*, established by Augustus, was not followed by the emperors, the basic ritual script for the performance followed the Augustan version.[669] It seems that there was more competition over the right to hold the games, and thus initiate a new *saeculum* than there was over the religious message they delivered. Like the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, the *ludi saeculares* were not available to any emperor: a convergence of favourable omens and a sufficient interval of years was required before an emperor had the opportunity to renew this festival.

The different trajectories of the early Han and Roman reforms to imperial cult would seem, initially, to negate the usefulness of comparison. However, just as the cults themselves hide similar tendencies, so too, the legacies of these reforms obscure shared characteristics of the later periods. In both the reforms of Emperor Wu and of Augustus, the ruler sought to place himself at the centre of all cult activity, ensuring that the ruler had a monopoly on the most important sacrifices of state, and on cosmological affairs. In their pursuits of calendrical reform, Julius Caesar and Emperor Wu bypassed the traditional elites who were charged with regulating time, in favour of those who could offer alternative systems, unencumbered by, but compatible with, historical and mythological iterations of calendrical lore. In their shaping of imperial cult across the empire, and across the city, respectively, Emperor Wu and Augustus incorporated men who could assist them in their goals. For Emperor Wu, this meant relying on the mantic knowledge of the *fangshi*, to the consternation of the textual scholars at court, while Augustus shifted the balance of power

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[668] For the source materials and commentary, see Pighi, 1965.

[669] Melanie Grunow Sobocinski, "Visualizing Ceremony:: The Design and Audience of the Ludi Saeculares Coinage of Domitian," *American Journal of Archaeology* 110.4 (2006): 584. Sobocinski notes in particular that the coinage issued in commemoration of Domitian's games was intended to directly mimic the Augustan coins.

amongst the priesthoods, staffing formerly less important posts with his supporters, and offering them the opportunity to play a more active role in public, religious life. In both cases, these reforms culminated in epoch-making spectacles, demonstrating the imperial order, and eliciting consensus from the elites.

The divergent futures of the imperial cults, the calendars, and the spectacular ceremonies belie the most fundamental commonality between them: that prior to the reigns of Emperor Wu and Augustus, despite the very different political systems of early China and Rome, there was no single arbiter of cult, whereas afterwards, the emperor was the embodiment of each state's sacrificial system.

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