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Zhongxiao Wang

World Views and Military

Policies in the Early Roman

and Western Han Empires

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World Views and Military
Policies in the Early Roman
and Western Han Empires

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Introduction

1. Worldviews in the Roman and Han empires

> *Some chronicler, speaking of Asia, asserted that one man ruled as much land as the sun passed, and his statement was not true because he placed all Africa and Europe outside the limits where the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. It has now however turned out to be true. Your possession is equal to what the sun can pass, and the sun passes over your land. Neither the Chelidonean nor the Cyanean promontories limit your empire, nor does the distance from which a horseman can reach the sea in one day, nor do you reign within fixed boundaries, nor does another dictate to what point your control reaches; but the sea is drawn as a belt without distinction through the middle of the inhabited world and your empire.*[1]

Aristides, *Or.*10

In AD 144 Aelius Aristides (117-181) delivered a panegyric in the city of Rome. In his speech he extolled the grandeur which Rome had achieved under imperial rule. He claimed that the Mediterranean Sea occupied the center of the inhabited and civilized world, and that the Roman emperor ruled an empire without limits. Many centuries later Edward Gibbon referred to the first and second centuries AD as a period of peace, prosperity and order, when Rome achieved universal domination.[2] The optimistic message broadcasted by Aristides echoes the Virgilian notion of the *imperium sine fine*, which stresses the universal character the *imperium Romanum*.

On the other end of the Eurasian landmass, Ban Gu (AD 21-92), a senior official who lived during the early decades of Eastern Han dynasty, formulated a worldview which looks similar to that of Virgil and Aristides. In a fictional dispute between a spokesman from the western capital Chang'an and a speaker originating from the eastern capital Luoyang, the latter supports his claim that Luoyang is the better city by offering the following arguments:

> *Moreover, to dwell in a remote area bordering the Western Rong,*
> *Block by steep barriers in all directions,*
> *And maintain "defense and resistance,"*
> *How can this compare with dwelling in the center of the country,*

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[1] The translation is based on Oliver (1953) 896.
[2] Woolf (1993) 185.

Which is level and flat, open and accessible,
Where a myriad places converge like the spokes of a wheel?
…
You know only the Qin Epang Palace that reaches to the heavens,
And are unaware that the Capital Luo conforms to set regulations.
You recognize that Han valley may serve as a protective pass,
But you do not realize that the true King sets no external boundaries.[3]

Eastern Capital Rhapsody 311-16; 334-37

Can Ban Gu's representation of the world ruled by the Han emperors really be compared to that of Aristides, or are the similarities between the two passages superficial? In other words, did most, or some intellectuals of the Han empire subscribe to a truly universalistic worldview or was the Roman ideology of unbounded empire based on cultural assumptions which have no counterparts in Chinese political ideology?

2. Structure and content

The principal aim of this dissertation is to bring Roman and early Han worldviews and imperial ideologies into sharper focus by carrying out a series comparative studies focusing on the complex connections between worldviews, military policies and cultural ideas regarding the responsibilities and duties of imperial rulers. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the formation and development of worldviews in the pre-imperial societies of Roman Italy and China. Two main questions are raised. How did Romans of the republican period and various intellectuals in pre-Qin China perceive the world, and what is the relationship between pre-imperial perceptions and representations of the world and those worldviews which we find in early-imperial Rome and in Qin and Han China? In the sections of these chapters I will focus on the representations of imperial rules which we find in Augustus' *Res Gestae* and in the stele inscriptions erected by Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the unified Qin empire.

In chapters 3 and 4 I move on to the frontier policies which were pursued by the Roman emperors of the first to early third centuries AD and by the Qin and Han emperors of the late third to late first centuries BC. One of my questions will be whether any differences between the military policies of Roman and Chinese emperors can be perceived. In studying this topic I will pay

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[3] The translation is based on Knechtges (1982) 171.

attention to various factors and considerations which are likely to have shaped imperial policies and to the objectives which individual emperors, or emperors of various sub-periods, were trying to achieve. Finally, I will try to shed some light on the complex interplay between worldviews and actual frontier policies, paying special attention to the question if, or to what extent, long-term changes in frontier policies stimulated the formulation of alternative worldviews or *vice versa*.

Chapter 5 and chapter 6 will focus on the roles which the Roman emperors of the Principate and the Chinese emperors of the Qin and Western Han dynasties were expected to play. What were the relationships between Roman emperors and the army, and to what extent did the search for military glory and prestige continued to stimulate territorial expansion in the period between Augustus' death and that of Septimius Severus? Did Chinese emperors and intellectuals of the Qin and Han periods cultivate close relationships with the army, did Chinese emperors pursue military successes with the aim of bolstering their prestige, or were Chinese ideas about the way in which emperors were supposed to rule, and the images of imperial rule which the Qin and Han emperors were trying to broadcast, differ from what we find in the Roman world of the first two centuries AD?

The ultimate aim of these comparative enquiries is to offer some new insights into the natures of the two empires which were home to almost fifty per cent of the world's population at the beginning of the first millennium AD.[4]

3. Methodologies and problems

The six chapters of this book deal alternately with Rome and China. In this respect I followed the model used by Mutschler and Mittag's *Conceiving Empire, China and Rome Compared* rather than the integrated approach of Scheidel's *Rome and China, Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*.[5] An important advantage of organizing a comparative study of Rome and China in parallel chapters is that it allows a focused, detailed and sustained discussion of clearly

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[4] For the challenges of comparative studies of various aspects of the Greco-Roman world and China, see Scheidel (2013) 1-12; (2015) 5-6.

[5] Mutschler and Mittag (2008); Scheidel (2009). Vasunia in a review article about the two books also notices the differences in approach, see Vasunia (2011) 224, also Scheidel (2015) 6.

defined topics. A potential drawback of this method is that it might result in a book in which similarities and differences are highlighted through iuxtaposition rather than analyzed. In order to avoid this outcome chapters 2, 4 and 6 end with a section in which similarities and differences in worldviews, imperial ideologies, frontier policies and the various roles played by Roman and Chinese emperors are directly compared.

One of the prices which comparative historians have to pay, particularly if they are trying to answer big questions, is that at least some topics can be dealt with only superficially. To give just one example, while Chapter 3 of this dissertation aims to give a general impression of the Roman frontier policies and of some important changes which took place during the first to early third centuries AD, it is not based on a detailed inspection of the situation which existed in each frontier zone at different moments in time, for the obvious reason that such an approach would have been too time-consuming and would therefore have been incompatible with my aim to compare Roman and Chinese frontier policies in a large number of frontier zones and during a period of almost 250 years. Although there can be no doubt that a more detailed examination of the literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence for each frontier would have resulted in a deeper understanding of regional particularities, I derive some consolation from Scheidel's reminder that "a crucial benefit of comparative study lies in its capacity to recognize broad patterns obscured by a preoccupation with "local" details and to identify significant differences between particular cases." [6] Only by taking a wide perspective can crucial differences which existed within and between empires be brought to light.

In my comparative investigations differences will receive more attention than similarities. In recent article Peter Bang has urged comparative historians not to ignore similarities. While this reminder is both timely and useful, however, I have deliberately chose to highlight differences in Roman and Chinese worldviews, military policies and ideas regarding the roles and duties of rulers, for the simple reason that I started my investigations with the aims of highlighting some of the distinctive features of the Roman and Qin-Han empires.[7] Of course, similarities are also important, if only because there would

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[6] Scheidel (2015) 7. For a long-term comparative assessment on social development in eastern and western Eurasia, see Morris (2009); Scheidel (2015) 5, no. 17.
[7] See Bang (2015) 37-38: "In putting the emphasis on similarities, we have been going against the inclination of much humanist research, which has tended to stress the

no point in carrying out a comparative study of two societies which were totally different. However, as Scheidel has pointed out in a recent book, the emphasis on critical differences between two cultures helps us to "identify variables that were critical to particular historical process and outcomes, and allows us to assess the nature of any given ancient state or society within the wider context of pre-modern world history".[8]

In this book I will sometimes use various "big terms", such as "Roman", "Chinese" and "Confucianism". I am keenly aware that these terms as well as many other generalizing concepts have rich but ambiguous meanings. Since completely avoiding them was not a feasible option, I can only hope that the intended meanings, which are often not very specific, will be clarified by the contexts in which they appear.

4. Evidence

For the purposes of this study the literary sources are more important than any other kind of evidence. The main reason for this is because these sources offer the best information on most of the topics which are examined in this dissertation. This is particularly true of worldviews and ideas regarding the various roles which Roman and Chinese emperors were expected to play. Needless to say, the reliability and utility of the surviving literary sources are often in doubt, but that is a problem with which almost all historians have to deal in some way or another.[9] Because this dissertation covers huge spaces and long periods, special attention will be given to the problem of distortions created by anachronistic perceptions. As a general rule I have tried to rely on contemporary literary works rather than on sources which were composed long after the events which they describe.

In addition to the literary sources, some inscriptions also play an important part in this thesis. As has already been explained, a comparative study of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* and the Stele Inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang will

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unique features of societies and therefore privilege the culturally specific or what Clifford Geertz dubbed local knowledge… In short, there is a real risk that nominalism will crowd out analysis here in the desire to emphasize, even celebrate difference and complexity. The scholar may simply end up stating the obvious, in this particular case that Latin was not Chinese and vice versa".

[8] Scheidel (2009) 5.

[9] For a general discussion of literary sources and historical writings in early China, see Lewis (1999). For Rome, see Bispham (2006) 29-50; Damon (2006) 23-35.

be undertaken in the final parts of the first and second chapters. In chapters 3 and 5 other inscriptions will be used as supplementary sources of information. In my discussions of the roles and duties of Roman and Chinese emperors and of the images which they tried to broadcast I will occasionally draw on various types of material evidence, such as coins, sculptures, reliefs and paintings, but these types of evidence have been used mainly to supplement or to correct the picture which emerges from the literary sources. A systematic study of all the evidence relating to all of the topics which will be examined in this dissertation would have expanded the scope of my investigations to unmanageable proportions.

Chapter 1
Roman worldviews during the Republic

1. Introduction

In 220 BC Rome had just recovered from the horror of the invasion by the Gauls and was being dragged into a war against various Illyrian tribes living on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea. Only one year later, the siege and fall of the city of Saguntum triggered a new war between Rome and Carthage.[1] At the outbreak of the Hannibalic War, neither the Romans nor the Carthaginians could foresee that it would last for nearly twenty years or that it would profoundly change the course of world history. The defeat of Carthage itself marked the beginning of a new era of Roman expansion. In the late 160s BC, Polybius revealed an acute sense of the far-reaching changes which had taken place and was shocked by the rise of Roman power throughout the Mediterranean world. In the first book of his *Histories*, he sees the four years between 220 and 216 BC (the 140th Olympiad) as the beginning of "world history".[2] Polybius says that prior to the Second Punic War history had been fragmented; the histories of various regions were unrelated to one another. In other words, before the outbreak of the Second Punic War the histories of Libya, Italy and Asia had unfolded separately. After 218 BC, events in the West and the East had become interlinked and "the affairs of Italy and Libya have been interwoven with those of Asia and Greece, leading to one end."[3] In a short period of a mere fifty-six years, Rome had extended its power from Italy across almost the entire inhabited known world. How could this have happened? The question is raised in the opening of Polybius' *Histories* and prompted him to look for explanations in the rest of his books.[4]

In reality, at the time of Polybius' death (c. 118 BC) Rome had not yet

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[1] For the origins of the Second Punic War, see Astin (1967) 577–596.
[2] Polyb. 1,3,1.
[3] Polyb. 1,3,3-4.
[4] Polyb. 1,5. On the interactions between the Romans and the Hellenistic world in the work of Polybius, see Walbank (1963) 1-13; Derow (1979) 1-15. For the notion of universal history and the concept of space in the eyes of Polybius, see Clarke (1999) 77-127; For reflections on Polybius' Roman mastery of the world in book 6, see Erskine (2013) 231-247.

completed the conquest of the entire world.[5] The final stage of Roman expansion in Asia Minor and the Near East did not take place until the time of Pompey in the 60s BC. Only in the 50s BC were central and northern Gaul conquered by Caesar's legions. Egypt became a province in 30 BC, and south-west Germany, Britain, Judaea and Dacia passed into Roman hands after the establishment of the Principate. Although the Romans continued to covet the empire of Parthia for centuries, the annexation of the Iranian plateau never happened, let alone the acquisition of the exotic Indian lands conquered by Alexander the Great.[6]

As this chapter will show, the fact that a large part of the known world had not been conquered did not stop Augustus from claiming Roman supremacy throughout the *orbis terrarum*. During Augustus' reign Polla, a sister of Marcus Agrippa, began the construction of the *Porticus Vipsania*. This building was unfinished at the time of Agrippa's death in 12 BC but was completed by Augustus. According to Pliny, in this building Agrippa planned "to set the world before the city for inspection".[7] This statement has been interpreted as referring to a map of the world but, as Brodersen has pointed out, Pliny might be referring to an inscription listing or describing the various parts of the inhabited world.[8] However Pliny's words are interpreted, there can be no doubt that the *Porticus Vipsania* with its map or inscription was intended to be an emblem of Augustan world rule.

The final decades of the third century BC not only marked the beginning of a new phase in "universal history" in the Mediterranean world. In 220 BC, at the other end of the Eurasian continent, the state of Qin 秦 had just ended its wars against the other six states and ultimately unified China, an area completely unknown to all but a handful of Greeks and Romans. Chronologically, the

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[5] It is extremely doubtful whether anyone in Rome was toying with the idea of conquering of the world in the time of Polybius. As both Derow and Gruen have pointed out, we must distinguish between the accomplishment of "worldwide supremacy" and world domination as a military and political goal. See Derow (1979); Gruen (1984) 286; Clarke (1999) 116.

[6] About the growth of Roman imperialism from the early second century BC in the aftermath of the Hannibalic War to the age of Julius Caesar, see the brief overviews of Badian (1968) 1-16 and Lintott (1993) 6-15. For the Roman view of India, see Whittaker (2004) 144-62.

[7] Pliny *HN* 3,17.

[8] Nicolet (1991) 95-121 follows the traditional view that Pliny is referring to a world map. But see the criticisms of Brodersen (1995) 268-285.

establishment of the Chinese empire, which has been designated the "Great Unity" (Da yitong 大一統), took place slightly earlier than the rise of Rome to super-power status in the Mediterranean.[9] In the same year in which the Romans began to build the Via Flaminia between Rome and the Latin colony of Ariminum (220 BC), the new government of Qin was equally ambitiously implementing the imperial highway system.[10] Sima Qian 司馬遷 says that during the reign of Qin Shi Huang (r. 221 – 216 BC), the first emperor of Qin, two large-scale palace-construction projects were carried out in Xianyang 咸陽, the capital of the new empire. In 220 BC the First Emperor built the Xin Palace 信宮 near the south bank of the River Wei 渭河. Shortly afterwards, it was renamed the Ji Temple 極廟 to symbolize the ultimate power of heaven. In 212 BC, Qin Shi Huang began to construct a garden called Shanglin 上林苑 and the famous palace of Epang 阿房宮 on the same site. Besides these building activities, between the palace of Epang and the South Mountain 南山, a huge bridge was erected spanning the River Wei, to connect the new buildings with the capital, Xianyang. On a symbolic level, this bridge referred to the fact that the constellation of the Big Dipper and Polaris had crossed the Galaxy and met the star Encampment (part of the constellation of Pegasus). As such, it reflected the way in which the First Emperor imagined the universe.

There are good reasons to think that the First Emperor's mausoleum, located at the foot of Li Mountain 驪山, about ten miles northwest of the city of Xianyang, also reflected ideas about the celestial and temporal worlds.[11] Since excavations of the mausoleum complex have not been carried out so far, scholars have very limited knowledge about the structure of the inner chambers and the objects they contain.[12] However, thanks to the vivid and detailed description of Sima Qian, it is possible to shed some light on this giant

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[9] For discussion on the paradigm of "Great Unity" of Chinese history, see Pines (2000) 280-324.

[10] The large-scale constructions of the Qin included the making of the "Straight Road" (Zhidao 直道) and the imperial highways (Chidao 馳道), see Shelach (2011) 122; 131-32. On the construction of the Straight Road, see *Shiji* 6, 256; *ibid.* 110, 2885-86; Shi Nianhai 史念海 (1991) 435-453.

11. On the construction of the palaces in imperial Qin, see *Shiji* 6: Bodde (1986) 54; Lewis (2006) 156-158; 171-175.

[12] For discussions about the latest findings to do with the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, see Thote and Von Falkenhausen (2008). For the latest review concerning the untouched mausoleum see Shelach (2013).

monument. Sima Qian's account records that the ceiling of the burial chamber was decorated with jewels depicting the sun, the moon and the stars. The chamber also contained other spectacular features such as miniature palaces, pavilions with flowing rivers and surging oceans made of mercury. If the narrative of Sima Qian is authentic, there is no reason to doubt that the First Emperor attempted to connect the earthly and celestial worlds, thereby constructing a complex universal network to fit the cognitive map of the universe in his mind.[13]

After ending periods of intense military conflict and restoring peace and order, the founders of the Roman and Qin empires each made an attempt to proclaim their successes to the world. In doing so, they disseminated visible images of the world through the media of coinage, architecture, sculpture and other works of art. Both emperors also left behind important documents eulogizing their virtues and their accomplishments in establishing their "universal" empires. The documents in question are the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* and the Stele Inscriptions of the First Emperor of Qin. Each of these texts contains important information about the world views which the first Roman and first Chinese emperor sought to disseminate, thereby allowing us to study similarities and differences between Roman and Chinese conceptions of "world domination".[14] In these texts Qin Shi Huang and Augustus used the terms *tianxia* and *orbis terrarum* to refer to the geographical dimensions of imperial power. At first sight, the meanings of these terms are very similar, but closer scrutiny reveals they had very different connotations in their respective cultural and political contexts.

The first two chapters of this book are devoted to the emergence of the

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[13] Lewis (2006) 172-3.
[14] There is no need to reiterate the importance of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* in studies of the political history of Roman Principate. Named "the queen of inscriptions" by Mommsen, it provides an invaluable insight for our understanding of Roman political ideology of Augustan and later periods. The text of *Res Gestae* has been translated into many languages (e.g. for the Chinese version, see Zhang Nan and Zhang Qiang, 2007). For the latest English translation and commentary, see Cooley (2009). The stele inscriptions commemorating the achievements of Qin Shi Huang, originally eight in number, were all inscribed in stone and set up on mountains. Six of them were preserved in Sima Qian's *Shiji*. The text of one of the two inscriptions missing from Sima Qian's work is known from a copy made during the Tang dynasty, but the other one has been lost. Systematic modern research on the inscriptions started with Rong Geng (1935) 125-71. The seven Qin stele inscriptions are discussed and analyzed in Kern (2000).

Roman and Chinese ideologies of "world domination" and more specifically to a study of the semantics of various terms used in texts broadcasting these ideologies. In each case, I shall begin by examining how the ancient Chinese and the Romans imagined the world prior to the establishment of the Qin and Augustan empires. Focusing on the seemingly parallel terms *orbis terrarum* and *tianxia*, I shall first analyse the text of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* and then that of the Stele Inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang in an attempt to capture the worldviews of the emperors responsible for their creation. Building on the findings which will emerge from these textual enquiries, I shall offer an explanation of the strikingly different imperial world views which emerge from the Roman and Chinese material.

2. Roman worldviews during the Middle and Late Republic

In Roman Italy historical writing began with Fabius Pictor, who was active during the final years of the third century BC.[15] However, Fabius wrote his history in Greek. The first historical book written in Latin was Cato's *Origines*, which appeared a couple of decades after Fabius Pictor's account. For the study of early Roman history, ancient historians have to rely on archaeological evidence and, to a lesser extent, on various works written by Greek authors during the second and first centuries BC. Unquestionably, the Romans had developed their own concepts of space and geography as early as the Regal period, but the evidence relating to Roman worldviews during the Monarchy and during the first three centuries of the Republic is too meagre to offer a basis for systematic research.[16]

In 509 BC Rome concluded a treaty with Carthage which contained provisions concerning Roman traders doing business in Sardinia, Sicily and North Africa. Nevertheless, politically the geographical horizon of the Romans remained confined to the area between Veii and Tarracina.[17] During the fourth and early third centuries BC, Roman power was extended northwards to the Pisa-Rimini line and southwards to the Ionian Sea. In 268 BC a map of *Italia*

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[15] On the primary literary sources of the early Roman Republic, see Cornell (1995) 1-26; Bispham (2007) 29-51.
[16] On the views of cosmology and space in the Roman tradition, Whittaker gives a brief introduction in his first chapter. See Whittaker (2004) 10-30. Others, see Brodersen (2010).
[17] Pol. 3,23.

was set up in the temple of *Tellus* (Earth) by the Roman consul P. Sempronius Sophus. This map probably showed peninsular Italy.[18] About a century later, Cato famously referred to the Alps as a wall protecting Italy, but in another passage he refers to Gallia Cisalpina as lying outside Italy, suggesting that, as late as the first half of the second century BC, at least two different concepts of "Italy" coexisted and also that, depending on the context, the ideological boundaries of *Italia* might be constructed differently.[19]

In his account of the year 197 BC, Livy reports that various Greek states sent ambassadors to Rome in order to persuade the Senate to continue the war against Philip V of Macedon. Livy writes, "What especially impressed the Senate was their elucidation of the geography of the area in question, of the sea and the land. This made it clear to everyone that, if the king held Demetrias in Thessaly, Chalcis in Euboea and Corinth in Achaea, Greece could not be free ...."[20] This episode shows that as late as the early second century BC members of the Roman elite were still inadequately acquainted with the geography of mainland Greece.

The concept of *orbis terrarum* does not appear to have developed until the late Republic. The obvious explanation for this is that Roman worldviews developed as a result of military conquest and territorial expansion beyond the Italian Peninsula after the First Punic War.[21] Nevertheless, it is clear that during the Middle and Late Republic Roman geographical and cosmological conceptions were in some ways influenced by ancient Greek and Hellenistic thought.[22] During the past century, Greek theories about the universe and the inhabited *oikoumene* from Homer to the death of Alexander the Great have received considerable scholarly attention.[23] The inevitable starting point is

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[18] Varro *RR* 1,2,1; Florus, 1,19,2. For modern discussions see Williams (2001) 37; Bispham (2007) 56.

[19] Cato F85P (= iv. 10C) and F39P (= ii. 9c). Cf. Bispham (2007) 59. For the evolving notion of *Italia* during the Republic, see Dench (2005) 152-221; Bispham (2007) 53-73.

[20] Livy 32,37.

[21] Only in the early first century BC was *imperium* related to the *orbis terrarum* in literature. For some examples: Cic. *De imp. Cn. Pomp.* 53; Cat. 4,11; *Rosc. Am.* 131; *Off.* 2,27; *Inv. rhet.* 4,13. For the meaning of the phrase *orbis terrarum*, see Nicolet (1991) 31; Gruen (1984) 274.

[22] For the relations between Greeks and Romans and the influences of ancient Greek culture on the Roman aristocratic society in the Republic, see Rawson (1985) 3-38. Especially for the impacts of Greek geographical thought on the later Romans, see Rawson (1985) 250-67; Momigliano (1971).

[23] Nicolet (1991) 57-85. On the idea of the *oikoumene*, see Gisinger (1937) = Gisinger, Oikoumenē, *RE* 2123-74.

Homer's depiction of the inhabited *oikoumene* as a huge island encircled by the boundless Ocean, an idea which remained popular in the Archaic and Classical periods.[24]

Pytheas of Massalia, a Greek adventurer and geographer who lived in the fourth century, for example, wrote two books, a *Description of the Earth,* and a treatise *On the Ocean.* Of these works, only a few fragments survive.[25] It appears that Pytheas expanded existing geographical knowledge on the basis of his voyages and expeditions to the northern and western parts of the Mediterranean world. [26] As a result of further research carried out by Dicaearchus of Messana (c. 350 – 285 BC), Aristarchus of Samos (310 – 230 BC) and, especially, by Eratosthenes of Cyrene (c. 276 – 195 BC), who is widely regarded as the most erudite scholar of the third century, cartographical theories were raised to a higher level as the standard of geographical and astronomical knowledge grew. Nevertheless, with regard to the general understanding of the *oikoumene*, Eratosthenes still maintained the Homeric model, seeing the world as an indivisible entity surrounded by vast oceans.[27]

There is no agreement in the sources on what else remained beyond the ocean, although a number of Hellenistic scholars seem to have believed that there was more than one *oikoumene* in existence.[28] Crates of Mallos, a Greek Stoic philosopher and grammarian living in the second century BC, proposed that the globe was divided by the ocean into four zones which were symmetrically positioned in four directions.

When Latin authors use the expression *orbis terrarium* to refer to the inhabited world in its entirety, their conception of what this world looked like is indistinguishable from that of their Classical and Hellenistic predecessors.[29] Cicero, for instance, believed that the inhabited world was encircled by an

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[24] On the world visions of the ancient Greeks from the time of Hesiod to Alexander the Great, see Romm (1994). Herodotus, for instance, did not believe in the existence of a river of Ocean flowing around the whole earth. See Her. 4,36.

[25] See Mette (1952).

[26] He wrote two books, at least as far as we know: *On the Ocean* and *Description of the Earth*, of both of which only fragments remain. See Nicolet (1991) 60. For the itinerary of Pytheas, see Dion (1977) 189-99.

[27] About the development of geographical knowledge in the Hellenistic period, see Nicolet (1991) 60-2.

[28] Homer seems to have believed that the world had boundaries. In Book Nine of the Odyssey, he depicts the coastline of Polyphemus' island as the boundary of the Earth. See Hom. *Od.* 9,284; Romm (1994) 12.

[29] See Nicolet (1991) 15-31; Gruen (1984) 273-5.

immense ocean.[30] He also relates the dream of Scipio Africanus in which the Earth is said to consist of two zones, the north and the south, with the Greeks and Romans both living in the north, and conjectures that, had Alexander the Great lived longer, he might have crossed the vast ocean.[31] His contemporary, Sallust, records that Sertorius was forced to flee to the edge of the known inhabited world, the ocean, to escape from his enemies.[32] A couple of decades later, Virgil and Horace appealed to Augustus to pursue his world conquest, carrying Roman arms beyond the encircling Ocean, and conquering every piece of land on Earth.[33] Strabo says that, although the eastern and southern limits of the *oikoumene* were still unknown, they presumably bordered on the ocean.[34] The same idea is to be found in the works of Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder in the Early Imperial period.[35]

These examples clearly show that Roman ideas about the *oikoumene* were heavily influenced by Classical and Hellenistic geographical thought, a consequence of the increasing interaction with the Hellenistic world after the third century BC.[36] As the extant literary sources are too scarce to permit a thorough examination of the matter, to what degree such a worldview was in accord with that of the early Romans has to remain unknown. However, it has to be remembered that, before the mid-third century BC, Rome was a traditional agrarian society in which most people were peasants who knew little about seafaring.[37] The first Roman navy was created at the time of the First Punic War, and it was only then that the Senate began to conceive the possibility of establishing Roman military power in the western Mediterranean.

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[30] Cic. *Rep.* 4,31.

[31] Cic. *Rep.* 6,20; 4,31. The tale that Alexander the Great had ambitiously planned to cross over the Ocean and conquer the whole world is described only by Cicero, but hints of it are also seen in the writings of other Roman authors. See Quint. *Inst.* 3,8,16; Sen. *Ep.* 119.7; Luc. 10,36,41.

[32] Sall. *Hist.* 1,102.

[33] Verg. *G.* 1,25-31; *Aen* 6,785-88; 8,226-27; Hor. *Carm.* 1,12,57; Ov. *Fast.* 4,857-62.

[34] Strab. 1,1,8.

[35] Pomponius Mela, a geographer living in Rome during the reign of Claudius, wrote 3 books entitled *De chorographia* (*Description of Regions*). He thought that the Earth consisted of two hemispheres and was divided into five climatic zones, wholly surrounded by the Ocean. See Pompon. 1,5; 3,45. His work became the main source for Pliny the Elder's description of the world. Plin. *HN* 2,2405f.

[36] For general upper-class Roman attitudes to the Hellenistic culture, see Gruen (1984) 204-72.

[37] Rosenstein (2004) 3.

3. The emergence of the idea of world domination during the late Republic

As the result of the First Punic War, Sicily became Rome's first overseas province in 241 BC. Only three years later, Sardinia and Corsica were annexed. After the battle of Zama (202 BC), Rome became the mistress of the western Mediterranean, enabling it to shift some of its focus of attention to the East. Although threats from northern Italy during the first decades of the second century retarded the pace of conquest in the East, Rome managed to intervene in the affairs of the Hellenistic world and triumphed over Philip V of Macedon and the Seleucid king Antiochus III.[38] It is noteworthy that these successes did not immediately result in the creation of new provinces in the eastern Mediterranean. Although Macedon and Asia became Roman provinces in 146 BC and 129 BC, large-scale annexations of eastern territory did not happen until the time of Sulla and Pompey in the next century.[39] Syria was not transformed into a province until after the Battle of Dastria in 66 BC. The eastward expansion came to a temporary halt in 53 BC when M. Licinius Crassus lost his legions at Carrhae.[40] Julius Caesar planned to campaign against the Parthian Empire but was assassinated before he could carry out this project.[41] In an attempt to surpass Octavian in terms of military achievements, Mark Antony mounted his Persian campaign in 37 BC but achieved few lasting results.[42] Not until the time of Augustus, in 20 BC, did Rome manage to reclaim the Roman standards which had been in Parthian possession and then did so by diplomatic means.[43]

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[38] For the contacts between Rome and the Hellenistic world in the early stages, see Arthur Eckstein's recent book: Eckstein (2008). For the policies of the Roman state in the East in the second century BC, see Sherwin-White (1984) 18-121.

[39] By 103 BC, the number of overseas provinces of Rome had risen to eleven. Most were located in the western half of the Mediterranean world. They were: Sicily (241), Sardinia (238), Corsica (238), Hispania Ulterior (197), Hispania Citerior (197), Cisalpine Gaul (191), Macedon (146), Africa (146), Asia (129), Transalpine Gaul (121) and Cilicia (103). Illyricum was a Roman protectorate from 167 BC but does not seem to have become a separate province having its own provincial administration until the late 30s BC.

[40] Cass. Dio 40,21-4; Plut. *Crass.* 23-7.

[41] On Caesar's plan, see Suet. *Jul.* 44,3.

[42] On M. Antony's disastrous Parthian campaign, see Cass. Dio 49,23-28; Plut. *Ant.* 37-50.

[43] For the retrieval of the standards from the hands of Parthian king Phraates, see Cass. Dio 54,8. The Roman wars in the East and Roman foreign policies from the mid-

Ever since the late nineteenth century, there has been a lengthy and fierce debate about the driving forces behind Roman imperialism during the Republic. [44] Commencing with Mommsen, some have argued that Rome's territorial expansion was driven mainly by the wish to obtain security by eliminating external threats (T. Mommsen, Maurice Holleaux, de Sanctis, T. Frank, and H. H. Scullard). Against this hypothesis, many other scholars have maintained that Roman expansion was stimulated by the prospect of tangible profits and martial *gloria* (W. Harris, P. Brunt and K. Hopkins, E. Gruen and N. Rosenstein). Yet another group of researchers emphasizes the importance of such psychological drives as greed, fear and shame, or a mixture of such sentiments (J. Rich, S. Mattern, J. Peristiany). Whatever the view adopted, Roman society was characterized by a high-level of militarism. Constant wars and campaigns were part and parcel of the state of Rome for centuries, fostering a competitive and highly militaristic culture. As Eckstein has recently pointed out, such a warlike and aggressive culture was not a uniquely Roman feature but a common characteristic of states in the Mediterranean world, and hence should not be seen as the key to Rome's success. In his view, the success of Rome was largely built on its remarkable capacity to absorb the resources of newly conquered territories and people for the next round of military expansion.[45]

Whatever view is taken on the driving forces behind Roman expansion during the Republic, it cannot be denied that Rome was a thoroughly militaristic society. During the Republic, Roman aristocrats had to serve in the army for ten years, and military service was a requirement for access to political office. The military participation rate of the citizen population was very high. During the second century BC, approximately ten per cent of the adult male citizen population served in the army in each year. During the wars of the first century BC, this ratio rose to one-third.[46] Another statistic shows that more than half of all Roman citizens regularly served in the army for seven years in the early second century BC.[47] It is also generally accepted that military success brought

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second century BC to the Augustan period are surveyed by Sherwin-White (1984).

[44] Erskine offers a lucid overview of approaches to the nature of Roman imperialism over the one hundred years since Mommsen, see Erskine (2010) 33-49.

[45] See Eckstein (2006) and (2008) 16-19 and 187-88.

[46] Brunt (1971) iv.

[47] Hopkins (1978) 32-5; Finley (1985) 68. For Roman manpower and recruitment during the Middle Republic, see De Ligt (2007); For publications and scholarly debates on the problems of Roman demography in the last decades, see Scheidel (2008); De

enormous material, social and political rewards. All of these factors helped to drive Roman expansion forwards, but for a long time no clear concept of the ultimate territorial objectives of this process emerged.

So, exactly when did Roman politicians, generals or intellectuals conceive of the idea that Rome might be on the way to achieving mastery of the entire world?

In Arrian's *Anabasis*, Alexander the Great is credited with having had the plan to conquer the entire inhabited world. When his army refused to advance farther into India, for instance, Alexander is said to have given a speech in which he tried to persuade his men to follow him to the Eastern Ocean. In Book Seven, Arrian reports that some writers believed that Alexander intended to sail round Arabia, Ethiopia and Libya, so as to press forward beyond Mount Atlas and conquer Libya and Carthage. Other writers have credited Alexander with the intention of attacking the Scythians living near the Sea of Azov or with the plan of invading Italy.[48]

It has been plausibly suggested that the theme of world domination which surfaces in the sources recounting Alexander's conquests was borrowed from the cultures of the Ancient Near East, where Assyrian and Persian kings had claimed control of the four corners of the earth.[49] During the three centuries following Alexander's death, various Hellenistic monarchs tried to emulate Alexander's example and repeated his ideological claims. The ideal of establishing universal rule after the conquest of vast territories and multitudes of peoples can be found in texts relating to the achievements of various monarchs of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires. The most famous example is the *Res Gestae* of Ptolemy III Euergetes (r. 246 – 222 BC), which contains the following account of his achievements during the Third Syrian War:

> *Ptolemy, the Great King..., paternal descendant of Heracles, son of Zeus, and mother's side of Dionysus, son of Zeus, after he had inherited his father's dominion over Egypt, Libya, Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Lycia, Caria and the islands of the Cyclades, he marched out into Asia with infantry and horsemen and elephants from the land of the Troglodytes and from Ethiopia, which his father and he was the first to hunt from these lands and, after bringing them to Egypt, equipped them for military use. Having gained possession (kyrieusas) of all the land on this side of the Euphrates, of Kilikia, Pamphylia, Ionia, the Hellespont, Thrace, and of all the*

Ligt (2012), in particular Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, 79-192.
[48] Arr. *Anab.* 5,26; 7,2.
[49] Strootman (2014) 120-37.

forces in these countries and of the Indian elephants, and having made all the rulers of these areas his subjects, he crossed the river Euphrates, and having subdued Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Sousiana, Persis, Media and the rest of the land as far as Bactria, and having sought out all the sacred objects that had been carried out of Egypt by the Persians, and having brought them back to Egypt together with the rest of the treasures from these areas, he sent his forces across the rivers (canals) that were dug out . . .[50]

Similar ideological statements are to be found in Appian's account of the far-flung conquest of Seleucus Nicator (r. 306-281 BC):

He acquired Mesopotamia, Armenia, 'Seleucid' Cappadocia, Persis, Parthia, Bactria, Arabia, Tapouria, Sogdia, Arachosia, Hyrcania, and other adjacent peoples that had been subdued by Alexander, as far as the river Indus, so that the boundaries of his empire were the most extensive in Asia after that of Alexander. The whole region from Phrygia to the Indus was subject to Seleucus.[51]

In his attempt to emulate Alexander, one of the most dynamic and successful Seleucid kings, Antiochus III (r. 222-187 BC), claimed the title of *Megas Basileus*, a term borrowed from the Persian tradition.[52] Likewise, Hannibal's spectacular march into Italy was said to have been encouraged by the example of Alexander the Great's military expedition to the Persian Empire.[53]

Various pieces of evidence suggest that the example set by Alexander and the claims to universal rule which were formulated by some of his successors had a major impact not only on Roman ideas about generalship but also on formulations of the ultimate goals of imperial conquest. Scipio Africanus was probably the first Roman general to model himself on Alexander.[54] Nevertheless, it took at least another century for the Hellenistic concept of world domination to find its way into Roman ideology.

A key figure in this process was Pompey the Great, another general whose aspirations for glory were inspired by the accomplishments of Alexander the Great.[55] Diodorus describes the results of Pompey's campaigns in the East

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[50] *OGIS* 54; cf. Austin (2006) 466, no. 268; Sage (1996): no. 275; Chaniotis (2005) 58.
[51] App. *Syr.* 55.
[52] On the name, see Ma (1999) 273-76. About Antiochus III's emulation of Alexander the Great, see *ibid.* 273.
[53] Hoyos (2003) 105.
[54] Weippert is critical of the Alexander *imitatio* by Scipio Africanus. See Weippert (1970) 55.
[55] According to Sallust, "Pompey from his early manhood, influenced by what his

in language which is strongly reminiscent of the ideological claims of various Hellenistic kings:

> *Pompeius Magnus, son of Gnaeus, imperator, freed the coasts of the world and all the islands within the Ocean from the attacks of pirates. He rescued from siege the kingdom of Ariobarzanes, Galatia and the territories and provinces beyond there, Asia and Bithynia. He protected Paphlagonia, Pontus, Armenia and Achaia, also Iberia, Colchis, Mesopotamia, Sophene and Gordyene. He subjugated Dareius king of the Medes, Artocles king of the Iberians, Aristobulus king of the Jews, and Aretas king of the Nabataean Arabs, also Syria next to Cilicia, Judaea, Arabia, the province of Cyrenaica, the Achaeans, Iazygi, Suani and Heniochi, and the other tribes that inhabit the coast between Colchis and Lake Maeotis, together with the kings of these tribes, nine in number, and all the nations that dwell between the Pontic Sea and the Red Sea. He extended the borders of the empire up to the borders of the world. He maintained the revenues of the Romans, and in some cases he increased them.*[56]

Plutarch's biography of Pompey describes the latter's achievements in very similar terms:

> *Inscriptions borne in advance of the procession indicated the nations over which Pompey triumphed. these were: Pontus, Armenia, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, Media, Colchis, Iberia, Albania, Syria, Cilicia, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia and Palestine, Judaea, Arabia … and cities not much under nine hundred in number, besides eight hundred pirate ships, while thirty-nine cities had been founded … But that which most enhanced his glory and had never been the achievement of any Roman before, was that he celebrated his third triumph over the third continent. For others before him had celebrated three triumphs; but he celebrated his first over Libya (Africa), his second over Europe, and his last over Asia, so that he seemed in a way to have included the whole world in his three triumphs.*[57]

According to Velleius Paterculus, Pompey set up three monuments, each representing a continent that he had conquered.[58]

Pompey's claim that he had established Roman power throughout the inhabited world was clearly influenced by Hellenistic imperial ideology, with

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supporters said, thinking that he would be the equal of King Alexander, sought to rival his deeds and plans". See Sall. *Hist.* 3,88. For Pompey's emulation of Alexander the Great, see Weippert (1970) 56-104.

[56] Diod. Sic. 40,4.
[57] Plut. *Pomp.* 45; Cass. Dio 49,40,2 -41,3.
[58] Vell. Pat. 2,40,4.

which the Romans had become familiar during the second and first centuries BC. Considering the example set by Pompey, it is not surprising to find Crassus attempting to invade and conquer Parthia, and Caesar's conquest of Gaul as well as his expedition to Britain could be presented in the same light. In 34 BC Mark Antony declared Cleopatra VII Queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya and Coele Syria. To Cleopatra's son by Julius Caesar, Caesarion, he granted the title King of Kings, giving him sovereignty over the vassal kings and cities of the Middle East. Of course, Octavian presented this act as proof that Antony had been manipulated to the point at which he was prepared to betray the interests of the Roman people. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Antony's seemingly "insane" behaviour made perfect sense from the point of view of Hellenistic practice and ideology.[59]

After defeating his opponents in 31 BC, Octavian boasted that he had brought peace to the Roman empire. Nevertheless, new wars against external enemies were launched, marking a new phase of bold expansionism which lasted until the later years of Augustus' reign. Augustus' presentation of these military successes and the ideology of conquest which emerges from his account will be examined in the final part of this chapter.

4. *Imperium sine fine* and the idea of Roman world domination

Once Augustus had secured his position, the Roman legions were moved to the periphery of the empire. During the next two centuries most wars were fought far away from Italy.[60] Ever since Edward Gibbon, Roman historians have used the expression *Pax Romana* to refer to the relatively peaceful period which now commenced for most inhabitants of Italy and the Mediterranean provinces of the empire.[61] Of course, the quasi-disappearance of warfare from these core regions by no means implies that Roman emperors began to adopt anti-militaristic policies, or that the incentives which had driven Roman imperialism during the Republic no longer existed. In fact, a positive attitude to warfare and imperial expansion remained important elements in mainstream ideology. Soon after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, Virgil vigorously celebrated Roman

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[59] This view is elucidated in Strootman (2014).
[60] For the transformation, see Cornell (1993) 139-70.
[61] Weinstock points out that *pax*, in the Augustan context, connotes security and order, rather than tranquility. See Weinstock (1960) 33-58; Galinsky (2005) 115. Discussion on the concept of *pax Romana*, see Woolf (1993) 179.

dominion over the Mediterranean world and fictitiously represents various peoples living beyond the boundaries of the Roman empire, among them Britons, Parthians and Indians, as having been subjected to Rome's supremacy.[62] Horace also expresses the wish that Augustus will conquer the Parthians and Scythians living in the peripheral parts of the *oikoumene*.[63] As agent and representative of Jupiter, Augustus has spread the power of the Romans all over the inhabited world. Ovid expresses similarly optimistic ideas about Rome's expansion throughout the entire world. He claims that, under Augustus, the expanse controlled by the city of Rome had become conterminous with the entire world (*Romanae spatium est urbis et orbis idem*).[64] He urges Augustus to undertake the long-awaited march to the East and finally subdue the Parthians by force. In a similar vein, Livy, at the beginning of his *Ab urbe condita*, predicts that it was Rome's destiny to be "the head of the world".[65]

The theme of Rome's world conquest was propagated not only in literature but also in a wide range of visual media. For example, a coin minted between 32 and 29 BC depicts an image of the Roman goddess Victoria standing on a globe, with a wreath and a palm frond in her hands, signifying Rome's domination of the world.[66] Other visual materials used to present Rome's world ascendancy include Agrippa's map. From Pliny the Elder's account, we know that it was displayed on the wall of *Porticus Vipsania*.[67] Despite this information, whether or not it was a real, graphic map remains a matter of dispute. According to Servius, Augustus constructed a *porticus ad nationes*, in which he displayed statues from almost all known peoples of the world. A giant statue of Hercules stood at the entrance, symbolizing that Rome's domination had spread over the entire *oikoumene*.[68] As we will see, such

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[62] Verg. *G.* 3,16-33; 2,169-70.

[63] Hor. *Serm.* 2,1,10-15.

[64] Ov. *Fast.* 2,684. On the one hand, Ovid sings of peace, on the other hand he expresses the hope that people of all the corners of the world will fear the offspring of Aeneas. See Ov. *Fast.* 4,857-863.

[65] Livy 1,16,7: *caput orbis terrarum.*

[66] Globes on coinage as symbol of Roman domination of the known world were popular throughout the last decades of the Republic and in the early Principate. For some instances, see *RRC*, nos. 393; 397; 409,2; 449,4; 464,3; 465,8, 480,6; 594,5 etc. *BMC*, 1 no. 217. Discussions of the numismatic evidence include Gruen (1984) 274, n.5; Brunt (1990) 477; and Nicolet (1991) 41; 51, n. 29.

[67] Plin. *HN* 3,17. Scholarly discussion on Agrippa's map in Pliny's account, see Levi (1987) 17; Zanker (1988) 143; Whittaker (2004) 66; 78-79; Nicolet (1991) 100-12. Brodersen strongly opposes the existence of the map; see Brodersen (1995) 268.

[68] Mattern (1999) 183.

an open, all-encompassing mental world map contrasts sharply with the closed, exclusive worldview held by the First Emperor of China.

Another important representation of the known world (*orbis terrarum*) linked to Augustus' ambitious worldwide military conquests is to be found in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*. A large part of the text (Chapters 25-33) is devoted to Rome's military expansion throughout the inhabited world after 27 BC.[69] One of the focal points of the *Res Gestae* is a long enumeration of remote towns, rivers and peoples (*gentes*). As Nicolet has pointed out, of these names, many are referred to in Latin for the first time in this document.[70] By highlighting so many unfamiliar names and displaying them to the public in Rome, the centre of Roman power, these chapters promulgate the martial greatness of the Roman people and of Augustus in particular.

The expression *orbis terrarum* appears twice in the text of *Res Gestae*:[71]

i. *rerum gestarum divi Augusti, quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit...*[72]
[Account] of the achievements of the deified Augustus, by which he made the *orbis terrarum* subject to the rule of the Roman people…

ii. *bella terra et mari civilia externaque toto in orbe terrarum saepe gessi…*[73]
I have often conducted wars on land and at sea, civil wars as well as foreign ones, across the entire world…

In the second of these passages Augustus refers to the military successes achieved by him "by land and sea" (*terra marique*). This expression is also found in two other passages:

iii. *Ianum Quirinum, quem claussum esse maiores nostri voluerunt, cum per totum imperium populi Romani terra marique esset parta victoriis pax...*
Our ancestors wanted [the temple of] Janus Quirinus to be closed when peace had been achieved by victories on *terra marique* throughout the Roman Empire…[74]

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[69] Cooley (2009) 36.
[70] For Augustus' primary concern with Roman society, see Nicolet (1991) 21.
[71] My translations of passages from the *Res Gestae* are based on Cooley (2009).
[72] Heading of the *Res Gestae*.
[73] *RG* 3,1.
[74] *RG* 13.

iv. *ob res a me aut per legatos meos auspicis meis terra marique prospere gestas quinquagiens et quinquiens decrevit senatus supplicandum esse dis immortalibus.*[75]
On account of affairs successfully accomplished *terra marique* by me or by my legates under my auspices the Senate fifty-five times decreed that thanksgiving should be offered to the immortal gods.

In the first two texts, Augustus announces that his achievement was based on successful conquests of the whole inhabited world (*orbis terrarum*). In making such an ambitious pronouncement, Augustus suggests that his military accomplishments exceeded those of Alexander the Great, Pompey and Julius Caesar.[76]

In the third text, Augustus claims to have achieved peace by winning victories "by land and sea" (*terra marique*) throughout the Roman Empire rather than "throughout the entire world". The former expression is more ambiguous than the latter. As Momigliano has pointed out many years ago, the Latin expression *terra marique* might be regarded as corresponding to the Greek formula *kata gên kai kata thalassan*, which was widely used in Greek literary sources of the Hellenistic period. Momigliano suggests that the popularity of this phrase reflects the impact of the ideology of Persian kingship according to which "the king of kings" claimed universal rule "over land and sea".[77] Viewed in this light, Augustus' use of the expression *terra marique* could be read as another way of expressing the Roman claim to unlimited world dominance.

The central point of Chapters 26 to 33 of the *Res Gestae* is that, under Augustus' auspices, the Roman legions had been taken to the remotest corners of the known inhabited world.[78] Chapter 26 records that Augustus had

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[75] *RG* 4,2.
[76] *RG* 26,2; 31. Cf. Cooley (2009) 36-37.
[77] Momigliano has offered a series of examples to argue that, by the fifth and fourth centuries BC, the formula of "land and sea" was used to refer to political hegemonic rule over land and sea. See Momigliano (1943) 62, n. 36. It later impacted on Rome's formation of the model of territorial conquest. In Cicero's Speech *Pro Balbo*, for example, he voices his appreciation of Cnaeus Pompeius, *cuius res gestae omnis gentis cum clarissima victoria terra marique peragrassent, cuius tres triumphi testes essent totum orbem terrarum nostro imperio teneri* ("whose exploits had traversed all nations with splendid victory on land and at sea, whose three triumphs bore witness to the fact that the entire world is controlled by our authority"). See Cic. *Balb.* 6,16. Cf. *De imper Cn. Pompei* 56. Nicolet (1991) 36.
[78] Cooley (2009) 36-38. General discussion on Augustan imperial policy, see more in Luttwak (1976) 7-13; Mann (1979) 178-79; Gruen (1990) 395- 416; Austin and Rankov (1995) 111-13; Nicolet (1993) 85-95; Eck (1998) 93-104, etc. I shall deal with this

"extended the territory of all those provinces of the Roman people which had neighbouring peoples who were not subject to our authority." No limits to Roman expansion are specified here.[79] Referring to the North, he states that the Roman fleet had sailed eastward from the mouth of the Rhine as far as the place where the sun rises. Turning to the West, Augustus says that the Roman conquests reached Cadiz, the end of the world signified by the Pillars of Hercules.[80] Besides these geographical allusions, the names of foreign peoples are listed. The aim of this selective enumeration is to show that the military achievements of Augustus exceeded those of his Roman predecessors, and even those of Alexander the Great who had not managed to lead his troops to the very edge of the world.[81]

In the *Res Gestae*, the theme of Roman world domination is not restricted to passages dealing with military successes, but also occurs in references to diplomatic missions sent by various distant peoples who wanted to obtain Augustus' friendship and that of the Roman people (*amicitiam meam et populi Romani*, *RG* 26,4). Most of those peoples who are said to have sent embassies are the inhabitants of remote regions which were barely known in Italy, like the Charydes and Semnones of Germany, and the Medes and the Indians living on the eastern edges of the inhabited world, but some of them were less exotic peoples who had not been subjugated by Rome, like the Armenians, the Parthians and the Sarmatians. Similarly, Suetonius mentions that various peoples who had previously been mere names to the Romans, like the Indians and the Scythians, were induced by Augustus' virtues and moderation (*virtutis moderationisque*) to request the friendship of Augustus and the Roman people. Rome's principal opponent in the East, the Parthians, symbolically submitted to Roman authority by returning the military standards which had been captured from Crassus.[82] The underlying message is clearly that Augustus' claim of world conquest did not necessarily have to be fulfilled by force, but could also be obtained in peaceful ways.

In short, the central message broadcast in Chapters 26-33 of the *Res Gestae* is that the boundaries of Rome have been extended on an unprecedented scale. Although in a later passage Augustus claims that his personal power

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subject at length in Chapter 3.
[79] *RG* 26,1: *omnium provinciarum populi Romani, quibus finitimae fuerunt gentes quae non parerent imperio nostro, fines auxi.*
[80] *RG* 26,2-5.
[81] Levi (1947) 206; Cooley (2009) 37.
[82] Suet. *Aug.* 21,3.

(*potestas*) was "not greater than that of others", these chapters raise him to a position above all Romans and non-Romans of all time. [83] The message conveyed by the *Res Gestae* is consistent with Virgil's claim that the Roman empire was an *imperium sine fine*. [84] As mentioned, the Roman claim to domination of the entire *orbis terrarum* has clear antecedents in the Late Republic. In the *Res Gestae*, however, this theme appears to have been intertwined with a celebration of the virtues and exploits of the first emperor.[85] In other words, the theme of uncontested domination over the world is inextricably intertwined with Augustus' self-presentation.

In conclusion, the development of the worldview of the Romans in the Republic was tied to the rise of Roman imperialism in Mediterranean from the Early Republican period. Over a span of several centuries, the mode of the Roman imperialism follows a centrifugal pattern, which alike fostered the Roman worldview of the last hundred years of the Republic to even greater heights. By then, as a highly militarized society, the desire to conquer lands worldwide was stimulated to its zenith, fuelled by increasingly toxic competition between the leading political protagonists. However, on the other hand, it should be noted that, in the early fifth century BC, Rome was only one of the clustering of city-states of Latium in central Italy. For the greater part of the Republican period, world conquest was apparently not part of the plans of the Roman aristocratic rulers. Little is known about how the Roman elite viewed the world until the last half of the third century BC, when Roman power increasingly gained control over the whole of the Italian Peninsula. Still, it seems clear that it was only with the increase in the interactions between Rome and the Hellenistic world from the early second century BC onwards that the horizons of Romans to the outside world were dramatically broadened. In the last century of the Republic, overseas territorial expansion was paid greater attention as the competition in the search for glory and power among those men of power in the Roman Senate began to accelerate. Geography, military conquest and historiography were therefore bound up with each other more closely than before, and consequently Rome's aspiration for world conquest was displayed more brutally. As Augustus gradually took over the state in the last

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[83] *RG* 34,3. For a reconsideration of Augustus' *auctoritas*, see Rowe (2013) 1-15.
[84] Verg. *Aen* 1,278.
[85] See Brunt (1984) 423-44. On the acceptance of Augustus' image as monarch, see Syme's classic account, Syme (1939) esp. 277 ff. On its reflections in coins and artworks, see Wallace-Hadrill (1986) 66-87; Zanker (1988) 297-33.

decades of the first century BC, the concept of a relative open, inclusive and outward-oriented worldview emerged more clearly.

The worldview broadcast in the *Res Gestae* can be described as open, universal and encompassing. During the last decade of Augustus' lifetime, however, the empire had to face some serious military challenges and setbacks. The rebellions which erupted in Pannonia and Dalmatia between AD 6 and AD 9 were regarded as the most serious military crisis since the Hannibalic War. In AD 9, three Roman legions were cut to pieces in the Teutoburger Forest. Following this disaster, Rome withdrew its troops from the valley of the Elbe to the western bank of the Rhine. Suetonius records that Augustus was severely affected by this stroke of bad luck.[86] Before he died, Augustus left behind a *consilium* for Tiberius, suggesting that the empire should not be expanded any farther.[87] Cassius Dio reports that Augustus left four posthumous documents for the Senate.[88] In one of these documents, the Emperor advised his fellow Romans to be satisfied with what they possessed and not to seek any farther territorial expansion. Some ancient historians see the late reign of the Augustus as a turning-point in the long history of Roman territorial expansion.[89] In their view, Roman expansion slowed down markedly after Augustus.

Before examining the course taken by Roman imperial expansion after AD 14, I shall shift the focus of my attention to China where, about two hundred years before the initiation of the Principate, the Emperor Qin Shi Huang also claimed that the entire inhabited world had been unified under his sovereignty. How did Chinese rulers and writers envisage the world before and after the establishment of imperial rule? How do the worldviews which are encountered in China compare to the Roman worldviews which we encounter in Late-Republican and Early-Imperial Rome? These are the main questions which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[86] On the reign of Augustus in the last decade from AD 4 to 14, see Cass. Dio 55,13-56,46; Crook (1996) 94-112.
[87] Tac. *Ann.* 1,9,3-5.
[88] Cass. Dio 56,33.
[89] For an overview of scholarly disputes, see Sidebottom (2005) 315-30.

Chapter 2
Chinese worldviews from the late Shang
to the Qin periods (*c.* 1200 BC-200 BC)

1. Introduction

Between 500 BC and AD 14 Rome developed from a small city-state into a large territorial empire. The process of state formation in China was very different. When Qin Shi Huang founded the first unified empire, various dynasties had already held sway before 221 BC. There has been a long-standing debate between western scholars and Chinese historians and archaeologists about whether or not the Xia 夏 should be seen as the first Chinese dynasty and the precursor to the emergence of large states in China.[1]

However, this is not the place to enter into the complex controversy about the origins of Chinese state formation.[2] After the creation of the Qin Empire in China and the establishment of the Roman Principate in Mediterranean and western Europe, the elite class of the two societies applied the terms *tianxia* and *orbis terrarum* to describe the world as they knew it. In the previous chapter, the transformation of the Roman worldview during the Republic and early Principate has been examined by focusing on the appearance of the term *orbis terrarum* and its use in the *Res Gestae*. In this chapter I shall carry out a study of the formation and transformation of Chinese worldviews during the lengthy process leading to the emergence of the Qin Empire. The concept of *tianxia*, the Chinese counterpart of the Latin *orbis terrarum*, will serve as a focal point for an investigation into the evolution of Chinese worldviews

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[1] Huber (1988) 46-77; Thorp (1991) 1-33; Liu Li and Chen Xingchan (2003) 26-29.

[2] For this issue, see the monograph of Liu Li and Chen Xingchan (2003); Liu Li (2004) 223-238. Many debates focus on whether the Erlitou culture (c. 1900 – 1500 BC) in archaeology corresponds to the legendary Xia dynasty (c. 2100 – 1600 BC), the earliest large territorial state in Chinese history. For discussions of this problem, see Allan (1984) 242-256 and *id.* (1991). In a recent article, Allan offers a new interpretation of the relationship between Erlitou culture and the formation of Chinese civilization; see Allan (2007) 461-96. In an interesting article, Liu Li investigates the divergent views of Chinese and non-Chinese scholars on the question of whether the Xia dynasty should be regarded as historical fact or as fiction. See Liu Li (2009) 831-843. The question of the existence of the Xia dynasty has become the subject of a prolonged debate since Gu Jigang 顧頡剛 cast doubt on its historicity in the early twentieth century.

during the long pre-Qin period.

2. Worldviews between the late Shang and late Zhou periods

2.1 Zhong and Sifang/Situ: concepts of space in the mental map of the Shang people

The Taiwanese scholar Xing Yitian 邢義田 claims that the first attestation of the term *tianxia* is to be found in an essay entitled *The Announcement of Duke Shao* (*Shaogao* 召告) from the *Book of Zhou* (*Zhoushu* 周書), a section of the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書). Since this treatise is commonly assumed to have been written in the early Western Zhou period (1046-771 BC), it can be used to shed some light on the worldview held by the ruling class of early-Chinese society.[3] The text runs as follows:

> *Only if the king is virtuous and the king himself serves as a model followed by the people under the* tianxia, *can his name spread far and wide throughout* (*the lands*). 其惟王位在德元，小民乃惟刑用於天下，越王顯。[4]

Sima Qian states that the *Announcement* contains moral advice which the Duke Zhou 周公, the younger brother of King Wu 武王 (r. 1046-1043 BC), gave his nephew, King Cheng 成王 (r.1042/35-1006 BC), Wu's successor, on how to become a good monarch by applying the power of virtue.[5] In a literal sense, *tianxia* 天下 is a geographical term meaning "all (areas) under Heaven".[6]

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[3] The *Shaogao* is commonly regarded as one of the earliest chapters of the *Shang shu*. For a good discussion of the *Shang shu* itself and of the high reputation it enjoyed among later writers for a period of over two thousand years, see Shaughnessy (1993) 376-89.

[4] *Shang shu* 15,14. 400; Xing Yitian (1991) 441. The Japanese scholar Shinichiro Watanabe 渡辺信一郎 has carried out a detailed investigation into the term *tianxia* and its usage in written sources of the pre-Qin period. See Shinichiro Watanabe, trans. Xu Chong 徐衝 (2008) 3-17. Zhao Tingyang 趙汀陽 has published a series of articles focusing on the concept of *tianxia* in the Chinese classical sources, but his approach is principally philosophical. For a critical discussion of Zhao's theory, see Zhang Qixian 張其賢 (2001).

[5] *Shiji* 4, 133.

[6] In most publications dealing with Chinese ancient history in English scholarship, the term "*tianxia*" is simply translated as "all under Heaven" without any further

Nevertheless, in the passage from the *Announcement* just quoted, the emphasis is on the political space in which the king's example should be followed by his subjects. In the Zhou dynasty, the sort of a geopolitical entity implied by *tianxia* under the authority of the Zhou king was conceptualized as consisting of two parts: the *wangji* 王畿, the core lands of the Wei River Valley which were directly controlled by the Zhou royal domain, and the numerous hereditary fiefs surrounding this core area which were ruled *de facto* by the Zhou nobles.[7]

Soon after the Zhou defeated the Shang, the Dukes of Shao and Zhou fulfilled the plan of the deceased King Wu to build a new capital at the confluence of the Yellow River and River Luo, which was called Luoyi (present-day Luoyang, Henan Province) 洛邑, or Chengzhou 成周, symbolizing the centre of the *tianxia*.[8] The city, together with its adjacent lands, formed the core area of the Zhou domain, and the vast areas of lands surrounding this core area were called the *sifang* 四方 (four quarters) or *situ* 四土 (four lands). Nevertheless, it is important to note that the term *tianxia* 天下 was not used in the early Chinese written sources until the Spring and Autumn 春秋 period (770 – 476 BC) and the time of the Warring States 戰國 (476 – 221 BC).

The idea that the world consisted of a centre and four quarters (*sifang*) is much older. Using the then newly discovered oracle-bone inscriptions to study Shang history, Dong Zuobin 董作賓 (1895 – 1963), one of the first historians in modern Chinese scholarship, was able to show that the capital of Yin Shang 殷商 referred to in the early Chinese literature appears as *Dayi Shang* (the big city of Shang) 大邑商 or *Zhong Shang* (Central Shang) 中商 in the oracle-bone documents.[9] The territory of the late Shang state was thought to consist of a

interpretation. In my view, this is somewhat problematic.

[7] For the landscapes of the Western Zhou homeland and its regional states, see Li Feng 李峰 (2006) 30-90.

[8] *Shiji* 4, 133. According to the account of Sima Qian, nine tripod cauldrons, which were believed to have been cast by the legendary flood-tamer the Great Yu in remote antiquity and which symbolized the nine earliest provinces of China, were moved the city of Luoyi. From this moment, the new capital was regarded as the centre of the Chinese political landscape. For the fable of the casting of the nine tripods, see Chang (1983) 95-100; Lewis (1999) 268-271; (2006b) 54.

[9] Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1956) 255. On the sources for early Chinese history, see the essays in Shaughnessy (1997). For the Chinese writing system of the pre-Qin period, see Boltz (1999) 74-124. The most important publications on the Shang oracle inscriptions in Chinese are the monographs by Chen Mengjia and Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣. In Western scholarship, Keightley's *Sources of Shang history: the Oracle-bone Inscriptions of*

core area, the royal domain, and the vast neighbouring areas loosely called the *situ* 四土 or *sifang* 四方, which literarily means "the lands of the four directions".[10] But scholars who study late Shang history have observed that the character *fang* as it appears in many of the oracle-bone inscriptions often refers to various political entities in or bordering on the Shang territory. In order to achieve a better understanding of this point, it is necessary to pay attention to the spatial aspects of political and administrative organization in the Shang period. Following the reign of King Tang 湯 (c.1675 – 1646 BC), the first monarch of the Shang, the Shang people frequently moved their capital from one place to the other, their aim being to control valuable resources like copper, tin and lead, as shown by the brilliant studies by Chang Kwang-chih 張光直.[11] This situation lasted until the reign of King Pan Geng 盘庚 (c. 1290 – 1263 BC), who moved the capital to Yin 殷 (present-day Anyang 安陽, northern Henan province). This became the permanent capital until the displacement of the Shang dynasty by Zhou. However, although the Shang kings constantly shifted their capitals during the first three centuries after the establishment of their dynasty, the region in which the members of the Shang royal house performed sacrifices to the spirits of their deceased ancestors, especially the *di* 帝, the highest god in the pantheon of the Shang religion, never changed. This sacred place was thought to be the core area in the Shang cosmology.[12] Around

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Bronze Age China (Berkeley 1978) is an indispensable monograph in the field of oracle-bone studies. For the studies of oracle-bone inscriptions in the twentieth century, see Wang Yuxin 王宇信 and Yang Shengnan 楊升南 (1999). On the bronze inscriptions of the Shang and the Zhou dynasties, the most important publications are the eight volumes edited by the Institute for Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In the West, Shaughnessy's monograph focusing on the inscribed bronze vessels in the Western Zhou dynasty has become a standard book in the field of inscribed bronze vessels. See Shaughnessy (1992).

[10] For examples of the sequences *sifang, situ* or *fang* in the oracle-bones in the reign of Wuding 武丁, see Chen Mengjia (1956). Wheatley translates these expressions as "four quarters", and this is the translation which I adopt in my discussion. See Wheatley (1971); Wang Aihe 王愛和 (2000) 23; Wang Aihe (2001) 114.

[11] For the frequent movement of the Shang capital before King Pan Geng, see Chen Mengjia (1956) 249-252; For Chang Kuang Chi's famous theory, see Chang (1990).

[12] Scholars believe that the cult of *di* is closely related to the worship of the Shang ancestral spirits. See Hsu and Linduff (1988) 101. For the rite of ancestor worship and Shang state religion, see Eno (2009) 54-102. For an archaeological account of the core area of Shang, see Chang (1980) 69-73. Whether the *di* was originally regarded as the highest god and later transformed into the representative of Shang ancestral spirits, or

the core area lay multiple subordinate states scattered across the central plain surrounding the Shang royal domain. All of these states, to a greater or lesser extent, stood in a dependent relationship to the Shang; some of them were even only very loosely under the control of the Shang state.[13] The Shang king bolstered his power by means of frequent travels, hunting trips and military campaigns. The territories of these political entities which were connected to the Shang royal house were referred to in the inscriptions on the oracle bones as *sifang* 四方 or *situ* 四土. In later political contexts *fang* means "side", "border" or "quarter".[14] As will be revealed, such a conception of a square world consisting of a centre and four cardinal directions played a significant role in shaping the spatial conception of the subsequent Chinese dynasties.

2.2. Sifang *and* zhongguo: *worldviews in the Western Zhou period*

After the battle of Muye 牧野 in 1046 BC, the Zhou, a subordinate state located on the western periphery of the Shang world in the Wei River Valley, annexed large parts of the Shang land and established a new regime in c. 1045 BC.[15] Although the extent to which the geographical and cosmological views of the Western Zhou people were influenced by the former Shang dynasty is unknown, the character *sifang* 四方, which appears on many inscribed bronze objects belonging to this period, clearly illustrates the link between the two dynasties in terms of cosmological views.[16] For example, the inscription on the bronze sacrificial vessel named the Da Yu Ding 大盂鼎, which can be dated to the reign of King Kang 康王 (r. 1005/3-978 BC) of the early Western Zhou period, contains the phrase "extending to the *sifang*" (*puyou sifang* 匍有四方).[17]

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vice-versa, is a matter of dispute in scholarship, see Shima Kunio 島邦男 (2006); Chen Mengjia (1958) 561-582; Hu Houxuan (1959) 23-50; 89-110; Wang Aihe (2001) 116; Itō Michiharu 伊藤道治 trans. Jiang Lansheng 江藍生 (2002) 3-38.

[13] Keightley (1983) 552.

[14] Keightley (2000) 66. In addition to the fact that the *fang* is related to directions in many oracle-bone inscriptions, the Shang people were in the habit of linking the *fang* to a number of names referring to specific places, see Chen Mengjia (1956) 270-291.

[15] The precise date of the Zhou conquest of Shang is far from certain. Shaughnessy suggests that the Zhou dynasty began in 1045 BC. See Shaughnessy (1991) 217-236; Wang Aihe (2000) 57.

[16] For continuities in cosmological conceptions during the Shang and Zhou periods, see Keightley (1983) 121-129.

[17] *JC* 2626. The Da Yu Ding records King Kang's appointment of a minister named Yu,

The term *sifang* also appears on the Lai Pan 逨盤, a inscribed bronze vessel dating from the late Western Zhou.[18] In the *Book of Songs* (*Shi jing* 詩經), containing the oldest surviving Chinese poetry, some of which was written during the early Western Zhou period, the expression *sifang* frequently appears in some early poems, generally carrying a meaning similar to that which can be observed in the inscription on the Da Yu Ding and some other contemporary bronze vessels.[19] It is impossible to verify whether this geographical concept existed in Zhou culture before the Zhou state became affiliated to Shang, or whether it was borrowed from the Shang people.[20] However, it is clear that, by the early Western Zhou period at the latest, the basic world view was based on the idea that there was a core area in which the royal domain was located and four quarters (*sifang*) occupying the peripheral zones.

Against this background, it does not come as a surprise that the emphasis on the *sifang* in early Chinese sources was closely related to various groups of characters, such as *zhong* 中 (centre) or *zhongguo* 中國 (Central State(s)). For instance, a poem entitled *Minlao* 民劳 in the *Shi jing* contains the following passage:

> *Let us cherish the centre of the state* (zhongguo) *in order to secure the pacification of the four quarters* (sifang)…*Let us cherish the capital* (jingshi) *of the state in order to secure the pacification of the four quarters* (sifang).惠此中国，以绥四方……惠此京师，以绥四方。[21]

In this passage *sifang* refers to the vast territories beyond the core area of the

and the latter cast a bronze vessel inside which King Kang's appointment and instructions were inscribed. As one of the most famous excavated bronze vessels of the Western Zhou, it has been thoroughly discussed since the late 19th century. For a recent study, see Li Xueqin 李學勤 (1985) 51-55.

[18] The texts containing the characters 四方 can be seen on some other bronze vessels such as the Ke Ding 克鼎, the Shihu Gui 師虎簋 and the Jinbang Gui 晉邦簋 cast during different periods of the Western Zhou dynasty. See Yu Shengwu 于省吾 (1935) 38-43.

[19] For some of the character *sifang* 四方 appearing in *Shijing*, see *Shijing* 270; 280; 315; 367; 373; 381; 387; 395; 397; 422; 418; 422; 433; 450; 454; 562; 465; 478; 480; 483; 506; 527; 533, see Gao Heng 高亨 (1980).

[20] For the relationship between the Zhou and the Shang, see Hsu and Linduff (1988) 41-59.

[21] *Shijing* 422. Mao Heng 毛亨, an exegete living in Han period, comments: "Zhongguo, the capital".

Zhou. The term *zhongguo* corresponds to *jingshi*, most likely signifying the new capital of Zhou, the city of Luoyi, mentioned above.

The term *zhongguo* also appears in the chapter *Zicai* 梓材 of the Shangshu:

> *Heaven gave our ancestors a mission to open up new fields [and] to govern the people at <u>the centre of the state</u>* (zhongguo). 皇天既付中國民，越厥疆土于先王。 [22]

At the opening of the chapter, it has been said that some essays from the *Shangshu* can be dated back as far as to the time of Duke Shao in early Western Zhou times when the project for the construction of the city of Luoyi was just commencing. In the chapter *Zicai*, the term *zhongguo* is again used to refer to the city of Luoyi, the new capital located in the Luo River Valley.[23] An inscription on the bronze vessel He Zun 何尊 excavated near present-day Baoji 寶雞 (Shanxi province) in the early 1960s corroborates the argument. The value of the inscribed text lies not only in the fact that it confirms that the new capital of Luoyi was constructed in the fifth year of the reign of Duke Zhou, as stated in the *Shangshu* (cf. below); it is also the earliest record containing the characters *zhongguo* 中國 (central state), which is nowadays used to refer to the People's Republic of China. Consequently, the inscription in the He Zun has attracted special attention from scholars studying the origins of Chinese ethnicity and nationality.[24]

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that the Western Zhou people subscribed to a worldview in which the world consisted of a central area (sometimes referred to as the *zhongguo*) which was surrounded by territories vaguely designated the *sifang*. However, the paucity of early Chinese texts makes it difficult to achieve a clear understanding of the relationships between the two

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[22] *Shang shu* 14,13. 387. *Shang shu Zhengyi* Vol. 2, 458.
[23] Wang Aihe (2000) 65. A whole chapter is addressed to cosmological views in Shang and Zhou China in Wang's monograph. See Chapter 2, 23-74.
[24] For instance, Ge Zhaoguang's recent book on Chinese identity in Chinese intellectual history, *Zhai Zi Zhongguo* 宅兹中國, quotes the famous phrase from the inscription of the He Zun, which is translated as *I built my home in the zhongguo* 余其宅兹中國. For an interpretation of the full inscription, see Tang Lan 唐蘭 (1976) 60-61. The text of the He Zun has been translated into English by Shaughnessy, see Shaughnessy (1997) 77. Ge notes that the term *zhongguo* carries different meanings in different periods of Chinese history. In the inscription of the He Zun, *zhongguo* denotes the city of Luoyi. See Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光 (2011) 3 of Preface.

components.

Pertinently, such a perception of the world was not merely a symbolic exercise in the ideological realm. It was also connected to the territorial expansion which had taken place in the early Western Zhou period. In the first two hundred years following its conquest of Shang, the Western Zhou went through a process of large-scale territorial absorption. In particular during the reigns of King Cheng 成王 (d. 1021 BC) and King Kang 康王 (d. 996 BC), the power of the Zhou reached its zenith.[25] By their time the lands under the control of Zhou had been substantially increased since the time of King Wu. Its eastern boundary was now formed by the East Sea; its southern regions extended as far as the Han River Basin 漢江盆地 and the Nanyang Plain 南陽平原; its northern frontier followed the course of the Ordos 鄂爾多斯 in modern Inner Mongolia; and its western boundary lay beyond the eastern Liupan Mountains 六盤山. Therefore the Zhou territories consisted of the Luo River Valley (modern Henan and southern Shanxi province), which was the core area, and of the vast tracts of lands stretching outwards in the four directions.

It is well known that the most distinctive feature of the political institution of the Western Zhou was its feudal system.[26] From roughly the time of Duke Zhou and thereafter, the Zhou kings established multiple vassal states among them Yan 燕, Qi 齊 and Lu 魯 throughout the alluvial plain in the Yellow River Valley. The nobles of Zhou and old Shang, who initially had been granted the newly conquered land by the Zhou kings, were endowed with the power to rule the indigenous peoples, although they were all to some extent supervised by the royal house of Zhou.[27] Many of the vassal states located on the fringes of the Western Zhou realm were surrounded by "barbarian peoples", the Man 蠻, the Yi 夷, the Rong 戎 and the Di 狄 referred to in later texts. Why were so many vassal states located in remote places far from the core area of Zhou? One possible answer is that these vassal states were

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[25] On territorial expansion in the period of the early Zhou, see Li Feng (2006) 1-27.

[26] For a discussion of Zhou feudalism, see Hsu and Linduff (1988) 177-85. Li Feng, however, opposes the use of the term "feudalism" in the context of Western Zhou political history. Instead, he suggests that the political system of the Western Zhou state was a kind of "delegatory kin-ordered settlement State". For details, see Li Feng (2010) 269-302. For the relationship between the local sub-states and the central government of Zhou, see *ibid*, 254-267.

[27] For the bureaucratic apparatus of the Western Zhou, see Li Feng's English monograph, Li Feng (2008).

supposed to act as watchdogs, protecting the Zhou people from the threat of rebellion by local populations and from barbarian invasions.[28] If this view is accepted, the outlying territories occupied an important place in the Zhou worldview. It also follows that, at least during the early and mid-Western Zhou dynasty, the Zhou people did not have well-defined boundaries.

A passage contained both in Chapter *Kanggao* 康誥 and Chapter *Zicai* 梓材 of the *Shang shu* sheds some light on the place occupied by the barbarians dwelling on the borders of the Zhou realm in Zhou world views:

> *Duke Zhou commenced the construction of the new great city at Luo in the eastern land. People from the four quarters flocked to the assembly, including those who dwell in* hou, dian, nanbang, cai, wei, *as well as hundreds of craftsmen and peoples living on the frontiers* (bomin).
> 周公初基作大邑于东國洛，四方民大和會，侯、甸、男邦、采、衛，百工播民，和見士于周。[29]

Most scholars agree that this passage was written in the early Western Zhou period. In it *hou* and *dian* are the two zones closest to the centre, similar to the picture to be found in the *Yugong*. The term *bomin* almost certainly refers to such barbarian peoples as the Man, the Yi, the Rong and the Di living on the periphery of the Zhou world. These peoples were invited by Duke Zhou to attend the inauguration ceremony which took place in Luoyi. The author of the *Zuozhuan* 左传 (Commentary of Zuo),[30] a historical work completed between the late fifth and fourth centuries BC, mentions that during the reign of King Mu 穆王 (r. 956-918 BC) a significant military campaign was waged against the Quanrong 犬戎, a barbarian tribe living in the northeastern regions of the Wei River Valley. Thereafter, the Quanrong never seem to have made an appearance the Western Zhou royal court again. These indications suggest that, even before the mid-Western Zhou period, the barbarian peoples living on the fringes of the Zhou borders occupied a place in Zhou worldviews.

The kings of the early Zhou period authorized various Zhou nobles to establish vassal states in the far-off lands. As far as the Zhou state was

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[28] Li Feng (2008) 113.
[29] *Shang shu* 14,11. 358.
[30] The *Zuozhuan* is now regarded as a compilation of several authors rather than a work completed by a single writer. Sima Qian credits Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 as the compiler of the works. See *Shiji* 130, 3300.

concerned, this was actually a convenient method of achieving territorial expansion and establishing regular communication with the east. In some literary sources of the Zhou period, those dwelling in the remote lands are referred to as the *yuanmin* 遠民, "the distant people". Some were descendants of the Shang, but the rest belonged to various ethnic groups. In the inscribed bronzes of the Zhou period they are designated by such names as Xianyun 獫 狁, Rong 戎 or Huaiyi 淮夷.[31] However, it should be emphasized that the relationships between the Zhou king and royal court and various groups living on the periphery of the Zhou realm frequently alternated from friendly to hostile or vice-versa. Therefore it is impossible to draw a clear line between the lands inhabited by the Zhou people and the non-Zhou barbarians.

2.3. Changes in world views during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods

After the collapse of Western Zhou power during the eighth century BC, King Ping 平王 (r. 770-720 BC) moved the old capital from Hao 鎬 to Luoyi in the Luo River Valley, an event marking the beginning of a new era, the Eastern Zhou (771-255 BC). During the next five hundred years Chinese worldviews changed significantly.[32]

In various written sources compiled during the Eastern Zhou, the expression "the central state" (*zhongguo*) no longer referred specifically to the city of Luoyi, but more frequently connoted the Central Plain (*zhongyuan* 中原) of the Yellow River Valley, a huge landmass encompassing modern Henan, northern Jiangsu and Anhui, western Shandong and a small part of Hubei. As time went by the power and authority of the Zhou king and Zhou royal house declined. Luoyi lost much of its earlier prominence, and a number of feudal states in the Eastern Zhou royal domain was rising to power.

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[31] Scholars suggest that the Xianyun 獫狁 recorded in the Western Zhou inscriptions are to be identified with the Quanrong 犬戎, mentioned in the literary sources compiled in the Eastern Zhou period. For the names and origins of these barbarian peoples in the Western Zhou, see Wang Guowei 王國維 (1959) 583-605.

[32] The homeland of the Zhou people in the Wei River Valley had been occupied by the barbarian tribe of the Western Rong *(Xi Rong* 西戎) by the mid-eighth century BC. This was the most immediate cause of King Ping's decision to move eastwards. However, recent research has revealed that many royal activities had been taking place in the capital city of Chengzhou 成周 (Luoyi) since the early Western Zhou period. See Hsu and Linduff (1988) 264-265.

A number of dukedoms originally founded by relatives or associates of the Zhou king, such as Zheng 鄭, Qi 齊, Jin 晋, Lu 魯 and Qin 秦 had grown into powerful states from the late seventh and early sixth century BC. Subsequently, the non-Zhou states in the south, like Chu 楚 in the Han River Valley and Wu 吳 and Yue 越 in the Yangzi Delta also gained prominence during the early Eastern Zhou period, more commonly known as the *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn) period.[33] From approximately this period onwards, a number of states in the Central Plain began to trace their cultures back to a common ethnic and cultural identity, the culture of *huaxia* 華夏. This increase in cultural and ethnic homogeneity ran parallel to a process in which barbarian tribes were either absorbed into the newly created world order or excluded from it.[34] In part as a result of this growth in cultural self-consciousness, the concept of *tianxia* was increasingly used to denote a more or less "closed" entity whose boundaries were determined by culture, ethnicity and geography.[35]

Scholars have long observed the fundamental impact of changes in ecology and landscape of northern China on the formation of the two cultural zones in the first half of the last millennium BC.[36] As historical meteorologists and anthropologists have noted, the late Neolithic period (c. 2000-1000 BC) witnessed the emergence of drier and colder climatic conditions along the line of the northern Yellow River – Qin Mountains 黄河–秦嶺, especially in the area of the present-day Ordos 鄂爾多斯 and Baotou 包頭 in Inner Mongolia. This trend peaked around 1000 BC. As a result, in the vast areas ranging from

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[33] For the eclipse of the Western Zhou royal house and the rise of the neighbouring vassal states, see Hsu (1999) 547-51; Li Feng (2006) 91-140.

[34] For the locations of the Zhou people and the non-Zhou in the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn period, see Shi Nianhai 史念海 (1990) Vol. 2, 57-84.

[35] The rise of the identity of *huaxia* can be attributed to the long-term historical evolution of the amalgamation between the Zhou people and their neighbours. See Paulleyblank (1983) 411-66; Hsu (1999) 550. Nowadays *huaxia* is often used as an equivalent of "Chinese", but strictly speaking this is a misuse of the term.

[36] See Chu Coching 竺可槙 (1972) 17. From the perspective of anthropology and archaeology, Wang Mingke 王明珂 believes that the pastoral boundary in northern China was formed between 2000 BC and 1000 BC as a result of climate change. See Wang Mingke (2008) 97-99. In an influential publication Wang examined the formation of the ecosystems in the areas of modern Qinghai, Ordos and the West Liao River from c. 2000 BC to 600 BC; see Wang Mingke (1997), 95-151. In his classic book, Di Cosmo has also examined the transition to pastoral nomadism in the northern zone of China during the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn period; see Di Cosmo (1999) 909-951.

Hetao 河套 located to the south of the Yin Mountains 陰山 to the state of Yan and even to the north of the Liaodong Peninsula 遼東半島, at the end of the seventh and sixth century BC the mixed economic model combining agriculture and animal husbandry was gradually replaced by a type of nomadic economy.[37]

Correspondingly, the barbarians who lived to the north of the Yellow River gradually developed their distinctive culture and customs. One outcome of this natural change was the formation of new ethnic peoples in the Eastern Zhou period. The Hu (later known as the Xiongnu 匈奴), for instance, were a confederation of nomadic tribes which arose in the last decades of the third century BC, when they began to pose a threat to the Qin and Han Empires. I shall discuss their development in a later chapter. Another phenomenon of this period was the gradual migration of a number of peoples who had lived on the periphery of the Zhou areas into the central regions. These peoples were progressively integrated into the mainstream *huaxia* culture. In the meantime, those tribes which remained in and beyond the Hexi Corridor 河西走廊 and on the Inner Mongolian Plateau were becoming nomadized.

Consequently, by the sixth century BC at the very latest two features can be observed. First, more frequently than before, those rulers who had established their states in the early Western Zhou period and were connected with the Zhou clans, like the leaders of the states of Qi, Lu and Jin, began to trace their origins to the Western Zhou culture. Both culturally and psychologically, they self-consciously distanced themselves from the non-Zhou states, including the barbarian tribes on the northern and western frontiers and those in and beyond the Yangzi River Valley. Abundant evidence in the documents created in the pre-Qin period reveals the cultural and ethnic discrimination towards such non-Zhou peoples as the Man 蠻 and the Yi 夷.[38] In the next three centuries, in order to seize hegemonic power (*ba*) 霸 over the Central Plain, the principal states of Qi 齊 in the east, Jin 晉 in the north and Chu 楚 in the south as well as Wu 吳 and Yue 越 in the Yangzi River Delta struggled fiercely for power using the slogan "venerate the Zhou king, expel the barbarians" (*Zun wang rang yi* 尊王攘夷).[39] Interestingly, although in the Spring and Autumn period some states were situated in the remote areas of the Zhou

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[37] Wang Mingke (2008) 65.
[38] For some instances in Chinese classical texts, see Luo Zhitian 羅志田 (1996) 215.
[39] On the formation of the *Ba* system, see Hsu (1999) 551-562.

realm, intersecting with various ethnic tribes, they consciously reinforced their "Chinese-ness", considering Zhou rituals and institutions as models which had to be followed.

The case of the vassal state of Qi bears witness to the vast distances across which these Zhou models were thought relevant. Although the first ruler of Qi, Jiang Shang 姜尚, was not a member of the Ji 姬 clan, the Jiang 姜 clan had established a marriage alliance with the Zhou rulers when Zhou was still a humble state in the Wei River Valley. As a general and the right-hand man of King Wu, Jiang Shang had made important contributions to the Zhou campaigns against Shang. Accordingly, Qi occupied a prominent position among the vassals of the Western Zhou. In the Spring and Autumn period, Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685-643 BC) appointed Guan Zhong 管仲 prime minister. The latter embarked on a series of reforms and finally made Qi the most powerful state of the early Eastern Zhou period.[40] Pertinently, it should be noted that, geographically, Qi was not at the centre of the Zhou world but part of the eastern lands bordering the sea. Like other states affiliated with Zhou, the Qi people were surrounded by various barbarian tribes, the most formidable of which was the Dong Yi 東夷. From roughly the early Western Zhou period onwards, Qi frequently suffered disturbances from incursions by neighbouring barbarian tribes like the Yi, Rong and Di. Furthermore, during the reign of King Yi 夷王 (r. 899/7-873 BC), the king launched a military campaign against Duke Ai 齊哀公 (d. 863 BC) in retaliation for the latter's noncompliance. Despite these difficulties, Qi was able to maintain a prominent place among the vassal states until the late Warring States period.

The influence exercised on the state of Qi by Zhou culture is reflected by a famous saying of Confucius (551-479 BC):

> *Had it not been for Guan Zhong, we might well be wearing long hair and folding our robes to the left!* 微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣！ [41]

Confucius' words imply that the differentiation between the *xia* 夏 or *hua* 華 (Chinese-ness as selfness) and *yi* 夷 (barbarianism as otherness) did not depend on the geographical distance between vassal states and the Zhou royal court,

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[40] On the hegemony of the state of Qin over the Central Plain in the reign of Duke Huan, see Tong Shuye 童書業 (2003) 155-174. For Guan Zhong, see Rosen (1976).
[41] *Lun yu* (*Xian wen*) 14,17. 157.

but on the degree of the affinity with the Zhou tradition in ritual and customs. After the collapse of Zhou rule, the transmission of the Zhou legacy was thought to be a key component in reconstructing the ethnical and cultural identities.

One of the effects of the emergence of a relatively homogenous Chinese culture based on Zhou models was a transformation of the idea of *tianxia*, which was now invested with new connotations. Two cases quoted from *Zuo Zhuan*, the most important document on the history of the Lu state compiled in the Warring States period, illustrate this phenomenon:

> *Even ruling the world mildly*, (*the Zhou*) *was still worried about invasions by the outsiders.*[42] 其懷柔天下也，猶懼有外侮。
>
> *Humanizing the central states* (zhongguo) *by means of virtue, while intimidating barbarians in the four quarters* (siyi) *by means of punishment.*[43] 德以柔中國，刑以威四夷。

In the first passage, Fu Chen 富辰, a minister of King Xiang (d. 619), is persuading the Zhou king to treat the vassal states, Hua 滑, Wei 衛 and Zheng 鄭 fairly. He does so by pointing out that, even in the period of Western Zhou, when the Zhou house was powerful and capable of ruling the world (*tianxia*) mildly, the Zhou was still anxious about external attacks (*waifu*). Fu's words sit uneasily with the Zhou view that lands inhabited by "outsiders" were part of the "Zhou world". Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the dialogue between Fu Chen and King Xiang took place in the late seventh century, when Zhou power had been declining for a long time. In the meantime, the barbarians on the periphery of the former Zhou realm and multiple vassal sates had risen to prominence. The worldview during this very period was undergoing a crucial transformation in which the original concept of *tianxia*, which was based on the model of a "centre and four quarters", was finally displaced by a two-tier cosmic system based on the ideas of "inside" (*nei*) and "outside" (*wai*). The geographical meaning of *zhongguo* now increasingly became synonymous with *tianxia*, while the land of barbarians was conceptualized in opposition to it.

In the second statement, *siyi* (barbarians living in the four quarters) is used

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[42] *Zuo zhuan* (Xi 24) 425.
[43] *Zuo zhuan* (Xi 25) 436.

in opposition to *zhongguo* (the people in the central states), indicating that a distinction between the two ethnic groups had been drawn.[44] Literary texts show that Chinese identity was beginning to be consolidated as an articulation of the concept of *zhongguo*. The transformation of the concept of *tianxia* should be seen as a closely related development.[45]

Down to the Warring States period, various vassal states of Zhou had been obliterated as a result of perennial and intensive warfare. Finally, by the early and mid-fourth century BC seven major states, Yan 燕, Qi 齊, Zhao 趙, Wei 魏, Han 韓, Qin 秦 and Chu 楚, dominated the landscape of Chinese politics. A detailed analysis of the key factors and events leading to the formation of the first unified Chinese Empire between the fourth and late third centuries BC is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, two developments which occurred during this period are directly relevant to the issues being discussed here.

The first of these is that, by the late third century BC, those non-Zhou barbarian tribes such as the Rong, Di and Yi which used to live on the northern periphery of the old Zhou had either had been forced to move to areas far from the Chinese states in the Central Plain, or had migrated to the central areas and been incorporated into the newly shaped *huaxia* civilization.

Secondly, by the late Warring States period, the geographical boundaries of China, defined here as comprising all those areas in which *huaxia* civilization had taken root, had expanded far beyond the drainage basin of the Yellow River. The state of Chu provides a good illustration. Chu was initially established by the non-Zhou people of the central Yangzi valley.[46] Even in the early Western Zhou period, Chu had risen to prominence on account of its far-flung territory and large population, which allowed it to act as a counterweight to the power of the Zhou and its vassals.[47] After the conquest of Yue in 334

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[44] Here *zhongguo* should be understood as an ethnic concept rather than geographical one.

[45] A great deal of attention has been paid to the subject of the mutual transitions between the *xia* 夏 and the *yi* 夷 in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. For some examples, see Luo Zhitian (1996) 213-224; Guo Wei 郭玮 (2004); Li Feng (2006) 285; Di Cosmo (2004) 93-94; Mittag and Mutschler (2010) 524.

[46] For discussions on the culture of Chu and its acculturation with the states in the Central Plain during the Warring States period, see a series of papers edited by Lawton (1991).

[47] For the geography of Chu and its relationship with Western Zhou and its vassal states, see Blakeley (1999) 9-20.

BC, the Chu gained control over the entire middle and lower Yangzi River region. As a result of frequent interactions with other major states in the Central Plain over the course of several centuries, by the mid-fourth century at the latest in a cultural sense the Chu had come to resemble the old Zhou states.[48]

Another example is the state of Qin. As it was situated in the Wei River Valley, Qin had been closely associated with various barbarian tribes and alien cultures since the Western Zhou dynasty. For a long while Qin had been a second-rank state among Zhou's satellites. Nonetheless, archaeological evidence shows that the Qin nobles shared a common culture with their counterparts in other states of the Central Plain.[49] After the Shang Yang reforms 商鞅變法 in the mid-fourth century BC, Qin rose to become the leading state.[50] For the purposes of the present investigation, the most important point is that, while Qin undoubtedly distanced itself from the other vassal states of Zhou, it never considered itself to be culturally more closely associated with the barbarians than with other Zhou vassal states in the Central Plain.[51] Qin undoubtedly saw itself as a part of the *tianxia* order rather than as an outsider to that system.[52]

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[48] Major (1999) 168; This is, of course, not to deny the distinctiveness of the Chu culture from that of the states in the northern part of the Central Plain. For the distinctive culture of Chu and its diversity and complexity, see several articles collected in Cook (1999). But, as Pines points out, "during the Warring States period, the centrifugal tendencies were counterbalanced by forces of renewed cultural integration, promulgated by members of the educated elite"; see Pines (2012) 187 n.12.

[49] Lewis (2007) 39.

[50] For the reforms in and territorial expansion of Qin in the Warring States period, see Lewis (1999) 596. For the history of Qin prior to unification, see the monograph of Wang Quchang 王蘧常 (2000). For an excellent recent overview of Qin history from its early origins to the eve of unification, see Pines with Von Falkenhausen, Shelach and Yates (2013) 11-32.

[51] As Pines observes in a recent article, "For generations Western scholarship was plagued by the erroneous view, perpetuated among others by Bodde, which, following a series of pejorative remarks about Qin in the Warring States and Han literature, in particular in the Historical Records Qin is identified as a "semi-barbarian" polity, a cultural outsider from the margins of the Zhou civilization. Archaeologists — most notably Lothar von Falkenhausen — were among the first to question this misperception." See Pines (2014) 446-447. Kern's book on the stele inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang is an impressive book reinforcing our understanding of the close affinity of the Qin ruling elite with Zhou culture.

[52] I do not agree with Yuri Pines who boldly stated that, since the mid-fourth century BC after Shang Yang's reforms, Qin was 'definitely beyond *tianxia* boundaries'. See Pines (2002) 110.

On the basis of the evidence, the conclusion is that, by the middle and late Warring States period, *tianxia* more frequently was used to refer to the huge landmass made up of the combined territories of the seven major states. Two passages quoted from the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (Schemes/Strategies of the Warring States) clearly show that such an idea was very common among the elite members in this period:

> *In ancient times, there were tens of thousands of states within the four seas. Although the size of some cities was big, none was bigger than 300* zhang. *Although the population of some cities was large, there was none larger than 3,000* hu… *The tens of thousands of states in ancient times have nowadays been reduced to the seven major states.* 且古者四海之內，分為萬國。城雖大，無過三百丈者。人雖眾，無過三千家者……今古之為萬國者，分為戰國七。[53]

Although the term *tianxia* does not appear in this text, in which it is replaced by *sihai,* the message is clearly that the territory within the *sihai* (in other words, the *tianxia*) which had contained tens of thousands of states in remote antiquity, had now fallen under the control of only seven major states.

In another passage, Su Dai 蘇代, a statesman and rhetorician living in the middle of the Warring States period, gives the following comment on the relative importance of the state of Yan among the states of the Warring States period:

> *In the tianxia which consists of the seven states, Yan is one of the weaker.* 凡天下之戰國七，而燕處弱焉。[54]

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, it is possible to conclude that the period between the late Shang era and the foundation of the first unified empire witnessed some important transformations in worldviews.

In the late Shang period, the early Chinese worldview conceptualized the world as consisting of a "centre" and "four quarters". In the Zhou period, a very similar cosmic ideology still prevailed according to which the world consisted of a central capital (*zhongguo*) and four quarters (*sifang*), which had almost certainly been formulated under the influence of Shang models.

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[53] *Zhanguo ce* 20 (*Zhao* 3,1) 678. 1 *zhang* = 10 *chi* = 2.32 metres.
[54] *Zhanguo ce* 29 (*Yan* 1,8) 1056.

Interestingly, the term *tianxia* rarely appears in early Chinese political discourse until the fall of Zhou in the mid-seventh century.

As a result of the decline of Zhou power in the eighth century BC, the Zhou capital of Luoyi gradually lost its role as the centre of the Zhou world. Probably as a result of its diminution in power, the concept of *zhongguo* acquired a broader connotation, developing as a term for the Chinese world and tending to become coterminous with *tianxia*.

When a recognizably Chinese identity began to develop from about the sixth century BC, it continued to bear the imprint of Zhou tradition. From about this time, the Chinese worldview began to be heavily influenced by layers of cultural and religious self-consciousness. The distinction between the *hua* (roughly translated as Chinese-ness) and *yi* (barbarianism), which appeared between the seventh and the fifth century BC, introduced an important element of introversion and inclusiveness into Chinese worldviews.

From the middle of the Warring States period, two factors encouraged this development. First, the increasingly clear-cut separation between the agricultural and nomadic worlds in the north; and second, the emergence of an increasingly homogenous culture in which all of the seven major states participated.

The establishment of a unified Chinese Empire by the Qin king, Ying Zheng 嬴政, who became the First Emperor, created a new world order encompassing all those areas which participated in the emerging Chinese culture and identity. This political fact is reflected by the further development of the term *tianxia*, which now began to be used to refer to a "closed" geopolitical space consisting of the former territories of the seven states.

Although the literary evidence pointing to the emergence of this new worldview is quite strong, it would be wrong to conclude that the more open conception of the world which had existed in the Western Zhou period completely disappeared. In recent research into the development of spatial conceptions in early Chinese classical literature, a chapter preserved in the *Shang shu* named *Yugong* 禹貢 (Tribute of Yu), an eulogy attributed to the legendary sage ruler Great Yu 大禹, the founder of the Xia, has attracted particular attention. Unfortunately, this text cannot be securely dated. It is universally agreed that the *Yugong* cannot possibly have been written by its alleged author, but the dates of composition which have been proposed in the scholarly literature range from the last centuries of Zhou to the early imperial period. For the purposes of my argument it does not really matter which of these

proposals is more likely to be correct.[55]

According to traditional Chinese historiography, the Great Yu was known as a hero who successfully resolved the flooding problems which had plagued the Central Plain of the Chinese landmass for a long time. Allegedly, he spent thirteen years giving leadership to people in trying to cope with the floods, and finally overcame them by draining the land and channelling the rivers to the sea.[56] The *Shangshu* reports that the Great Yu divided the floodplain into nine parts, or nine provinces, named the *jiuzhou* 九州. This is the earliest administrative division based on geographical knowledge recorded in Chinese historical documents.[57] In the world system conceived by the Great Yu, the *jiuzhou* was closely linked to the *wufu* (five zones) 五服, five geographical cultural zones which are named *dian* 甸, *hou* 候, *sui* 綏, *yao* 要 and *huang* 荒 respectively.[58] The innermost zone was seen not only as the geographical centre, but also symbolized the highest level of civilization of the five. Conversely, the zone of *huang*, the outmost layer of the world order, was seen as the least civilized region in the world. Everything lying outside of the *huangfu* 荒服, the outmost layer of the system, was designated the *siji* 四极 (four ends), referring to the four outermost ends of the world.

It is noteworthy that in some pieces of classical Chinese literature the term *siji* is replaced by another term, *sihai* 四海 (four seas). In the book *The Explanation of Names* (*Shiming* 釋名), a Chinese lexicographical compilation attributed to Liu Xi 劉熙 and believed to date from c. AD 200, the *hai* is explained as being interchangeable with the similarly shaped character, but with a different radical, *hui* 晦, which means "too obscure to see clearly".[59] From this it might be inferred that the world order which is found in the *Yugong*, as argued

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[55] See Loewe (1993) 378.

[56] For the flood myths of early China and the tale of Great Yu, see Lewis (2006) 38-39.

[57] The names of the nine provinces are not only recorded in the *Yugong*, they appear in later literary sources among them *You shi lan* 有始覽 in *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, *Zhi fang* 職方 in *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Zhou's Ritual*) and *Shidi* 釋地 in *Erya* 爾雅. Tang Xiaofeng 唐曉峰 suggests that in the later sources *jiuzhou* is not always related to the tale of the Great Yu. In the later period, it was generally used to refer to the vassal states of the Western Zhou. See Tang Xiaofeng (2010) 221-222.

[58] According to *Guangya* 廣雅, *huang* 荒 means "remote" or "far", see *Shigu* 釋詁, *Guang ya*.

[59] *Shiming* 釋名, Vol.1 *Shi shui* 釋水, 9. Li Ling 李零 (2000) 260. Tang Xiaofeng (2010) 132.

earlier, had a relative well-defined centre but unclear boundaries.

Whatever the exact date of composition of the *Yugong* might have been, its contents serve as a reminder that rather than ousting existing ideas about the world, the more closed worldview which emerged during the Spring and Warring States periods coexisted with older spatial conceptions.

3. The stele inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang

3.1 Background

According to the *Basic Annals of the First Emperor of Qin* in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), Qin Shi Huang paid four visits to his newly conquered eastern regions between 219 and 210 BC.[60] During each of his tours, he visited venerated mountains located on the eastern edge of the empire and performed rituals, after each of which a series of inscribed stelae was set up to eulogize the virtues of Qin (*song Qin de* 頌秦德).[61] Although Sima Qian relates that eight stelae were set up during Qin Shi Huang's eastern tours, the texts of only six inscriptions are recorded in his account.[62] The text of a seventh inscription is known from a transcription made during the Tang dynasty. Linguistically, the seven surviving inscribed texts are characterized by certain uniform rhymes and formulae, but these aspects will not be discussed in this chapter.[63]

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[60] For the routes, see Wang Jingyang 王京陽 (1980) 70-76.

[61] For an introduction to Qin Shi Huang's progresses and his stele inscriptions, see Kern (2000) 1-9. For the texts of the stele inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang, see *Shiji* 6, 243-267; Kern (2000) 10-49. For a commentary on the inscriptions, see Rong Geng (1935) 125-171.

[62] The inscription of Mt Yi 嶧山 was composed when Qin Shi Huang made his first tour in 219 BC but the text was not included in the *Shiji*. However, its contents have been preserved in a transcript which was made during the Tang 唐 dynasty (AD 618–907). The copy of the Mt Yi inscription is now in the Museum of the Forest of Stelae of Shanxi Province. The only missing text is the inscription of Zhifu 之罘, created after the First Emperor's visit to Mount Zhifu in the same year. Most scholars do not doubt the authenticity of these inscriptions; see Kern (2000) 3.

[63] Scholars believe the author of the inscriptions to have been Li Si 李斯, Chancellor to the First Emperor. Liu Xie 劉勰 (467–522) and Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (c. 470 – 527), two writers who lived in the period of Nanbei Dynasty 南北朝, state that both the calligraphy and the content were derived from Li Si; see Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍, 21,803; Li Daoyuan, *Shuijing zhu* 水經注, 4,130; 25,810; 40,1256. Some have

The texts of Mt Langxie (琅邪) and Mt Kuaiji (会稽) contain 288 characters each, making them twice as long as the other inscriptions.[64] Despite these differences, all of the seven inscriptions have the same basic structure.[65] For the purpose of the present analysis, they can be divided into three parts. The first part provides background information which sets the scene for the following narrative. In part two, the inscription provides an eulogy of the grand achievements of Qin Shi Huang. In most cases the topics covered in this section include criticism of the cruelty and violence of the six former kings and praise for the pacification and unification achieved by the First Emperor. The last part can be regarded as a kind of summary. It normally consists of only two or three lines, closing the panegyric by emphasizing the lofty aim of the erection of the inscribed stelae, which are stated to have been set up in order to publicize the principles of imperial rule and to glorify and transmit the accomplishments of the First Emperor to later generations forever.[66]

Since Martin Kern has made a close and systematic analysis of the structure of the text, there is no need for a detailed re-examination of this topic.[67] For this reason I shall immediately focus on those issues which are directly related to my own investigations. The two central questions which will occupy us are: What kind of worldview is found in Qin Shi Huang's stele inscriptions, and in what way or ways does this worldview differ from those of the pre-imperial period? In the first half of this chapter, I discussed changes in Chinese worldviews over a long period of time, tracing their transformation between the late Shang and the Eastern Zhou periods. Building on earlier findings, I shall now proceed to examine the inscribed stelae set up by Qin Shi Huang with the aim of shedding some light on the next stage of development.

3.2. Tianxia *in the stelae*

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expressed doubts about the authorship of these inscriptions. Chen Zhiliang 陳志良, for example, thinks the texts were composed by Zhao Gao 趙高, a eunuch and later chancellor of Qin. Since both Li Si and Zhao Gao were closely connected to Qin Shi Huang, the problem of authorship has little relevance to my examination of the worldviews of the ruling class in the Early Imperial China.

[64] Some lines of the Jieshi Gate inscription（碣石門）are thought to be missing.
[65] As pointed out by Kern (2008) 217-240.
[66] This formula is clearly presented in the inscriptions of Mt Yi; Mt Tai; Mt Zhifu; Mt Jieshi Gate and Mt Kuaiji.
[67] Chapter 4 in Kern (2000), 119-147.

In the seven inscriptions, *tianxia*, one of the terms most frequently used in the text, occurs nine times altogether. The complete lists is as follows:

i) *Now the August Thearch/ Has unified the* <u>tianxia</u> *under one lineage/ Warfare will not occur again!* 迺今皇帝，壹家天下，兵不復起！[68]

ii) *In his twenty-sixth year/ He first unified the* <u>tianxia</u>/ *There was none who was not respectful and submissive.* 廿有六年，初並天下，罔不賓服。[69]

iii) *The August Thearch embodies sagacity/ And after having pacified the* <u>tianxia</u>/ *he has fulfilled his duties as a ruler.* 皇帝躬聖，既平天下，不懈于治。[70]

iv) *Everywhere in the* <u>tianxia</u>/ *He unifies the minds and integrates the wills.* 普天之下，搏心輯志。[71]

v) *He universally promulgates sagacious laws/ Gives warp and woof to the* <u>tianxia</u>/ *Forever to serve as ritual norm and guideline.* 普施明法，經緯天下，永為儀則。[72]

vi) *He seized and extinguished the six kings/ Far and wide the* <u>tianxia</u> *was unified/ Disaster and harm were cut off and stopped/ Forever halted were clashes of arms.* 禽滅六王，闡並天下，災害絕息，永偃戎兵。[73]

vii) *The numerous multitudes are free of corvée/ And the* <u>tianxia</u> *is pacified.* 黎庶无繇，天下咸抚。[74]

viii) *In his thirty-seventh year/ He tours the* <u>tianxia</u> *in person/ And all around surveys the distant regions.* 卅有七年，親巡天下。[75]

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[68] Inscription of Mt Yi, 28-29. The translations given here and below are slightly adapted versions of those of Kern.
[69] Inscription of Mt Tai, 4-6.
[70] Inscription of Mt Tai, 19-21.
[71] Inscription of Mt Langxie, 17-18.
[72] Inscription of Mt Zhifu, 28-30.
[73] Inscription of Mt Zhifu Dong-guan, 16-18.
[74] Inscription of the Jieshi Gate, 27-28.
[75] Inscription of Mt Kuaiji, 4-6.

ix) *He took great pains to cleanse/purify customs, and the entire* <u>tianxia</u> *receives the influence/is affected by this/ [All] is covered and clothed by the superb guidelines.* 大治濯俗，天下承風，蒙被休經。 [76]

In each of these nine passages, *tianxia* seems to refer to a relatively closed geo-political entity. In the first text, *tianxia* refers to the unified land made up of the formerly fragmented territories of the multiple states which had existed before unification. The emphasis is on the fact that the First Emperor, for the first time, had unified the world under his own lineage. In the future warfare would be a thing of the past, disasters would no longer occur and people would henceforth live in peace and tranquility.[77] The use of the phrase "has unified the *tianxia* under one lineage" (*yi jia tianxia* 壹家天下) merits attention. In this instance, the character *jia* (家 house, lineage) symbolizes the House of Qin.[78] It indicates that the territories of the former seven states constituting the *tianxia* have now been brought together in a cohesive imperium under Qin Shi Huang and his clan.[79]

The theme of unification, implying the earlier existence of a fragmented world, is also found in the inscriptions of Mt Tai (nos. ii and iii) and Mt Zhifu Dong-guan (no. vi). In the latter inscription the perspective shifts from territorial unification to the unification of minds and wills.

In the inscription of Mt Langxie (no. iv), the author eulogizes the accomplishments of the First Emperor by referring to his famous unification of the written script, weights and measures, coinage and so on. These measures can be seen as making a contribution to the unification of "minds and wills"

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[76] Inscription of Mt Kuaiji, 58-9.

[77] In lines 19-27, the author briefly recalls history, stating that there had been conflicts and wars since remote antiquity. By calling attention to the chaos and turmoil of the past, the author underlines the formidable achievement of the First Emperor who had stopped warfare and unified the world.

[78] For the complicated relationship between *guo* 國 (state) and *jia* 家 (house) in ancient Chinese society, see the monograph by Ogata Isamu 尾形勇, trans. Zhang Hequan 張鶴泉 (1993). The author examines the origin of *jia* and its relationship to the royal houses and dynasties since the Zhou period. He acutely points out that the relationship between the state and house in kingship was based on the loyalty of ministers to their political leaders. In our text, on the term *yi-jia* 壹家, *yi* means "one", *jia* refers to "house". The phrase denotes that Qin Shi Huang annihilated the six feudal states and unified them as single state under the authority of Qin, the new empire. For *jia* as a spatial unit in pre-Qin China, see Lewis's recent study (2006) 77-130.

[79] For the historical narrative of the annihilation of the six states, see *Shiji* 5, 231-235.

referred to in Text iv. The basic message is that, on all levels, an indivisible imperial domain had been forged.[80]

The layout of the Zhifu inscription (no. v) is similar to that of the Mt Yi text. The author first eulogizes the military feats and prowess of Qin Shi Huang who had obliterated the atrocious kings of the six states through punitive wars, bringing an end to centuries of chaos and turmoil. In the subsequent section, the author focuses on the laws promulgated by the First Emperor. Here, the metaphor of the warp 經 and woof 緯 is used to denote the politico-ethical principles institutionalized by the emperor.[81] The Emperor hopes these will be obeyed throughout the Empire and will be adopted as guidelines by later next generations.[82]

The stele inscription at the Gate of Jieshi, the present-day city of Qinhuangdao 秦皇島, Hebei province (no. vii), was erected in 215 BC, when the First Emperor visited the territory of the former state of Yan during his third eastern excursion. Several lines are missing at the beginning of the text, but the structure and subject of the inscription generally coincides with those of the other six. The text states that, after eliminating the six kings, the First Emperor ordered all city-walls of the old states to be demolished, opened the river embankments and removed dangerous obstacles. These attempts were just as pertinently aimed at building a unified empire in a real sense. Following this, the author narrates that multitudes of commoners (*lishu* 黎庶) are now free of corvée, and that the *tianxia* has been pacified and peace bestowed on it.[83] Therefore, *tianxia* is connected to *lishu*, designating the people affected by the administrative re-organization of Qin.

In 210 BC, Qin Shi Huang made his fourth and final tour through the eastern commanderies of his empire (no. viii). This time he travelled all the way to the territory of the old Yue state (present-day Zhejiang province). This

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[80] Inscription of Mt Langxie, 17-20. On these policies see *Shiji* 5, 239. In recent years, scholars have begun to doubt that the scale of Qin Shi Huang's reforms was as large as has been previously thought. For discussion, see Pines with Von Falkenhausen and Shelach and Yates (2013) 48.

[81] See *Zuo Zhuan* (Zhao 25) p.1197: The ritual is the discipline observed by both upper and lower classes in society, as warp and woof connecting Heaven and Earth, see also Kern (2000) 37.

[82] Inscription of Mt Zhifu, 30: "Forever to serve as ritual norm and guideline" (*yong wei yi ze* 永爲儀則)

[83] Inscription of Jieshi, 21-24.

region had been outside the old Zhou domain of earlier centuries, but had been incorporated within the First Emperor's new *tianxia* system.

The ninth passage refers to Qin Shi Huang's reforms in moral and social terms. In line 57, for example, the author claims that, under the sovereignty of the ruler, "all has been transformed to become honest and pure".[84] The entire population living within the boundaries of the political domain of Qin is said to have been affected by these reforms. Here as the other texts, the term *tianxia* cannot be interpreted as a reference to the entire world but only to those areas which had been conquered.[85]

The meanings of the term *tianxia* in the stelae inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang shed an interesting light on the relationship between the configuration of imperial power and imperial world views during the Qin period. Following the centuries of disunity and turmoil which had arisen after the decline of Zhou, for the first time the Chinese world was unified under a single monarchic sovereignty.

The First Emperor of Qin travelled continuously throughout the newly conquered territory for the purpose of consolidating imperial sovereignty and authority. During these journeys, sacrifices were performed on venerated mountains and on the banks of rivers to honour Heaven and various holy (ancestral) spirit beings in order to link the emperor to the divine world and immortality.[86] The act of erecting inscribed *stelae* on top of mountains was meant to contribute to achieving this purpose.

Therefore, the meanings of the term *tianxia* which are encountered in the inscriptions strongly reinforce the idea that the Chinese "world" had begun to be perceived as a relatively closed geopolitical entity, different in character from

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[84] Inscriptions of Mt Kuaiji, 57.

[85] Of the seven inscriptions, only the last one mentions some concrete reforms of customs and rituals. I would suggest that this text refers to the territory occupied by the old Yue in the Spring and Autumn period. For a long time, this area had been regarded as a region in which civilization stood at a lower level than in the states of the Central Plain. The First Emperor might have felt it more urgent to launch reforms in this region.

[86] It is believed that the spirits of the legendary sage kings, like the Yellow Emperor and the Immortals could be reached by ascending to the top of a number of venerated mountains. This is the main reason the First Emperor and some emperors in the later Han dynasty had to travel to the eastern edge the world, ascending mountain tops to perform sacrifices. For discussion, see Kern (2008) 256. I shall return to this topic in Chapter 6.

the unbounded and open worldview which was embraced by the Romans during the Late Republic and Early Principate.

3.3. Tianxia *in Sima Qian's biography of Qin Shi Huang*

A study of the meanings of the term *tianxia* in the *Basic Annals of the First Emperor* strengthens this conclusion. In this treatise, the expression *tianxia* occurs ninety-one times, often in passages containing such terms as *sihai*四海, *hainei*海內 and *junxian*郡县, which belong to the same semantic field. These other terms help clarify the connotations of *tianxia* in the passages concerned. Some good examples are to be found in various passages from the *Basic Annals of Qin Shi Huang*:

> *Chancellor Wang Wan, Imperial Secretary Feng Jie and Commandant of Justice Li Si all replied: "…Now Your Majesty has raised troops to punish the evil and the remiss, brought peace to the <u>tianxia</u>, made the <u>hainei</u> (area within the seas) into <u>junxian</u> (provinces and counties) and ensured that laws and rulings shall proceed from a single authority. From highest antiquity to the present, such a thing has never occurred before, nor could the Five Emperors equal it…"* 丞相琯、御史大夫劫、廷尉斯等皆曰："……今陛下興義兵，誅殘賊，平定天下，海內為郡縣，法令由一統，自上古以來未嘗有，五帝所不及……"[87]

> *Thus the <u>tianxia</u> was divided into thirty-six <u>jun</u> (commanderies), and each commandery was provided with a governor, a military commandant and a censor. The common people were renamed the "black-headed ones".* 分天下為三十六郡，郡置守、衛、監。更名民曰"黔首"。[88]

> *Now the Emperor has unified the <u>hainei</u> (all within the sea), making it into <u>juxian</u> (commanderies and counties), and the bringing peace to the <u>tianxia</u>…* 今皇帝並一海內，以為郡縣，天下和平……[89]

> *Captain of the Archers Zhou Qingchen stepped forward and spoke these words of praise: "In former times Qin's territory did not exceed 1,000 li. But Your Majesty, through your spiritual power and enlightened sagacity, has pacified the <u>hainei</u> (all within the seas) and driven out the Man and Yi barbarians…* 周青臣進頌曰：

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[87] *Shiji* 6, 239.
[88] *Ibid.*, 239.
[89] *Ibid.*, 247.

"他時秦地不過千里，賴陛下神靈明聖，平定海內，放逐蠻夷……"[90]

The Second Emperor plotted with Zhao Gao, saying: "I am still young and have just ascended the throne, and the black-headed people are not yet won over to me. The former emperor made tours through the commanderies and counties in order to display his might and cause the hainei (area within the seas) to be held in awe. Now, if I do not make a similar tour, they will regard me as weak and I shall have no way to make people living in the tianxia serve me as subjects!" 二世與趙高謀曰："朕年少，初即位，黔首未集附。先帝巡行郡縣，以示強，威服海內，今晏然不巡行，即見弱，毋以臣畜天下……"[91]

The Second Emperor said: "…The former emperor rose up from among the feudal lords to unite the tianxia. After the tianxia had been pacified, he drove out the four barbarian tribes in order to bring peace to the border regions, and he built halls and palaces as a symbol of his success…" 二世曰："……且先帝起諸侯，兼天下，天下已定，外攘四夷以安邊境，作宮室以章得意……"[92]

The first three passages refer to the *tianxia* or *hainei* being divided into administrative units after the establishment of a unified, pacified empire. The last three texts refer to the idea that imperial sovereignty was bounded by "the four seas" (*sihai*) or confined to the areas "within the seas" (*hainei*).[93] This conceptualization of space and power was evidently influenced by the pre-Qin worldview in which the world consisted of a centre and four quarters (*sifang*). Ideologically, the primary Qin administrative organization, the system of commanderies and counties, was established throughout the newly conquered lands in which the people of *huaxia*, representing the mainstream of developing "Chineseness", defined the backbone of the order of *tianxia*.[94] In the process, the barbarian tribes, as clearly shown by the last three texts, were all driven out of the newly formed Chinese realm.

In the biography of Qin Shi Huang, Sima Qian relates that walls and bulwarks were built to fend off the invasions by non-Chinese barbarians, of which the most important project was the construction of the Great Wall.[95] Qin

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[90] *Ibid.*, 254.
[91] *Ibid.*, 267.
[92] *Ibid.*, 271.
[93] For the symbolic meaning of the "sea", see the above discussion.
[94] For the names of the thirty-six provinces, see *Shiji* 5, 239.
[95] *Shiji* 5, 239.

Shi Huang's overall defensive imperial policy was bitterly criticized after the collapse of Qin. The most influential critic was the early-Han statesman Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 BC). In his famous essay, *Faulting the Qin* (Guo Qin lun 過秦論), Jia identified the completely defensive policy of Qin as one of the main reasons for its rapid demise.[96] The practical imperial policies of the Qin dynasty will be discussed in a later chapter.

4. Alternative worldviews in Qin China

Soon after the unification, according to *Shiji*, the high-ranking Qin officials led by Chancellor Wang Guan 王琯, Court Minister Li Si and Imperial Councillor Feng Jie 馮劫, advised Ying Zheng to change his title in order to broadcast his successes.[97] Having examined various old designations such as those of the Three Augusts 三皇 and the Five Emperors 五帝, which had been used to refer to the legendary sage rulers of remote antiquity, he coined a brand new title *huangdi* 皇帝 (Thearch August) for himself. By assuming this title Qin Shi Huang wished to express the idea that he had opened a completely new chapter in human history, in line with his conviction that his personal achievements surpassed those of any previous ruler.[98] The title of "king" (*wang* 王) transmitted from the Zhou dynasty was no longer deemed appropriate. Interestingly, another traditional title, *tianzi*, meaning "Son of Heaven", remained in use.[99] As

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[96] Jia Yi's essay is recorded in Sima Qian's *Shiji*. As Jia notes, "Qin united and incorporated the lands of the feudal lords East of the Mount into more than thirty commanderies, repaired ferries and forts, and refined their armour and weapons to protect them". See *Shiji* 5, 279.

[97] In their proposal these officials highlighted the achievements of the First Emperor. As they pointed out, "if the title is not changed now, there will be no way to celebrate the achievements and make them known to [future] generations. Let's consult on the imperial title." See *Shiji* 5, 236.

[98] According to Nishijima Sado 西嶋定生, as a title, *huangdi* 皇帝, originally meant "shining god". Literally, the character *huang* 皇 has the same sound value as 煌, and as an adjective means "shining". If this opinion is right, it would follow that the First Emperor saw himself as a god rather than as a deified human being. Therefore, Sado's observation challenges the traditional view that the emperor was assumed to be an agent between God and humankind, a view which Sado thinks emerged only after the period of the Western Han dynasty. See Nishijima Sado 西嶋定生, trans. Huang Yaoneng 黄耀能 (1983) 23-24.

[99] The term *tianzi* 天子, which can be traced back to the Western Zhou dynasty,

many scholars have pointed out, this title emphasizes the affinity existing between the ruler and Heaven, denoting that the ruler's legitimate power derived from Heaven. This ideological claim might explain why the First Emperor chose to have his accomplishments displayed on mountain tops near the edge of the *oikoumene*, in complete contrast to the Senate's decision to set up copies of Augustus' *Res Gestae* in major cities.[100]

If imperial sovereignty was to be linked to Heaven, it should not be limited by any spatial limits, like mountains, rivers and seas, but extend to the everything under Heaven, in accordance with the literal meaning of *tianxia*. As a matter of fact, the stele inscriptions contain various references to such a worldview, which is at odds with the concept of a bounded *tianxia*:

> *This is the land of the August Emperor: to the west it ranges to the flowing sands, to the south it completely takes in where the doors face north. To the east it enfolds the eastern sea, to the north, it goes beyond Daxia. Wherever human traces reach, there are none who are not his subjects.* 皇帝之土，西涉流沙，南盡北戶，東有東海，北過大夏，人跡所至，無不臣者。[101]

It is also recorded that every bit of earth on which the sun and the moon shine is included in the emperor's domain:

> *Wherever the sun and moon shine, and wherever boats and carriages carry loads, all people live out their lives and of all/among them all there is none who does not achieve his ambitions*！日月所照，舟輿所載，皆終其命，莫不得意！[102]

These two passages refer to a worldview which is radically different from that which encountered in other passages of the same texts. Interestingly, however, the existence of this alternative worldview never tempted the First Emperor to adopt a sustained policy of further expansion after the territories of the seven major states had been unified into a single empire.

It is true that, after 221 BC, the First Emperor ordered his generals to campaign against the Yi tribes in the southeast of the empire, and took great

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appeared in Chinese sources at very early period. By the time of Warring States period, it had become the general designation of the political leader with highest power. See Gan Huaizhen 甘懷真 (2008) 348.

[100] For a more detailed discussion of Qin Shi Huang's visit to Mount Tai and of the performance of the rituals of *feng* and *shan*, see Chapter 6.

[101] Inscription of Mt Langxie, 62-68.

[102] Inscription of Mt Langxie, 21-24.

pains to conquer the Southern Yue 南越, establishing a number of commanderies and counties on the imperial frontiers,[103] but these military and administrative efforts should be seen as sequels to the defeat of the state of Chu in 223 BC. Unlike Augustus, the First Emperor of China does not seem to have been much attracted by the idea of extending imperial power into *terra incognita*.

A brief review of the military conquests of Qin after 221 BC casts into relief the differences existing between the imperial policies of the two empires. Shortly after the unification of China, Qin Shi Huang established a commandery in Longxi 隴西 (present-day southeastern Gansu Province) to define and stabilize the western frontier of the new Empire.[104] Following this he ordered his general, Meng Tian 蒙恬, to expel the Qiang tribes 羌 from the Hehuang Basin 河湟谷地 (modern eastern Qinghai province).[105] After this goal had been achieved, the First Emperor seems to have had no interest in any further westward expansion.

If Sima Qian's narrative can be relied upon, the campaign which was fought against the Xiongnu in 215 BC arose from more or less fortuitous causes. When Qin Shi Huang was on his way to inspect the northern frontier of the empire, Master Lu 卢生, a native of Yan, who had been sent out to the East [China] Sea to search for the Immortals, returned. He submitted a document to the emperor in which he predicted that the Qin Empire would be ended by the

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[103] Sima Qian reports that, after the defeat of the Chu state, Qin established new provinces in the south of Chu, namely Ba province 巴郡 and Qianzhong province 黔中郡. In the Qin dynasty, a man named Chang An 常頞 was ordered to construct a road called Wuchi Dao 五尺道 to cross from Southern Shu 蜀南 (corresponding to southern Sichuan Province) to Dianchi 滇池 (modern Dali 大理, Yunnan Province). Some imperial officials were dispatched to administer these areas. See *Shiji* 116, 2993. Fan Ye says that King Zhao 昭 (325-251 BC) of the Qin state annexed some lands of the Yi tribes and created the province of Qianzhong when the Qin army was campaigning against Chu under General Bai Qi 白起. For details, see Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Hanshu* 86.

[104] The three provinces, Longxi 隴西, Beidi 北地 and Shangjun 上郡, were established in the reign of King Zhao, after the king of Yiqu 義渠, a barbarian tribe active in the Liupan Mountains 六盤山 and Hetao area, had been killed by Empress Xuan in the Ganquan Palace 甘泉宮. Immediately after the establishment of these provinces, the ruler of Qin begun to build Great Wall in these areas to protect them from hostile raids undertaken by the Hu. See *Shiji* 109, 2874.

[105] *Hou Hanshu* 87,77.

Hu. For this reason the First Emperor ordered Meng Tian to attack the Hu barbarians in the north with a force of 300,000 troops. Meng Tian successfully seized the area to the south of the bend in the Yellow River. In the area between Yuzhong 榆中 and Mt Yin 陰山, forty-four counties were established in the frontier zone in order to establish security.[106] A line of fortification works was constructed along the Yellow River to protect the northern frontier. Only three regions beyond the Yellow River, namely: Gaoque 高闕, Beijia 北假 and Yangshan 陽山, had been seized from the hands of barbarians, but outposts were also established to separate the Rong people 戎 from the Chinese settlements.[107] In 213 BC, Sima Qian says, officials in charge of administering lawsuits who had been found guilty of corruption were transported either to construct the northern section of the Great Wall or the garrison of Nan Yue in the southernmost part of the Qin Empire.[108]

To sum up, the stele inscriptions and other sources for Qin history indicate the simultaneous existence of two seemingly contradictory worldviews. On the one hand, there is the view that "all under Heaven" had been unified under the First Emperor's omnipotent and omnipresent power. On the other hand, the idea that imperial sovereignty was geographically unbounded also existed. To judge from the surviving sources, the former view was not only ideologically dominant but also informed or reflected actual Qin policies. The First Emperor and his son were fully aware that beyond the boundaries of the Qin Empire lived other ethnic groups including the Qiang, the Rong, the Hu and Chaoxian 朝鮮. In most texts these huge territories are represented as lying outside the boundaries of the *tianxia*, and neither the Qin nor the early Han emperors showed any great interest in subjugating these areas.

5. China and Rome compared

As we have seen, the concepts *orbis terrarum*, "circle of the lands", and *tianxia*, "all under Heaven", played an important part in the imperial ideologies and worldviews of the early Principate and Qin China respectively. At first glance, the two concepts, each of which refers to "the world as a whole", are very

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[106] For the anecdote and Meng Tian's military success against Xiongnu, see *Shiji* 5, 252-253.

[107] *Ibid.*, 253.

[108] Three provinces were created in Lingnan 嶺南 which was located in the very south of the territory, namely: Guilin 桂林, Xiangjun 象郡 and Nanhai 南海. See *Shiji* 5, 253.

similar. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, it transpires that they carry rather different meanings which point to important differences in the way the world, and the place of the Roman and Chinese Empires in that world, were perceived.

The first chapter has revealed that *orbis terrarum*, in the language of politics of the Late Roman Republic, and specifically in the inscription of *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, refers to an open, externally orientated and all-inclusive worldview. In complete contrast to this, both the stele inscriptions set up by Qin Shi Huang and classical Chinese literature employ the term *tianxia* to refer to a far more closed, inwardly orientated and exclusive view of the world. The founding emperors of China and Rome, Qin Shi Huang and Augustus, both demonstrated their supreme authority by claiming that they had achieved "world dominance", but in reality they were claiming two different things. How can this discrepancy be accounted for?

Part of the explanation might lie in the rather different historical trajectories followed by early Roman and early Chinese expansion and in the different social and political structures of republican Roman and pre-Qin society. As pointed out by Eckstein, the war-like city-state of Rome developed in a ferociously competitive inter-state environment which covered large parts of the Mediterranean world. Consequently, the emergence and persistence of a militaristic mentality in Rome cannot be regarded as exceptional or surprising. What remains striking is the extent to which the processes of military expansion were intertwined with social and political developments in republican Rome. Large sections of Roman society benefited from the conquests which commenced in the late fifth century BC and accelerated during the final centuries of the Republic. Lands and booty were distributed to Roman smallholders as reward for their service in the army. Aristocrats were expected to serve in the army for as long as ten years, and aristocratic generals and officers acquired land, slaves and social prestige. In conjunction with the emphasis on *virtus* and *gloria* as key cultural values, the fierce competition among the Roman noble families in their pursuit of military prestige and glory made the Roman state an aggressive "war machine".[109] The interplay between these

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[109] Joseph Schumpeter defined imperialism as the "objectiveless disposition of a state to unlimited forcible expansion". See Dolye (1986) 23-24. Schumpeter is probably one of the earliest scholars to use the phrase "war machine" to describe the aggressiveness and intense militarism of some empires in human history. Here I use the term "war machine" to describe Rome's aggressiveness in annexing alien territories, but I do not agree that Rome's expansion was driven by an "objectiveless disposition". For a good discussion of the objectives of Roman warfare and expansion during the Republic see

internal stimuli and external factors drove a process of quasi-continuous expansion which lasted for centuries.

As was discussed in Chapter One, Hellenistic imperial ideologies began to affect Roman worldviews in the second century but did not achieve any prominence until the second quarter of the last century BC. In this period, territorial expansion continued to be seen as a tool to satisfy the personal desire for glory. Nevertheless, the elite of republican Italy had now also found an ideology perfectly suited to presenting the seemingly never-ending process of expansion in a new light and to define "world domination" as the ultimate goal of this process. Following the establishment of the Principate, this ideology was adopted by Augustus and thence found its way into the imperial ideology of subsequent centuries.

Ancient China followed a completely different historical trajectory. Unlike the Roman Empire of the late first century BC, the first united Chinese Empire was preceded by the organized and highly prestigious political system of the Western Zhou which had encompassed large parts of China. In other words, by the time of the establishment of the Qin Empire in 221 BC, advanced political entities had already existed in the landmass of East Asia for centuries. The Western Zhou can be seen as a quasi-territorial empire which was characterized by the supremacy of the Zhou king over a number of feudal states which occupied most of the Zhou world. As said, the worldview of the Zhou people appears to have been based primarily on the view that the world consisted of a "centre" and "four quarters". This corresponded to the political structure of the Zhou realm which consisted of a royal domain which was surrounded by multiple vassal states.

The high value which the Zhou kings placed on the concept of *zhong* (centre) can be traced back to the late Shang dynasty. The first ruler of the Western Zhou dynasty built a new capital, the city of Luoyi, which he named *zhongguo*, referring to the centre of the state. He also called himself Son of Heaven, reflecting the claim that his rule was based on a "Mandate of Heaven" (*tianming* 天命).

If Heaven was seen as a supreme god rather than simply as a celestial object, this might have resulted in a worldview in which the areas subjected to this omnipotent Heaven did not have any geographical limits. However, as noted in the first half of this chapter, the term *tianxia* rarely appears in Western Zhou texts. So it is not entirely clear where the limits of the Zhou territory were

Harris (1979).

supposed to lie. In reality, the Zhou king distributed the conquered lands to his supporters, and the multiple regional states thereby created, mainly in the eastern lands, surrounded Luoyi in the nature of satellites.

The eastern capital of Luoyi did not become the political centre of the Zhou world until 771 BC, when King Ping was forced to move there as a result of the threat posed by the western Rong. During the following centuries, the power of the central Zhou state declined, while that of a handful of Zhou feudal states increased. Pledging its allegiance to the principle "venerate the Zhou king, expel the barbarians", the state of Qi followed Zhou rituals and norms while trying to carve out a dominant position in the newly emerging multi-state system. However, in the following two centuries Zhou rituals became increasingly less important, prompting Confucius to call for a restoration of the order in the world by returning to the rituals and norms of the Zhou ancestors.

Under these circumstances the concept of *zhong* (centre) became even more important than it had been. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, during this period, the idea of centre was transformed from a geographical into a cultural and ethnic concept. This shift was paralleled by the gradual emergence of the cultural concept of "Chinese-ness" (*xia*) from which all non-Chinese peoples (*yi*) were excluded.

As a result of these developments, the earlier worldview which had been based on the opposition between centre and *sifang* was replaced by a new perception of the world which distinguished between "inside" and "outside". In this new context, the term *tianxia*, "all under heaven", acquired a new meaning. From the late third century BC, this term was frequently used to refer to the "closed" geographical, political and cultural world ruled by Qin Shi Huang and his successors.

The historical trajectory followed by the fast expanding city-state of Rome was completely different. Although Roman culture was heavily influenced first by the Etruscans and later by the Hellenistic Greeks, the aristocratic elite of republican Rome did not have to deal with the cultural legacy of a highly prestigious political and cultural precursor comparable to the Zhou kingdom. During the seventh century BC, Rome had been just one of a vast number of tiny city-states and over the centuries which followed Roman worldviews took shape gradually in a long process of centrifugal expansion. During the first half of the third century, the concept of *Italia* became an important element in Roman territorial thinking, but as demonstrated in

Chapter One, even this concept was open to various interpretations, and soon after Roman hegemony had been established throughout peninsular Italy, Roman armies were sent to Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, North Africa and the Greek-speaking East.

When cultural contacts with the Hellenistic world intensified during the second and first centuries BC, Rome took over the Hellenistic ideology of world dominance, an idea which perfectly described the logical outcome of a never-ending process of centrifugal expansion. Elaborating on this idea, writers of the Augustan period developed not only the concept of the *imperium sine fine* but also the idea that Rome or Italy was the centre of the *orbis terrarum*.[110] The centrifugal, inclusive and encompassing worldview of this period stands in sharp contrast to the cohesive, exclusive and self-contained perception of the world which is found in Qin and Han China.

Although this contrast between Roman and Chinese worldviews can be convincingly related to differences in the military, political and cultural trajectories from which the Qin-Han and Roman Empires emerged, ecological factors might also have played a part. The city of Rome was situated in close proximity to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, leading to a much higher level of connectivity. After the Second Punic War, the existence of excellent connections by sea facilitated Roman expansion and, by the end of the first century BC, Roman "world dominance" continued to be largely synonymous with mastery of the Mediterranean world.[111]

The core area of Shang China was the North Chinese Plain, far away from the sea. When this fact is taken into consideration, it is not entirely surprising that the Shang people saw themselves as occupying the centre of a square world. The homeland of the Zhou kings was located in the Wei River Valley, adjacent to the Yellow River but far from the Yellow Sea. In various early Chinese texts, such as the *Book of Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經) and the *Tales of King Mu, Song of Heaven* (*Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳), the sea is described as a marginal part of the world, teeming with exotic mysteries.[112]

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[110] For example, Strab. 2,5,26; 6, 4,1. Vitr. 6,1,10-11. For a good discussion of this idea see Clark (1999) 220-223.

[111] For the ecology of the Roman Empire, see Woolf (2012) 56-61. For connectivity in the ancient Mediterranean world, see Horden and Purcell (2000) and Wilson (2003). For the Mediterranean as the Roman *mare nostrum* see Abulafia (2011) 191-211. See also the essays in Harris (2005) for a reconsideration of the role of the Mediterranean in Antiquity.

[112] Tang (2006) 128-33. In Chinese classical texts the Eastern Sea is often associated

As the discussion in Chapter Four will show, the ecological changes which took place in the northern regions of China between the sixth and third centuries BC created a rather sharp dichotomy between the areas dominated by traditional farming and the regions in which pastoral nomadism was becoming the principal economic activity. Even before the unification of China in 221 BC, the states of the northern plain had begun to build walls as a prevention against invasions by the nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes of the north. Admittedly, some of these walls were built to secure newly conquered areas rather than to protect existing territories. The stone walls along the Yin Mountain Ridges built by Zhao in the late Warring States period, for example, are a mark of the successful expansion of the agrarian territories to the north.[113] Similarly, Qin Shi Huang's military operations against the Xiongnu, which resulted in the conquest of the Houtao area 後套 in 215 BC, are also thought to have served this purpose.[114] However, the construction of the Great Wall following the completion of the First Emperor's short campaign against the northern barbarians strongly suggests that he had no interest in further territorial expansion.[115] Similarly, after Qin's conquest of Nanyue, the Qin and Han emperors showed little interest in conquering the hilly terrain of South China stretching beyond the Yangzi valley.

Turning to the Roman Empire, it has been suggested that the pace of territorial expansion slowed down after Augustus because various "natural" limits, among them the Rhine, the Danube and the Sahara, had been reached.[116] But closer inspection suggests that, although the Sahara and the Arabian Desert did form insuperable obstacles, many opportunities for further conquest continued to exist in other areas. What possible explanation can be offered for the fact that, in the two centuries which followed Augustus' death, far fewer regions were added to the Empire than during the last two centuries BC? Does

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with monsters and the Immortals.

[113] Baiyin Chagan 白音查幹 (2000) 81-6. Cf. Di Cosmo (2004) 138-58. Lees and Bates argue that the increase in the number of the people involved in agriculture during the Warring States period stimulated the devolvement of irrigated farming, which in turn stimulated further population growth. The agriculturalists responded to this by expanding their farming areas to the north. See Lees and Bates (1974) 187-193.

[114] Wang Mingke 王明珂 (2008) 155; Xin Deyong 辛德勇 (2009) 241-42; 55. For a detailed discussion of the northern frontiers of the Qin and Han Empires and of the functions of the Great Wall, see Chapter Four.

[115] For a more detailed discussion of this issue see Chapter 4.

[116] Cornell (1993) 141 and 146.

this mean that the policies of most Roman emperors were less aggressive than those of the generals of the Middle and Late Republic? Is it possible to find any evidence of the gradual abandonment of the "open" worldview of the Augustan age and the emergence of a more "closed" perception of the Roman world which placed more emphasis on the opposition between the "civilized" world ruled by the Roman emperors and the areas beyond the frontiers inhabited by "uncivilized" barbarians? These are the main questions for which answers will be sought in the next chapter.

Chapter 3
From *Orbis terrarum* to *Orbis Romanus*:
the *Imperium Romanum* transformed

1. Introduction

Most handbooks in the field of ancient history give the year 27 BC as the commencement of the history of the Roman Empire, but the heyday of Roman territorial expansion was in the period of the Late Republic, roughly from the age of Sulla to that of Julius Caesar, rather than during the Early Empire.[1]

During much of the Augustan period, the momentum of Roman expansion remained robust. After the annexation of Egypt in 30 BC, North-West Spain was subjugated by 19 BC. After these conquests, Augustus acquired new territories in Africa and Arabia. The hill tribes of the Alpine region succumbed to Roman rule after bitter fighting between 16 to 14 BC. Pannonia, Dalmatia, northern Macedonia and Achaea were also incorporated in this period. The brothers Drusus and Tiberius launched large-scale campaigns into the German lands beyond the Rhine between 12 and 9 BC, leading Roman arms as far as the Elbe River. At the time of the Teutoburg Forest disaster in AD 9, Germany was on the point of becoming a province. This audacious worldwide military expansion fits the literary picture which is found in the *Res Gestae*, as I have argued in the first chapter of this thesis.[2]

Despite such a promising beginning, during the last decade of Augustus' reign the Romans suffered a severe blow from revolts in Dalmatia and Pannonia between AD 6 and AD 9. Immediately following the revolt of Illyricum, Varus' defeat resulted in the loss of three Roman legions. The elderly Augustus responded by moving all Roman forces back to the left bank of the Rhine. In a posthumous *consilium*, he advised his successor not to expand the boundaries of the empire beyond the current frontiers.[3] This *consilium* suggests a

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[1] For the rise of Roman imperialism, see Chapter One.

[2] Many articles focus on the subject of the world conquest under Augustus, for example, Brunt (1990) 169-176; Nicolet (1991) 40-47; Eck (1998), 93-104.

[3] Tac., *Ann.* 1,11,7: *addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminus imperii* (He had added the advice that the empire should be kept within its boundary stones); Dio, 56,33; Whittaker (1994) 25.

degree of frontier consciousness had awakened in the minds of the Roman ruling elite of the Early Principate.[4]

John Richardson has studied the change in the meanings of the two terms *imperium* and *provincia* in Latin literature. One of his findings was that it was only during the final years of Augustus' reign that these terms began to be used to refer to territorial entities which were bounded by *fines*.[5] In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus claims that he extended the *fines* of "all the provinces of the Roman people" (*omnium provinciarum populi Romani*). Here the provinces are seen as geographically circumscribed units whose size could be expanded by military conquest. In his *consilium*, Augustus advised his successors to refrain from further expansion and "not to wish to increase the empire to any greater dimensions".[6]

In retrospect, Augustus' recommendation did not determine Roman imperial policy making during the first and second centuries. Only three decades after the catastrophe in the Teutoburg Forest, the Romans began to contemplate the conquest of Britain. Gaius' abortive plan to invade the island was followed up by Claudius who sent an invasion army in AD 43. Although his successor Nero might be seen as one of the least warlike emperors in Roman history, imperial conquest continued during his reign. In the East, Nero's general, Corbulo, achieved notable successes against Parthia, and in the West the Romans continued to expand their territory in Britain. In AD 61, Nero dispatched a praetorian regiment up the Nile on an exploratory and cartographical mission. Around the time of his death, he was planning to send his armies to the region of the Caspian Gates.[7] In the 80s AD, Domitian's Chattian Wars extended Roman control over parts of Free Germany. Two decades later, Trajan turned Dacia into a Roman province and as late as the

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[4] Isaac (1990) 28; Whittaker (1994) 29; (2004) 40-42.

[5] Richardson (2011) 10. While Richardson's theory is broadly acceptable, he goes rather far in playing down the degree of frontier consciousness during the Republic. The *lex publici portorii Asiae* (*AE* 1989, 681; *SEG* XXXIX 1180), which was set up under Nero but contains much Republican material, refers to "the boundaries of the province", demonstrating that a distinction was made between the land within the province of Asia and that outside the provincial boundaries. For studies of the inscription, see Engelmann and Knibbe (1989); Cottier and Crawford (2009). For discussions of the boundaries of the province of Asia, see Mitchell (2009) 169 ff.; Kantor (2011) 155-58.

[6] Cass. Dio 56,33,5.

[7] Plin. *HN* 6,181; Sen. *Q Nat.* 6,8,3–4; and Cass. Dio 63,8,1; Nicolet (1991) 86; Pogorzelski (2011) 151.

early third century Septimius Severus invaded Mesopotamia. Cassius Dio claims that he did so "out of a desire for glory".[8]

In short, although the pace of the Roman conquest slowed down during and after the final years of Augustus' reign, territorial expansion continued for more than two centuries, demonstrating that, until the early third century, most Roman emperors did not direct their efforts to demarcating the frontiers of the empire.

In this chapter I shall argue that a more bounded worldview began to emerge during the second century AD, without obliterating the Augustan ideology of the *imperium sine fine*. One of the questions which will be considered is how these competing worldviews could coexist. Another is whether the emergence of an alternative worldview which assigned great importance to fixed and well-defended boundaries had any discernible impact on actual military policies.

2. *Fines imperii*: limits of power or limits of territory?

As seen in the first chapter, the Emperor Augustus proclaimed that he had made the entire world subject to the rule (*imperium*) of the Roman people.[9] This claim fits perfectly with the concept of an *imperium sine fine* which is found in Virgil's *Aeneid*.[10] Indeed, the relationship between space and power is more explicitly expressed in the works of other Augustan writers such as Horace, Ovid and Vitruvius, and material objects also broadcast the idea that all the peoples of the world were now subject to Rome. On the *Gemma Augustea*, the emperor can be seen enthroned as Jupiter, sitting in the midst of various deities, including Roma, Tellus and Oceanus. He is crowned by another figure who has been identified as *Oikoumene*. The bottom half of the cameo shows Roman soldiers with barbarian captives.[11] The image explicitly advertises Rome's supremacy over the entire world, while emphasizing Augustus' divinely sanctioned power and authority. The Great Cameo of France, which dates to

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[8] Cass. Dio 67,4,1.
[9] *RG* heading: *quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit*. Some scholars assume the preface was added by Tiberius. See Cooley (2009) 102.
[10] Verg. *Aen* 1,278-79.
[11] For the Gemma Augusta, see Bernoulli (1886) 262–274 and Plate XXIX; Picard (1957) 304–310; Richter (1971) Vol. 2, no. 501; Megow (1987) no. A10, 155–163; Hannestad 1988, 78–80; Ando (2000) 287. For a picture see Zanker (1988) 230–232, with Fig. 182 on p. 231; Pollini (1993) 50; Whittaker (1994) 33-34, with Fig. 6 on p. 34.

the early reign of Tiberius, also expresses the idea that the *imperium Romani* has no boundaries. [12] The image shows a seated Tiberius holding a spear and surrounded by a cluster of figures. Some of these have been identified as members of the imperial *domus divina* and others as deities. In the sky, can be seen a man carrying a globe. One of the messages conveyed by this scene is that domination over the *orbis terrarum* had been transmitted from Augustus to Tiberius.

The claim that Rome's rule had no limits continued to be repeated by other writers of the first century. Pliny the Elder, for instance, states that a vast portion of the Earth bears the Romans' glory and honour.[13] Flavius Josephus credits King Agrippa of Judaea with a speech in which he points out to the rebellious Jewish people that Romans arms "have triumphed over the whole world", warning them not to challenge the authority of Rome.[14] These texts show that, throughout the first century AD, the ideology of Roman power without limits remained deeply ingrained in the minds of the upper classes of Roman society.

Such claims did not remain not undisputed. Some Latin writers of the early first century explicitly acknowledge that not all *gentes* and *nationes* of the *orbis terrarum* are subject to Rome's domination. Ovid, for example, urges Augustus not to stop territorial expansion but to pursue universal domination. As he writes,

> *Ecce, parat Caesar, domito quod defuit orbi*
> *Addere. Nunc, Oriens ultime, noster eris.*
> Oh, Caesar was preparing to complete the conquest of the world!
> Now, the farthest East should be ours.[15]

The contemporary poet Horace likewise expresses the wish that Caesar will push forward into the lands inhabited by various groups of barbarians, among them the Parthians, the Scythians, the Arabs and the Britons.[16] He takes for granted that all the territories from the far West (Spain) to the far East (India), and from the Nile in the deep south to Britain in the north hold Augustus in

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[12] Gagé (1930), 18–21; Megow (1987) no. A85 on 202–206; Ando (2000) 289, n. 57.
[13] Plin. *HN* 2,68,6-8.
[14] Jos. *BJ* 2,358.
[15] Ov. *Ar. Am.* 1,177-8; *Met.* 15,832-831; see also Nicolet (1991) 44; Ov. *Met.* 15, 832-831.
[16] Hor. *Serm.* 2.1.10-15.

awe.[17] Virgil predicts that the territory of Augustan Rome will reach the Garamantes and India, surpassing Hercules and Dionysus.[18] Strabo, on the one hand, emphasizes that the Britons sent envoys to Augustus to ask for his friendship, but also admits that Britain was not under direct Roman control. His explanation is that Britain was simply not worth conquering.[19] During the reign of Nero, the poet Lucan laments that the conquest of the world should have been completed by Pompey and Caesar, but that the attainment of this goal had been delayed by the civil war. Hence, he prompts Nero to complete this project.[20] A number of unconquered peoples are explicitly identified in his work. For example, in the first book of his *Bellum Civile*, he expresses the view that, if the Romans genuinely love war, they must set out to campaign against the peoples dwelling on the edge of the world, such as the Scythians, the barbarous Arabs and even the people of Central or East Asia:

> *sub iuga iam Seres, iam barbarus isset Araxes*
> *et gens si qua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo.*
> *tum, si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi,*
> *totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem,*
> *in te verte manus: nondum tibi defuit hostis.*
> Already the Seres might have passed beneath our yoke, already the barbarous Araxes,
> and any race, if there is one, that knows the source of the Nile.
> If Rome has such love of unspeakable warfare,
> let her first subdue the whole world under Latin laws,
> turn your hand against yourself—you have never yet lacked a foe.[21]

At the same time, many Romans seem to have thought that Roman power had been brought to nearly every corner of the earth. For instance, in AD 15, after the mutiny of the Roman troops on the German frontier, Germanicus launched a punitive campaign against the Chatti and Cherusci. After defeating the German barbarians, a number of Roman legions reached the shores of the North Sea via the river routes. Tacitus describes this part of the ocean as the roughest in the world, with hostile coasts bordering a vast and deep sea beyond

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[17] Hor. *Carm. 4.14.41-52*
[18] Mattern (1999) 169.
[19] Strab. 2,5,8.
[20] Luc. *BC* 1,53-62.
[21] Luc. *BC* 1,13-23.

which no other lands exist.[22] On the eve of the Claudian invasion of Britain, the troops commanded by the Roman general Aulus Paulinus were reluctant to board ship, because they thought Britain was outside the limits of the known world.[23] In the fictitious the speech given by Boudicca, she points out that the ocean separates the island of Britain from the continent, claiming that the Britons were living under a different sky.[24] After Claudius' conquest of Britain in 43, the emperor had a naval crown fixed to the pediment of the imperial palace, symbolizing that he had overcome the Ocean. An inscription dating to c. AD 51-52 states that Claudius was the first to have subjected the barbarian tribes living beyond the Ocean to the rule of the Roman people.[25]

This discussion produces two conclusions. Firstly, during the first century AD the idea that Rome, as the *caput orbis terrarum*, had universal and limitless power continued to be reiterated. Secondly, the claim to universal dominance could be combined with the admission that in actual fact Rome had not yet conquered the entire world in a geographical sense.

The concept of world dominance might be regarded as part of the ideological legacy of the Late Republic, when Roman writers and politicians had embraced an open, encompassing and outwardly oriented worldview, as discussed in Chapter One. In the sections which follow, I shall examine to what extent this unbounded worldview manifested itself in greater territorial expansion and in Roman frontier policies. At the end of this chapter, I shall return to Roman worldviews, focusing specifically on the changes in the ideological representations of the empire which can be observed during the first two centuries of the Principate.

3. Frontiers, foreign relations and imperial expansion during the first and second centuries AD

3.1. Client kingdoms

Undeniably a certain type of frontier consciousness existed during both the Republic and the Early Empire. When the Roman province of Africa was created after 146 BC, an earthwork, the *fossa regia*, was constructed to demarcate

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[22] Tac. *Ann.* 2,24.
[23] Cass. Dio 60,19,3.
[24] Cass. Dio 62,4,2.
[25] Wiedemann (1996) 236.

the boundary between the new province and the Numidian kingdom.[26] This example shows that, even if the Romans might not have thought of each frontier province as having a clear linear boundary, they were fully aware that those lands which were either occupied by allied kingdoms or inhabited by various barbarian tribes were not directly controlled by Rome. Consequently, it is not entirely true that the idea that states are separated by clear boundary lines did not emerge until the Early Modern Period.[27]

If a certain degree of frontier consciousness had not existed, Augustus' advice to "keep the empire within its boundaries" (*coercendi intra terminos imperii*) would have been nonsensical.[28] In this passage, the phrase *terminos imperii* must refer to the boundaries of the geographical area within which Rome could exert her power absolutely and directly. During the period of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, many parts of the Roman empire were surrounded by various client kingdoms or client tribes.[29] Although it is by no means obvious that the decision not to incorporate these client kingdoms and tribes stemmed from any conscious strategic considerations, as presumed by some modern scholars, it remains the case that, in the Early Imperial period, most client kings and tribal leaders who were thought of as *amici populi Romani* were allowed to keep their positions, as long as they behaved as loyal allies.[30]

In his account of the foreign policies adopted by Augustus around 20 BC, Cassius Dio distinguishes between two types of territories controlled by the Romans. While those territories which had been incorporated as *provinciae* were governed according to Roman customs, Augustus allowed allied peoples to

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[26] For discussions of the *fossa regia*, see Di Vita-Evrard (1986); Mattingly (2005) 137, 181-182, 206, 330; Quinn (2004); Abid (2014) 401-418.

[27] Whittaker claims that, by their nature, empires are incompatible with territoriality. See Whittaker (2004) 2. He argues that there was no direct link between sovereignty and territoriality until 1648, when the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years' War. This moment is widely regarded as signalling the creation of the concept of the nation-state. For the significance of the Westphalian system, see Osiander (2001) 257-284. For criticism see Badie (1995) 12-17. Whittaker's point remains valid to the extent that the client kingdoms of the first century could be seen as being subject to (indirect) Roman rule.

[28] Tac. *Ann.* 1,11; Cass. Dio 56,33,5.

[29] General studies about the relationship between the Roman Empire and the client kingdoms in the Principate, see Braund's monograph: Braund (1984); also Braund (1988) 69-96.

[30] Braund (1984) 55-70. This is also the viewpoint of Luttwak, who argues that the imperial rulers strategically employed the client system to defend the empire and sustain expansion. See Luttwak (1978) 50.

govern themselves in accordance with their indigenous traditions.[31] Dio also says that Augustus was satisfied with the *status quo* and that he had no intention of bringing any new territories or allied nations under his rule.[32] Likewise, Suetonius discusses the fate of those kingdoms which had turned against Rome during the civil war. In the aftermath of this conflict, Augustus restored some of these kingdoms but incorporated others into various Roman provinces.[33]

In some cases Rome took the step of appointing new client kings. King Juba II of Mauritania provides a good example. Juba II was raised and educated in Rome. His father was Juba I, an ally of Pompey and an enemy of Caesar, who died after the battle of Thapsus in 46 BC. Juba II became a close friend of Octavian. In 27 BC Juba was made king of Mauritania and married Cleopatra Selene II.[34] Juba's kingdom was not annexed until AD 40, because, Cassius Dio asserts, Caligula coveted the wealth of Mauritania. Juba's son and successor, Ptolemy, was recalled to Rome and forced to commit suicide. Thereafter the kingdom of Mauritania was annexed and divided into two provinces, Mauritania Tingitana and Caesariensis.[35]

The fate of the kingdom Cappadocia in the East was similar to that of Mauritania. After the death of King Archelaus in AD 17, it became part of the province of Syria. If Tacitus' account is reliable, the main reason for taking this step was that Archelaus had been discourteous to Tiberius when he was living as an exile in Rhodes in AD 1.[36] Another client kingdom, Commagene was also annexed in AD 17, after the death of King Antiochus III.[37] Among the client kingdoms bordering the eastern provinces, the disappearance of the client kingdom of Thrace can be attributed to similar causes. After the death of King Rhoemetalces I in AD 12 Augustus separated Thrace into two kingdoms, appointing Cotys VIII and Rhescuporis II kings, but in AD 19 the latter reunited the kingdom by murdering Cotys.[38] When the reigning king Rhoemetalces III was murdered in 46, Claudius converted Thrace into a

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[31] Cass. Dio 54,9,1.
[32] Suetonius has a similar account; see Suet *Aug.* 21,2,-3.
[33] Suet. *Aug.* 48.
[34] Dio Cass. 53,26,2. Braund (1984) 16-17.
[35] Dio Cass. 59,23,1. For general discussions of these two frontier provinces, see Millar (1967) 169-172; Raven (1969) 55; Breeze (2012) 142-143.
[36] Dio Cass. 57,17,3-6; Tac. *Ann.* 2,42.
[37] Tac. *ibid.*
[38] Tac. *Ann.* 2,64-67.

province.[39] By the end of the reign of Vespasian in 79, many former client kingdoms had become Roman territories.

Those client kings who were allowed to keep their kingdoms or had had them conferred by friendly emperors, were expected to ensure the stability of the frontiers and to provide manpower for the auxiliary units.[40] Similar relationships had already been formed during the Middle and Late Republic, when some foreign rulers had sought the patronage of powerful Roman families.[41] During the Early Empire, allied kings had to play the game exercising more care, as personal relationships with the incumbent emperor became a crucial factor in the fate of their kingdoms.[42] Augustus awarded kingdoms to his friends Juba II of Mauritania and Herod the Great. Antiochus IV of Commagene and Herod Agrippa were close friends of Caligula. Immediately after the latter's accession to the throne, Antiochus received the territory of his deceased father augmented by the coastlands of Cilicia. Simultaneously, Julius Agrippa (Herod Agrippa) was released from prison and offered a vast amount of land and royal titles. When he died in AD 44, his kingdom ceased to exist, but his son Julius Agrippa II received the kingdom formerly held by his uncle, Herod of Chalcis. In the 60s, Nero enlarged his territory by adding a number of cities in the Galilee and Peraea. The kingdom continued to exist until Julius Agrippa's death in AD 93.[43]

Were the allied kingdoms bordering the provinces of the empire regarded as being inside or outside the empire? As argued by Braund, the best answer to this question is that they "were neither and both".[44] Administratively, the Romans were aware of the distinction between provinces and non-provincial areas. In the *Res Gestae*, for instance, Augustus claims that he

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[39] Dio Cass. 60,28.
[40] Luttwak (1976) 49-50. Most scholars criticize Luttwak for overestimating the role of these allied kingdoms in securing the provinces of the empire during the Julio-Claudian era, but there can be little doubt that they did have this effect to a greater or lesser degree, whatever the aims originally were. See Gruen (1978) 564.
[41] Astin (1967) 27-31; Badian (1958); Braund (1988) 82-86; Wallace-Hadrill (1989).
[42] Some examples, see Braund (1984) 55 ff.
[43] Joseph, *Ant. Iud.* 20,9-15; Tac. *Hist.* 2,81. In addition to these examples, it is known that the Parthian king, Vologaeses, did once, in AD 69, promise to offer Vespasian 40,000 archers, although the latter refused to avail himself of it. For some other examples: the Cheruscan leader Italicus, Iulius Agrippa of Judaea, Antiochus IV of Commagene and Tigranes V of Armenia and Pharasmanes of Iberia; see Suet. *Vesp.* 6,3; Tac. *Hist.* 4,51.
[44] Braund (1984) 182.

advanced the "the boundary of Illyricum to the bank of the River Danube".[45] The passage shows that the Emperor regarded the Danube as the border of Illyricum, at least at a particular moment in time. In AD 66, when the Armenian king, Tiridates, returned home after paying a visit to Nero, he was accompanied by many artists whom he brought with him from the city of Rome. Cassius Dio says that Corbulo forbade some of these artists to cross into the land of Armenia,[46] proving that the existence of a clear territorial division did not mean that Armenia was free to pursue its own policies independently of Rome. Similarly, the fact that a stone column was set up to mark the boundary between the province of Osrhoene and the kingdom of Abgar of Edessa in AD 195 does not imply that Abgar was free to disregard Roman interests.[47]

In those regions in which Roman provinces did not border on client kingdoms, indisputable traces of a dynamic conception of provincial *fines* exist. The passage from the *Res Gestae* in which Augustus claims to have extended the *fines Illyrici* all the way the Danube goes on to state that his army crossed the Danube and subdued the Dacians beyond it.[48] Tacitus refers to Elephantine and Syene as being the frontier-posts of the Roman Empire at the time of Germanicus' visit in AD 19, but then goes on to say that, in his time, the boundary had been extended to the Red Sea. In the *Germania*, Tacitus explains that, only after a military road had been built (*limite acto*) and the garrisons had been moved forward (*promotisque praesidiis*), was the area of the *Agri Decumates* regarded as an outlying region of the empire and as part of a province.[49]

3.2. Parthia and the East

During the first and second centuries, Rome probably considered Parthia the only neighbouring state capable of posing a serious threat to it.[50] The Persians had been defeated by Alexander the Great, but Rome never came close to

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[45] *RG* 30,1.

[46] Cass. Dio, 62,6,3.

[47] The stone was set up when the new province of Osrhoene was established. See Lo Cascio (2000) 85; Whittaker (2004) 7.

[48] *RG* 30,2.

[49] Tac. *Ger.* 29,4. In the Penguin translation of 1948, the phrase *limite acto* is mistranslated as "the frontier line of defence was drawn". For the meanings of the terms *limes* and *limites*, see Isaac (1988) 125-147.

[50] However, the dearth of evidence from the Parthian side makes it difficult for modern researchers to evaluate relationship between Rome and Parthia. For the problems posed by the biased sources, see the comments of Wheeler (2000) 288.

repeating this achievement against the Parthians. After Crassus' defeat at Carrhae in 53 BC and the unsuccessful campaigns of Mark Antony, the Roman government developed a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards Parthia.

Augustus recovered the lost Roman standards and prisoners from Parthia by diplomacy. Roman writers of the first century urged Augustus to march against Parthia, but no such expedition was undertaken during his reign.[51] Under Nero, military conflicts took place between Parthia and Rome but these never escalated into massive warfare. During the second and early third centuries, Rome fought several large-scale wars against the Parthians. The armies of Trajan and Septimius Severus did manage to capture large parts of Mesopotamia, but the Rome troops never managed to penetrate into the Iranian hinterland and turn the whole area to a Roman province.[52]

Between the death of Augustus and that of Septimius Severus, the Romans were able to maintain their *dignitas* in their relations with Parthia.[53] Whenever the confrontations between Rome and Parthia escalated into warfare, it was usually Rome which was capable of enough mobilizing military manpower and resources to launch long-distant campaigns into the Parthian territories, rather than the other way round.[54] Although scholars claim that most Roman emperors of the first two centuries adopted the prudent strategy of avoiding direct confrontation with Parthia, preferring to deal with the Parthian question by manipulating the politics of Armenia, it is widely agreed

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[51] Hor. *Odes*, 4,15,23; Pogorzelski (2011) 163-168 e.g. For the general discussion about the relationship between Rome and Parthia from Augustus to Caracalla in the third century, see Karl-Heinz Ziegler (1964); Campbell (1993) 213-240; Wheeler (2000) 287-292.

[52] Cass. Dio 68,17; 71,2; 76,9-13. For overall discussion about Roman-Persian wars from the Late Republic to the third century, see Isaac (1990) 28-33.

[53] Cass. Dio 68,29. The failure to extend Roman control into the Parthian hinterland can be attributed to complex reasons. Focusing on the Euphrates River, Dąbrowa, points out that, unlike other major rivers in the Roman frontier zones, such as the Rhine and the Danube, only a limited section of the Euphrates was navigable. In addition, no navigation upstream was possible. These features made it difficult for Rome to gain control over the whole waterway. See Dąbrowa (2002) 275-279.

[54] In a letter sent by the Caesennius Paetus, legate of Cappadocia, to the Parthian king Vologaeses V in AD 62, the former compares the strength of the two states, claiming that the king of Parthia had mobilized all the resources of his kingdom against Rome's two legions, but that Rome had the rest of the world (*orbem terrarum reliquum*) behind it. It should, however, be noted that Paetus made this claim while his troops were being besieged by Parthian troops in a series of hastily erected camps. He was ultimately forced to accept a treaty under which all Roman troops were to be withdrawn from Armenia. See Tac. *Ann.* 15,13.

that, before the rise of the Sassanid Empire in the mid-third century, Rome had the upper hand in Roman-Parthian relationships.[55] In other words, while the Roman emperors of the Principate might have surrendered the ambition of rivalling the achievements of Alexander the Great by annexing all of Parthia, the Romans continued to have a large degree of political and military freedom in dealing with their eastern neighbour.

3.3. North-West and Central Europe (the Rhine and Danube frontiers)

On the western fringes of the empire, where no political entity capable of playing a role similar to that of Parthia existed, the levels of political organization were more primitive than they were in the East.[56] After Augustus' death, the majority of German tribes maintained alliances with the Romans. From the first century AD, numerous German barbarians served in the Roman auxiliary troops, but tribal loyalties to the Roman government were fragile. The events leading to the Teutoburg Forest disaster and the Batavian Revolt during the civil war between AD 68 and 69 are well-known cases in point.[57] Unquestionably, because of the low level of cohesiveness within these tribal organizations and their limited military striking power, they did not pose any really serious threat to Roman domination and, under normal circumstances, the Romans experienced few difficulties in keeping the German tribes in check by a combination of military force, diplomacy and other techniques. Italicus, for example, the son of Flavus the brother of Arminius, was educated in Rome. He was then sent back to the Cherusci by the Roman emperor Claudius when the tribe asked the Romans for king. Maroboduus, the leader of the Marcomanni, incurred the anger of Tiberius because he did not provide the Romans with

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[55] Isaac (1990) 19-53.

[56] For example, multiple tribes along the Rhine and beyond it were all lumped together under the same name and were called *Germani* by Roman authors, despite the fact that these tribes were not a unified nation. For the research on the origins and development of Germani in Roman period, abundant works have been published. However, it is impossible to mention all the studies in this footnote. Important works published in the last two decades include Todd (1992) and Wolfram (1997); see also Rüger (1996) 517-534.

[57] The most important revolts of the first century AD are recorded by Tacitus. They include the Gaulish revolt led by the Treviri in 22, the revolt of the Frisii in Lower Germania in 28, and the uprisings of the Iceni in 47 and 60.

support during the punitive German campaigns led by Tiberius and Germanicus after the Teutoburg Forest disaster.[58]

Between the end of Germanicus' German military expeditions in about AD 16 and the outbreak of the Batavian Revolt, there were a few sporadic uprisings among the German tribes of the Lower Rhine area, but on the whole the region remained relatively peaceful.[59] Tacitus states that Corbulo had the opportunity to launch a major campaign against the Chauci, but Claudius stopped him from further expansion.[60]

Turning to the frontier along the Upper Rhine and Upper-Middle Danube, from the early first century, at first sight, a good opportunity to annex the territory of Marcomanni presented itself when a split emerged in the tribal confederation AD 18 and Maroboduus fled to Italy. The reason Tiberius did not undertake any military action at this juncture remains obscure.[61] Gaius does not appear to have been interested in the conquest of this area, although he visited the Roman legions stationed on the Rhine frontiers in AD 39/40. Nero had little interest in military matters and there was no territorial gain in Germany under his reign.[62] Vespasian also showed hesitation about bringing the Roman troops across the Upper Rhine, but he did consolidate the frontier zone by building roads across the *Agri Decumates*.[63]

Taking all the evidence into account, it is fair to say that there was no attempt to expand Roman power into the territory of Germans until AD 83.[64] In that year the young emperor Domitian, who felt he lacked sufficient military prestige, launched a major war against the German *Chatti*. However, immediately following the conclusion of the First Chattian War, he turned his gaze to the frontier of the Middle Danube. Against the advice of his friends, who urged him to continue Vespasian's policy of maintaining client relationships with the Suebi and the Dacians, Domitian moved large numbers of troops from the Rhine to the Danube in preparation for another war.[65] During the last decade of the first century, the Germanic Suebi, Marcommani

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[58] Tac. *Ann.* 2,46,5.
[59] Tac. *Germ.* 37.2: *tam diu Germania vincitur.* For the policy of the German frontiers under Augustus, see Wells (1972) 156-161.
[60] Tac. *Ann.* 11,16–20; Cass. Dio 60,8,7.
[61] Suet. *Tib.* 41.
[62] Griffin (2008) 124-125.
[63] Tac. *Germ.* 29,3. Schönberger (1969) 158.
[64] Tac. *Germ.* 37. For Domitian's first Chattian War, see Cass. Dio 67,3-4; Jones (1992) 128-131.
[65] For the war of Chatti, see Jones (1973) 79-90; (1992) 126-131.

and Quadi, as well as the Sarmatians and Dacians, continued to attract plenty of Roman attention.

In the following century, Trajan's aggressive policies resulted in the incorporation of Dacia as a new province. Although shortly after his accession to the throne Hadrian withdrew the army from parts of Dacia, restricting Roman Dacia to the area within the Carpathian Mountains, Rome continued to control the entire area of the lower Danube. As long as the Marcomanni and Quadi on the middle Danube remained subservient to Rome, the imperial government could control them by manipulating their internal affairs.

Following the Claudian invasion of Britain and the creation of the province of Britannia, Rome pursued a highly expansionist policy in this area. Between 70 and 85 all of Wales, northern England and southern Scotland were added to the province.[66] After AD 85 Roman policies became less aggressive, in part because attention shifted to the eastern frontiers. Hadrian and Antoninus Pius built their walls in order to make it easier to monitor the movements of the British barbarians. In AD 208 Septimius Severus launched a new series of aggressive campaigns against the Britons. These campaigns seem to have begun as a punitive war but, as many other Roman wars, they quickly became more aggressive. The advance of the Roman troops ended with the emperor's death in Eboracum (York) in 211.[67]

On the whole, Rome enjoyed a position of superiority in dealing with the various barbarian peoples on the Rhine and Danubian frontiers during the two centuries after Augustus' death. Although some aggressive campaigns were fought and some new provinces were created, skillful manipulation of the internal affairs of barbarian tribes generally sufficed to secure Roman interests.[68] Compared to the situation which had existed during the Republic, war became intermittent but Rome did not hesitate to resort to force if the interests of the empire or the personal interests of the emperor required this. Millar has also pointed out that many conflicts seem to have been initiated by a particular emperor's subjects.[69] While there is an element of truth in this theory, it has to be said that, in almost all cases, the decision to continue a war or to make peace was made by Rome rather than by barbarian peoples. Examples

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[66] For British conquests in the reign of Vespasian, see Levick (1999) 158 -159.
[67] For Septimius Severus' military activities in Britain, see Birley (2002) 170-187. For the Roman conquest of Britain from Claudius to Septimius Severus, see Mattingly (2006) 94-127.
[68] Pitts (1989) 45-58.
[69] Millar (1966) 165-166; (2010), Part Three, Subject and Emperor, 275-537, *passim*.

include Germanicus' punitive war against the Germans between AD 15 and AD 17, Gaius' decision to abandon the plan to conquer Britain in 39, Corbulo's withdrawal of the army from the east bank of the Rhine on the orders of Claudius in 47, Domitian's Second Dacian War in 87, Hadrian's withdrawal of the Roman forces from the lower Danube in 127, as well as Commodus' decision to conclude a truce with the Marcommani, Quadi and Burii in 180. These examples illustrate that, by and large, Rome was able to maintain an elastic and confident stance in its dealings with its barbarian neighbors. While Roman policies were not invariably aggressive during the first two centuries AD, warfare always remained one of the options available to the emperors of this period.

4. Frontier policy making and the Grand Strategy revisited

In the field of Roman frontier studies, a fierce debate has raged about whether the central Roman government did develop a long-term, rational policy for the defence of the empire. A key moment in this debate has been the publication of Edward Luttwak's *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (1976), which stimulated debates not only among ancient historians, but also among archaeologists and political and military specialists. [70] Luttwak sees the development of the Roman frontier from the time of Augustus as having been shaped by rational and well-calculated planning. He divides the development of Roman frontiers into three chronological phases. In the first phase, which lasted from the reign of Augustus to that of Nero, the client kingdoms on the periphery of the empire were allowed to survive because the Romans believed their existence helped to protect the inner zones of the empire from the intrusions of hostile barbarian enemies. Between the death of Nero and that of Septimius Severus, Rome developed a new policy of "preclusive security" by annexing client kingdoms or tribes until it reached natural defensive frontiers. A well thought-out system of fortifications was built up in this period. Luttwak sees the period from 235 to the end of the Principate in AD 285 as the third stage of the Grand Strategy. This period witnessed the emergence of the idea of defence-in-depth. [71] Since the last period is beyond the scope of my

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[70] Luttwak (1976). For the feedback and criticism of Luttwak, see Gruen (1978) 563-566; Mann (1979) 175-183; Millar (1982) 2-23; Dyson (1985) 177-179; Isaac (1990) 5; 187-188; 376-377; Wheeler (1993) 7-41; 215-250; Whittaker (1994) 66-70; Austin and Rankov (1995) *passim*; Whittaker (2004) 28-49, Kimbley (2006) 333-362 etc.
[71] Gruen (1978) 563.

investigations, the following discussion will focus on the first two phases of Luttwak's Grand Strategy.

Luttwak's theory sits rather uneasily with the fact that imperial frontier policies during the Principate appear to have been highly erratic, not only between Augustus and Nero but also between the beginning of the Flavian period and the end of the Severan dynasty. Certainly, there are strong indications that the emperors of the first and second centuries AD did not see *continuous* territorial expansion as an inevitable military or political goal. Tiberius, for example, preferred to solve conflicts with barbarian tribes or kingdoms by virtue of either diplomacy or trickery rather than by military means. One reason for this seems to have been that he had acquired sufficient military prestige before his accession to the throne.[72] Claudius advertised his close relationship with the army, but showed little interest in further expansion after his armies had conquered large parts of Britain. As stated, he ordered Corbulo to withdraw his army to the left bank of the Rhine in 47,[73] and in AD 51 Helvidius Priscus was forced to return with his army after having crossed the Taurus Mountains into Armenia.[74]

Despite the caution exercised by some, many emperors did initiate wars and some newly conquered areas were incorporated as provinces, following the pattern set during the Republic. In most cases, the motives of the emperors who took these decisions remains an unknown mystery, but it is certain that Luttwak's emphasis on considerations of frontier security is far too one one-sided. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, among the reasons behind the foreign policy making, the necessity for emperors to accumulate military prestige is likely to have played a very important part. The conquest of Britain

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[72] In the letter to Germanicus, who was commanding the military campaign against the German barbarians in the lower Rhine in 16, Tiberius claims that he had been sent into Germany nine times by Augustus, and achieved more by diplomacy than by force. See Tac. *Ann.* 2,26.

[73] Tac. *Ann.* 11,19.

[74] Tac. *Ann.* 12, 49-50. The trajectory followed by Roman-Parthian relationships is instructive in this regard. As soon as the Romans had gained the upper hand in Armenia, what the emperors normally did was to change their policy from a hawkish imperialism to diplomatic dialogue. In 63, before Corbulo's aggressive military stance, Vologaeses sued for peace (Tac. *Ann.* 15,27). Of course, because of the lack of the sources from the Parthian side, it will never be known if Tacitus is correct in claiming that Parthia accepted the authority of Rome because of the latter's superior military strength. In any case, it cannot be denied that Rome normally followed a cautious course in dealing with Parthia.

by Claudius provides the most striking example. Trajan's expeditions into Armenia and Mesopotamia, culminating in the capture of Ctesiphon, were very probably motivated by the wish to follow in the footsteps of Alexander the Great.[75] As far as can be ascertained, many other major military operations, among them Germanicus' German campaign, Domitian's Chattian War of AD 83, Antoninus Pius' military advance to the area beyond the Hadrian's wall and Septimius Severus' offensive in northern Britain, were not undertaken for the purpose of protecting or achieving imperial security. Unquestionably, an appetite for military prestige and glory seems to have played an important part in carrying out these campaigns.

This is not to say that Roman emperors never took of the security of the empire into account. In this respect Luttwak's critics have gone too far. After the Illyrian and Dalmatian revolts and the disaster of the Teutoburg Forest, Augustus seems to have reconsidered the wisdom of his earlier plan to conquer the world.[76] Hadrian's decision to give up part of the newly conquered Dacian territory might have been informed by the idea that the province of Dacia should be confined to those areas which could be defended against barbarian incursions.[77] The efforts which Hadrian made to build or reinforce linear systems of fortifications in Britain, between the upper Rhine and Danube and in the southern Aurès Mountains of Numidia likewise suggest that he had a long-term view about the safety of the imperial frontiers. Nevertheless it should be emphasized that, immediately after Hadrian's death, Antoninus Pius launched a new aggressive policy in Britain. Hadrian's Wall was abandoned and replaced by another wall which was located about 100 miles farther north. This example clearly shows that Hadrian's policies cannot be regarded as reflecting the existence of a "Grand Strategy" which informed the actions and policies of successive emperors.

As some of Luttwak's critics have pointed out, any attempt to develop a long-term military policy would have run up against insuperable practical

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[75] For Trajan's military image and the theme of "world conquest", see Griffin (2000) 109-113; 123-128; Bennett (1997) 88-99; 166-221.

[76] Dio reports that, in 23 BC, when Augustus suffered a severe illness which nearly led to his death, he gave Calpurnius Piso a document listing the forces and the public revenues. See Cass. Dio 53,30,2. According to Suetonius, in AD 14 after Augustus death, four books were brought to the Senate to be read out. One of these contained an account of how many soldiers were serving in each place and how much money there was in the Treasury. See Suet. *Aug.* 101,4. These references show that Augustus possessed general information about the present situation of the empire.

[77] Zahariade (1997) 603.

difficulties. Both J. C. Mann and Millar, for example, have emphasized that emperors and government officials were unable to obtain accurate information about recent events or developments on the distant frontiers.[78] Therefore, it would have been impossible for Roman policy makers to have made any quick response to revolts and other threats on the borders of the Roman world. Nor are there any indications that the Romans adopted a scientific or holistic approach to frontier policies.[79] A more acceptable alternative is that the emperor and his advisors devised policies on the basis of the latest news from the frontiers. If they took a more active role, they were normally motivated by considerations to do with their personal prestige or the interests of the Roman state, as I shall discuss in the following chapter.

An examination of the history of the client kingdoms, which loom large in Luttwak's account of the first stage of the Grand Strategy, confirms that the short-term interests of emperors trumped any attempt to pursue long-term strategic goals. As has been shown, personal ties with the Roman emperor and his family played a significant part in the fate of the client kingdoms. This personal factor resulted in policies which were quite erratic. After Nero had ordered Corbulo to withdraw the legions to the right bank of the Euphrates, he allowed Armenia to retain its status as a kingdom as long as it preserved its loyalty to Rome. In AD 64 the king of Armenia, Tiridates, a brother of the Parthian king, Vologaeses, was publicly crowned by Corbulo on the Euphrates frontier, in front of Nero's statue. Two years later he paid a visit to Rome and was generously treated by Nero.[80] In the early 70s, however, Vespasian deposed Aristobulus of Lesser Armenia by merging his kingdom, along with the territories of Pontus and Cappadocia, into the enlarged province of Galatia.[81]

Another good example is Commagene, a small kingdom located in northern Syria, which had swung between Rome and Parthia for generations. It was first annexed by Tiberius in 17. Caligula returned the kingdom of Commagene to his friend, Gaius Iulius Antiochus, but the latter soon lost it again. The kingdom was restored once more by Claudius in 41. In AD 71 Vespasian deprived King Antiochus IV of his title and permanently annexed Commagene, turning it into Roman territory.[82] In contrast, Julius Agrippa II,

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[78] Mann (1979) 69; 175-183; Millar (1992) 2; Graham (2006) 18.
[79] Millar (1982) 13; 15-18; Isaac (1990) 401.
[80] Cass. Dio 62,23; 63,1-6.
[81] Levick (1999) 73-74; 76-77; Luttwak (1976) 113.
[82] For the destiny of Commagene, see Sullivan (1977) 732-798; Barrett (1990) 284-286; Isaac (1990) 39-42; Levick (1999) 165.

King of the Galilee and the Peraea, who maintained friendly relations with a succession of Roman emperors, was allowed to retain his territory until his death in the year 92/93.[83] In many cases, no reasons are given for why an emperor decided to annex a client kingdom, or a part of its territory. But, whatever the motives in each individual case might have been, there can be no doubt that Roman emperors saw client kingdoms as convenient vehicles for controlling people and sustaining Rome's hegemony at minimum cost.

The only possible conclusion is that Roman decisions in the field of foreign policy, such as that to annex a particular client kingdom, were prompted by a combination of case-specific factors, some of which might have been quite trivial. All that can be said is that Roman emperors and their advisors were guided primarily by considerations linked to the ruler's interests and needs at a particular moment in time.

However, even if Luttwak's theory about the existence of a "Grand Strategy" is rejected, his observation that, from about the second half of the first century AD, the client kingdoms increasingly passed under direct Roman control remains valid. After Domitian and particularly from the Hadrianic period, many of these kingdoms disappeared, thereby making the geographical contours of the empire gradually more visible. During the same period, many new military installations, such as legionary forts, towers, palisades, ditches and military roads appeared in the frontier zone. In the second half of this chapter, I shall focus on the development of the Roman *limes* system and on the emergence of a less open worldview which fitted the changing realities of the second century AD.

5. Developments in the frontier zone

5.1. Rivers as natural boundaries

In the *Res Gestae* we not only find the concept of the *imperium sine fine*, it also includes the idea that all *gentes* inhabiting the *orbis terrarum*, including those dwelling in the remotest areas bordering the *Oceanus*, acknowledge Rome's hegemony.[84] A logical corollary of this ideological conception was that any further military conquests lost their urgency. This can be seen as contributing to the background to Augustus' *consilium*. In actual fact, the Roman frontier

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[83] Joseph *BJ* 2,220; Joseph *AJ* 19,354-20,213.
[84] Whittaker (2004) 40.

remained quite open throughout the first century AD. As has emerged, it was more or less impossible to draw a clear line separating Roman territory from the territories of indigenous tribes and Roman client kingdoms.

In marked contrast to the Han Empire, the north-western and eastern fringes of the Roman Empire were marked by three major rivers, the Rhine, Danube and Euphrates. It is well known that, from the reign of Augustus, large numbers of Roman legions supplemented by auxiliary forces were stationed along these rivers, for the purpose of securing the hinterland of the empire.[85] Furthermore, imperial fleets were stationed in several harbours in the frontier regions.[86]

During the reign of Tiberius, eight legions were stationed along the Rhine frontier. Four legions were stationed in the two Danubian provinces of Pannonia and Moesia. In the north-western frontier zones, legionary fortresses were usually constructed along the major rivers or along important tributaries. From Vindonissa (Windisch) in Upper Germania to Katwijk in the Rhine Delta, nearly all legionary forts, such as Moguntiacum (Mainz), Bonna (Bonn), Colonia Agrippinensis (Cologne), Novaesium (Neuss) and Vetera (Xanten), were situated along the c.1, 000 kilometer-long Rhine River.

Austin and Rankov have criticized the tendency of scholarship to play down the role of the riverine frontiers of the empire as defensive barriers.[87] In some cases rivers do seem to have functioned as dividing lines separating ethnic groups. Julius Caesar stated that the River Rhine roughly separated the Germans from the Celts, although archaeological research contradicts the idea that its course coincided with any ethnic or cultural boundaries.[88] Among modern scholars, Braund has argued that rivers were perceived as deities, whose natural powers did play a part in separating different peoples.[89] After the catastrophe of the Teutoburg Forest, Augustus withdraw the army from the Elbe Valley to the west bank of the Rhine and between the late Augustan period and the outbreak of the Chattian War in 83 most Roman military forces remained stationed on the left bank of the Rhine for most of the time.[90] The fact that no permanent bridges were built over the Rhine until after the Flavian

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[85] Tac. *Ann.* 4,5; Keppie (1984) 127-33; 146-147.

[86] For the imperial fleets, see Saddington (2007); Keppie (1984) 131-132.

[87] Austin and Rankov (1995) 173.

[88] Caes. *B Gall.* 2,3,4; 4,16,1; Wells (1972) 19-24; Whittaker (1994) 77.

[89] Braund (1996) 43-49.

[90] For the positioning of the Roman imperial legions along the Rhine in Roman Germany, Raetia and Noricum in the first century, see Farnum (2005) 43-45.

advance across Odenwald could be taken to suggest that this river was regarded as a convenient barrier impeding the free movement of hostile barbarian tribes.[91]

Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence leaves no doubt that, during the Julio-Claudian period, some Roman military bases were built in areas either to the east or north of the Rhine. During the last phase of the German campaigns of this period, new camps were established along the Rhine in Germania Inferior. Examples include those in Oberaden and Haltern, both situated on the River Lippe.[92] These two camps were established as permanent military bases in the period before the battle of the Teutoburg Forest. A few bases such as Waldgirmes and Haltern even developed into civilian settlements.[93] After the Varian disaster, all forts east of the Rhine were abandoned. However, a six-mile-wide strip of land on the right bank of the river was still considered to be Roman territory and available for the use of the military (see below).[94] These examples show that, in this period, the Rhine was not regarded as marking the boundary between the Roman empire and the non-Roman-oriented tribes.[95] As many scholars have pointed out, rivers served as arteries of communication, which facilitated the transportation of military supplies from inland areas to the legionary garrisons and local communities as well as for the transmission of news and information from the frontier to the central area of the empire and vice-versa.[96] Cogently, the forts which were constructed along various rivers in the frontier zones served not only defensive purposes, but were also used as bases for further aggression.[97]

A passage from Tacitus' *Annals* shows that, during Nero's reign, the Romans remained ideologically committed to the view that the rule of Rome was universal and that the empire had no boundaries. In the early first century, an area on the right bank of the Rhine opposite Cologne had been occupied by the Frisians, but after they had been expelled, probably under Tiberius, it was

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[91] Whittaker (2004) 7. For discussions of the permanent bridges over the Rhine, see Austin and Rankov (1995) 173-180; Whittaker (2004) 53, n. 24.

[92] For Oberaden, see Schönberger (1969) 147; 149. For a reconsideration of Oberaden and Halten and other earlier Roman bases along the Lippe, based on recent archaeological research, see Wells (1998).

[93] Carroll (2011) 36-37.

[94] *Ibid.,* 38.

[95] See Schönberger (1969) 149; Wells (1998) 460-464.

[96] Whittaker (2004) 9.

[97] The Roman fortifications which were built between the Upper Rhine and the Upper Danube under Vespasian provide a good illustration.

left as an empty zone. In the late 50s AD, the Ampsivarii, who had been driven from their territories by the Chauci, arrived and occupied the lands. The Ampsivarii realized that this area was controlled by the Roman army. Therefore they chose Boiocalus, a veteran who had served in the Roman auxiliary forces for nearly fifty years, as their spokesman and sent him to Lucius Avitus, the governor of Roman Germany, to ask permission to settle in the territory. Boiocalus pointed out to Avitus that, as the territory was rarely used to pasture livestock belonging to the Roman soldiers, they should give it to a friendly tribe which had been made homeless. He continued to stress that the area in question had belonged to various tribes, implying that the Romans had no justification to hold it as an exclusive possession.[98] This episode shows that the Romans had an unchallenged dominance in this region, despite the fact that they had not occupied it. It also demonstrates that the frontier along the Rhine remained quite open and flexible.

When attention shifts from the Rhine to the Danube, a similar pattern emerges. Here too Roman armies were stationed in camps along the river from the early first century. In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus claims to have brought Roman arms not only to the banks of the Danube but to the areas on the far side of the river as well.[99] At certain sites along the river, like Mursa and Sirmum, military posts were built in the time of Augustus and Tiberius. The first forts along the Danube appeared in the 30s AD at the terminal points of roads which were probably built under Tiberius. During the reign of Claudius, more forts and new routes appeared in the Pannonian frontier zone, and a legion was established at Carnuntum.[100] From about this period a Roman fleet began to patrol the river.[101] Between the accession of Gaius and the early 60s, the Danube frontier generally remained in a tranquil state.[102] However, during the final years of Nero's reign, the Roxolani, a Sarmatian tribe living to the north of the Danube, began to stir up trouble.[103] In the civil war of 68/9, the Dacian barbarians campaigned across the Danube into Moesia and destroyed some forts and legionary bases by taking advantage of the absence of the two

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[98] Tac. *Ann.* 13,55-56.
[99] *RG* 30,2.
[100] The legionary fort of Carnuntum was the largest military base of this region. See Gabler (1980) 637; also (1995) 85.
[101] Tac. *Ann.* 7,30.
[102] Wilkes (2000) 580.
[103] Tac. *Hist.* 1,79.

legions previously stationed in the province.[104] The Danubian tribes remained troublesome during the Flavian period. Vespasian's decision to transfer one more legion to the Moesian area might be an indication that he was concerned about the security of the Danube frontier. Under the Flavians, more forts and military installations appeared along the Pannonian and Moesian frontiers.[105]

In about AD 85, the Dacian king, Decebalus, launched an attack crossed the Danube, killing the Moesian governor, Oppius Sabinus, and causing widespread panic.[106] Probably in the next year, Moesia was divided into two parts, each with a consular commander to increase military effectiveness. Between 85 and 95, Domitian waged two wars against the Dacian tribes and also campaigned against the Pannonian tribes. After the suppression of Saturninus' revolt on the Rhine in 89, the emperor transferred a substantial number of troops from the Rhine frontier to the East. This signalled a shift in the centre of military activity from the Rhine region to the Danubian area. The situation on the Danube frontier saw another dramatic change after Dacia was annexed by Trajan in 106. New forts, such as Quadrata and Ad Statuas, now appeared on the lower reaches of the Danube.[107] Unquestionably, a continuous chain of military bases along the Danube had been established at the end of the Trajanic period. Nevertheless, this building programme did not signify that the Danube had become the military defensive line of these areas. The fact that, even before Trajan's Dacian War, forts were established beyond the Danube in Wallachia points in the opposite direction.[108] As did the River Rhine, the Danube served as a supply route, both in times of peace and during military campaigns.

Unlike the Rhine and Danube, the Euphrates seems to have been generally regarded as marking a kind of boundary separating the zones of influence of Rome and Parthia.[109] Plutarch records that, as early as in 55 BC, the Parthian king tried to specify the Euphrates as the boundary between Rome and Parthia but, according to the historical sources from the Roman side, Pompey rejected this proposal.[110] However, the later historian Orosius reports that the Parthians saw Crassus' expedition into Northern Mesopotamia as a

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[104] Tac. *Hist.* 3,46.
[105] Móscy (1974) 80; Gabler (1980) 637.
[106] *PIR²* O 122; Jones (1992) 138.
[107] Gabler (1979) 639.
[108] Opreanu (1995) 247-248.
[109] Dåbrowa (1995) 109.
[110] Plut. *Pomp.* 36; Whittaker (2004) 40.

violation of existing arrangements, suggesting that the Parthians did see the Euphrates as demarcating the frontier between the Roman and Parthian Empires.[111] This was confirmed by the fact that, in 2 BC or 1 BC, Gaius Caesar met Tigranes III on an island in the Euphrates and confirmed the latter as the king of Parthia.[112] A similar diplomatic meeting took place on the Euphrates in AD 18, this time between Germanicus and Parthian envoys.[113] When conflicts between Rome and Parthia escalated in AD 61, Corbulo posted his troops on the Euphrates. After defeating an army led by Caesennius Paetus, the governor of Cappadocia, the Parthian king, Vologaeses, proudly crossed the river on the back of an elephant. Having learned that Corbulo had arrived on the Euphrates frontier, he dispatched envoys to Corbulo's camp, asking for the evacuation of all Roman forts beyond the Euphrates and proposing "to make the stream the border between them, as before".[114]

It is striking that the Romans do not seem to have accepted the idea that they should give up all claims to the lands beyond the Euphrates. The obvious reason for this is that Rome never got round to acknowledging Parthia as its equal. Accepting the Euphrates as marking the limit of Roman rule was incompatible with the ideological assumption that Roman domination was, or should be, totally uncontested.

6. The development of the *limes* system in the second century

The Romans excelled in building roads. Since the Republican period, they had constructed roads to connect the recently conquered areas of Italy. During the Imperial period the Roman road network spread over the entire Mediterranean region. Roads symbolized Roman power, greatly facilitated troop movements and gave Rome control over of local economies and resources.

Following the conquests and annexations of the first century BC and the first century AD, the Romans also began to build roads in the peripheral zones of the empire. As Isaac has pointed out in an important article, during the Early Imperial period the literary and epigraphic sources use the term *limes* to refer to military roads constructed by the Romans during or after campaigns against external enemies.[115] In the texts of the first century, the term does not denote a

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[111] Orosius 6,13,2.
[112] Cass. Dio 55,11.
[113] Tac. *Ann.* 2,58,1.
[114] Tac. *Ann.* 15,17,3.
[115] Isaac (1988) 126-128.

clearly demarcated boundary. Nor is it used to refer to any military works built for defensive purposes.[116]

During the first century, the Roman legionaries stationed in the frontier zones not only constructed roads and bridges but also turned their hand to military camps and other military installations. Since almost all Roman military forces in Europe and the Near East were stationed along the Rhine, the Danube and the Euphrates, numerous legionary camps and smaller fortifications were therefore built along these three rivers. Many of these military installations were positioned in places which were logistically and strategically advantageous, such as the confluence of two rivers or near a crossing of frontier roads. Such locations facilitated communication and the control of traffic as well as offering good starting points for military campaigns conducted across the rivers in questions. Some military bases were not built on terrain which was convenient for defence against invading enemies, demonstrating that in this period considerations of defence were not paramount in deciding where to station military units.[117]

The first phase of Domitian's Chattian War, fought between 83 and 85, resulted in the creation of a chain of timber-built forts and watchtowers to the east of the Upper Rhine, commencing from the Taunus Heights and the Wetterau Plain and thereafter running through the Odenwald down to the Neckar Valley. The construction of this *limes* system benefited from the German policy carried out by Vespasian, who had built roads linking the Upper Rhine area and the Danube.[118] However, the *limes* system along the north-west frontier was not completed until the reign of Trajan in the early second century.[119]

During the final years of Domitian and under Trajan, the focus of military activity shifted to the East. Trajan did not undertake any offensive operations on the German and Raetian frontiers, but merely reinforced the

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[116] Isaac calls attention to a passage from Tacitus' *Agricola* (41,2): *nec iam de limite imperii et ripa* … in which *limes* refers to the (land) boundary of the empire. As he notes, this meaning is not found in earlier texts.

[117] As some scholars have pointed out, some sections of Hadrian's Wall and the *fossatum Africae*, as well as some part of the Outer Limes in Germany, did not occupy the best defensive positions. For the discussion; see Breeze (2011) 85-86.

[118] Schönberger (1969) 158; Hind (1984) 187-192; Perl (1990), 210f.

[119] Recent studies suggest that "the main establishment of this system of roads, timber towers, and forts is now seen to belong to the decade AD 105/115 rather than earlier". See Wilson (2006) 201-203.

chain of fortifications guarding the frontier zones.[120] In Britain, he built the Stanegate military road along the line between the Tyne and Solway Firth. Hadrian used this line to build his 74-mile-long wall. In the southern parts of *Mons Aurasius* (the Aurès Mountains of modern Algeria and Tunisia), a system of ditches and mud-brick bulwarks, the so-called *fossatum Africae*, was constructed.

The *Historia Augusta* claims that Hadrian created a more or less complete *limes* system protecting the empire from barbarian attack:

> *During this period and on many other occasions also, in many regions where the barbarians are held back not by rivers but by artificial barriers, Hadrian shut them off by means of high stakes planted deep in the ground and fastened together in the manner of a palisade.*[121]

Antoninus Pius basically followed Hadrian's frontier policy, although in his early reign a military campaign was mounted in the territory of Britain, which was followed by the construction of a new wall in the newly conquered land close to the Forth-Clyde isthmus. In the area of Odenwald, timber-built forts and towers now were transformed into stone structures. In the Wetterau and Neckar regions, Antoninus Pius pushed the old *limes* system forward 30 kilometres and, by the end of his reign, twenty forts and 250 watchtowers had been built between Wörth-am-Main and Lorch-Rems.[122] Here too the *limes* system was beginning to assume a distinctively linear shape, making the contours of the Roman frontier more visible.[123]

Isaac has argued that decision makers of Rome never thought about the efficient functioning of the frontier system or about ways of making provincial territories safe from attack by enemies. In my view, it cannot be denied that, as early as the Julio-Claudian period, rivers, roads and military works built in the

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[120] The efforts of the Trajanic period were limited to turning the materials from turf into stone, and to adding to the number of small-size forts, watch towers, palisades and other military infrastructure along the *limes* system, etc.; see Wilson (2006) 201-203; Breeze (2011) 58.

[121] SHA *Hadr.* 13,6.

[122] Breeze (2011) 76.

[123] From the reign of Marcus Aurelius to the early third century, the *limes* system was abandoned in some areas, for instance in Britain, where the two walls became obsolete soon after their completion. However, generally, the function of the *limes* system persisted into later centuries. The decline of the system during the Late Empire is beyond the chronological limits of my studies.

frontier zone played some part in the defence of the empire.[124] Between the end of the Chattian War in the 80s and the mid-second century, the creation of a Roman *limes* system, buttressed by a chain of linearly arranged military installations, in conjunction with the major rivers, mountain ridges and deserts marking the outer edges of the world controlled by the Romans, defined the shape of the empire more clearly. The line of watchtowers running along German and Raetian provincial borders, for example, certainly played a role in military defence. At the same time the rivers, roads and military fortifications of the frontier zone, as argued by Whittaker, served to secure control of local resources and to facilitate logistics and communications. In other words, while these natural and man-made features undoubtedly played an important part in the defence of the empire, it does not follow that the geographical boundaries of the empire became fixed during this period.

In the long term, the development of a well-garrisoned and an increasingly well-defined perimeter seems to have had an impact on the way in which Roman frontiers and Roman power were conceptualized. There are indications, for instance, that during the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus territory began to play an increasingly important part in imperial thinking. Cassius Dio reports that, during the final years of Marcus Aurelius' reign, a treaty was concluded with the Marcomanni, stipulating that, "they might now settle to within a distance of five miles from the Danube".[125] What is striking about this arrangement is that it regulated the activities a barbarian people on the basis of a precise calculation. In a later passage, Cassius Dio relates that under Commodus all military outposts in the territory of the Marcomanni beyond the five-mile strip were abandoned.[126] This remark offers another piece of evidence that the outline of the frontier was becoming clearer. Not much later Commodus granted peace to another German tribe, the Burii, forbidding them to pasture their animals within a five-mile-wide strip of land bordering the province of Dacia.[127] Here too the boundary of the Roman empire was slowly being clarified. As said, in the time of Nero the territorial dispute between Rome and the Ampsivarii had been handled in a completely different manner. Therefore, it does not seem far-fetched to conclude that, during the final decades of the second century, the Roman government had

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[124] Cf. Wheeler (1993a) 27.
[125] Cass. Dio 72,15.
[126] Cass. Dio 73,2,4.
[127] Cass. Dio 73,3,2.

developed a higher degree of frontier consciousness than it had had about a century earlier.

To sum up, a combination of natural and artificial boundaries played a role in shaping the Roman frontier. During the period of roughly fifty years between the accession of Domitian and the end of Hadrian's reign, a more or less coherent systems of linearly arranged military installations took shape. Since most of these installations could be used as bases for campaigns against barbarian tribes occupying territories not yet become provinces, it would be wrong to interpret them as demarcating the external boundaries of Roman territory. It also seems clear that the original function of most of these military installations erected in the frontier zone was to control movements into the empire rather than to protect the frontier against barbarian raids, although some of the barriers in question could also have been used for defensive purposes. Nonetheless, the gradual appearance of an increasingly well-defined system of linear fortifications, many of which were situated along rivers, prompted a gradual and subtle change in Roman worldviews. In the last part of this chapter, I shall examine what the new perception of the image of the Roman world of the mid and late second century looked like.

7. A change in worldviews during the second century AD?

In his panegyric on the blessings of the *pax Romana*, a speech which was delivered in Rome in AD 155, Aelius Aristides describes the Roman world ruled by Emperor Antoninus Pius as follows:

> *Here you built the walls to defend you, and then erected towns bordering upon them, some in some parts, others elsewhere, filling them with colonist, giving these the comforts of arts and crafts, and in general establishing beautiful order. An encamped army, like a rampart, enclosed the civilized world in a ring… from the settled areas of Aethopia to the Phasis, and from the Euphrates in the interior to the great outermost island towards the west; all this one can call a ring and circuit of walls. … But the ring, must be greater and more impressive, in every way altogether unbreachable and indestructible, outshining them all, and in all time there has never been a wall so firm. … It is they who defend these ordinary walls. … Such are the parallel harmonies or systems of defence which curve around you, the circle of fortifications at individual points, and that ring of those who keep watch over the whole world.*[128]

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[128] Ael. Arist. *Or.* 26,80-4 (translated by J. Oliver); Breeze (2011) 20.

In his *History of Rome* Appian, a contemporary of Aelius Aristides, offers a similar picture of the Roman world being surrounded and guarded by military camps and as having acquired a clearly defined boundary:

> *In general, possessing the best part of the earth and sea they have, on the whole, aimed to preserve their empire by the exercise of prudence, rather than to extend their sway indefinitely over poverty-stricken and profitless tribes of barbarians, some of whom I have seen at Rome offering themselves, by their ambassadors, as its subjects, but the emperor would not accept them because they would be of no use to him. For other people, the emperors appoint kings, not requiring them for the empire. On some of the provinces they spend more than they receive, thinking it shameful to give them up even though they make a loss. They surround the empire with a great circle of camps and guard so great an area of land and sea like an estate.*[129]

A similar frontier consciousness is to be found in the work of Herodian in the late second and early third century:

> *From the time when Augustus assumed control of the government, however, the* princeps *freed the Italians from the necessity of working and of bearing arms; establishing forts and camps for the defense of empire, he stationed mercenaries in these to serve as a defensive bulwark on the frontier. The empire was further protected by great barriers of rivers and mountains and impassable deserts.*[130]

Up to a point Appian's assessment of imperial policies resembles Strabo's comment that Britain was so unprofitable it was not worth occupying.[131] Nevertheless, there is an important difference between the two passages. Both Strabo and Appian stress the importance of economic considerations, but Appian also describes the empire of the second century as a clearly defined geopolitical body which is defended "like an estate". His language suggests that, compared to the emperors of the early Principate, those of the mid and late second century came to think of the empire as a more cohesive geopolitical entity. Interestingly, this development is paralleled by a shift in the meaning of the term *imperium*. As Richardson has shown, the terms *imperium* and *provinciae* began to be used to designate clearly defined territorial spaces in the Augustan

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[129] App. *praef*. 7.
[130] Although Herodian writes about the Augustan Age, his account of frontier policies reflects the concerns of his own time rather than those of the Early Principate.
[131] Strab. 17,3,24; 6,4,2; Isaac (1990) 388.

period, but it was only in the early second century AD that this semantic shift reached "a mature middle age".[132]

Therefore, it seems as if imperial ideologies were slowly being adjusted in response to changes in actual military policies. Emperors and members of the ruling classes of the Roman Empire might well have realized that the limited imperial resources could not sustain continuous territorial expansion, doubts which perhaps began to creep in in the reign of Hadrian.[133] As the foregoing sections have shown, Hadrian took various steps signalling a change in frontier policy after the conquests of the Trajanic period. He withdrew some troops from the lower Danube in Dacia and gave orders to construct a wall in Britain. In North Africa a new frontier line, the so-called *fossatum Africae*, was built to regulate the movement of transhumant pastoralist and to protect the trade routes from nomadic raids.[134] At some sites along the Rhine, artificial frontier barriers consisting of a new series of wooden palisades, tree trunks and trenches were either renewed or augmented.[135] Such activities might be interpreted as pointing to a change in actual frontier policies.[136]

However, it would be wrong to interpret these developments as demonstrating that the old idea of an *imperium sine fine* was beginning to disappear in the same period. Clear traces of the ideological claim that Roman ruled the *orbis terrarum* can still be found in sources of the second century AD. In his panegyric, the same Aristides who refers to the empire being surrounded by army camps states that Rome has no fixed boundaries, claiming that "no one dictates to what point your control reaches".[137] According to the *Historia Augusta*, Septimius Severus dreamed one night that he beheld Rome and all the world from the top of a very high mountain, while the provinces sang together

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[132] Richardson (2008) 181.
[133] Webster (1985) 67.
[134] For the debate about the functions of the ditch system, see Trousset (1974) 140-142; Webster (1985) 73; Wheeler (1993) 29; Whittaker (1994) 91; Cherry (1998) 24; Breeze (2012) 121, 128. Whittaker argues that the main function of the *limes* in modern southern Algeria and Tunisia was to control the movements of transhumant pastoralists; see Whittaker (2004) 10. However, Cheery argues that there were two main functions for these barriers: to provide security for the garrisoned Roman soldiers, and to facilitate of collecting taxes from the local pastoralists. See Cherry (1998) 62-63.
[135] For a general discussion of the change of frontier policies under Hadrian, see Breeze and Dobson (1976) 28; Webster (1985) 67-85; Birley (1997) 113-141, 203-214.
[136] Whittaker (1994) 86.
[137] Whittaker (2000) 299.

to the accompaniment of the lyre and flute.[138] On the triumphal arch of the same emperor can be read the phrase *Ob rem publicam restitutam imperiumque populi Romani propagatum*, "[erected] because of the re-establishment of the state and the extension of the power of the Roman people".[139]

These examples demonstrate that the new idea of a clearly defined empire defended by army camps *coexisted* with the open concept of empire of Late Republican and Early Imperial times. Therefore, care should be exercised not to overrate the degree of frontier consciousness in the second century AD. As Chapter Five will reveal, external threats or the wish of some emperors to bolster their legitimacy by means of military successes continued to prompt quite a few rulers of the Roman Empire to take the offensive against external enemies. But that does not make the emergence of an alternative concept of empire any less significant.

8. Conclusion

Since each frontier zone of the Roman empire was unique, not only because landscape, climatic conditions and transport facilities differed from region to region but also because there were enormous variations in the nature and level of external threats, it is impossible to develop a uniform picture of Roman frontier policies which is valid for the whole empire.[140] However, if an abstraction is made from regional distinctions, it is still possible to make some general observations regarding the long-term evolution of Roman views about frontier zones and frontiers.

During the first hundred years which followed Augustus' death, the Roman world remained quite open and inclusive, both ideologically and in terms of actual military policies. Broadly speaking, no fixed boundary line serving the purpose of demarcating Roman from non-Roman territories came into existence until the mid-third century AD. During the Principate, the frontier provinces of the empire were surrounded by various client kingdoms which were not under the direct jurisdiction of the Roman government. Throughout this period, Rome's foreign policies remained flexible and

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[138] SHA. *Sep. Sev.* 3,5,1; 3,9,1.
[139] *CIL* VI, 1033= *ILS* 425.
[140] As Gruen rightly puts it, "there was little in common between Decebalus and Parthia, between barbarous Britons and the nomad tribesmen of the Sahara, and between Gothic invaders and Sassanian Persia." See Gruen (1978) 565. These distinctions undermine the validity of Luttwak's theory.

capricious. The choice to adopt a particular policy appears to have depended largely on the personal and immediate needs of the reigning emperor. In making these decisions, emperors could not rely on accurate information about conditions or developments in the peripheral zones of the empire. Compounded with the overriding importance of personal and political needs, this made it impossible for successive emperors to develop a scientifically based and clear-cut imperial strategy devised to preserve or maximize military security.

Between the last decades of the first century and the early third century AD, the contours of the Roman Empire became slowly more concrete and visible. By the late second and early third century, various Greek and Latin writers admitted the existence of imperial boundaries. In part as a result of the absorption of various client kingdoms in the East during the first century AD, the empire had increasingly become an organic political entity consisting of clearly defined territorial and administrative units. Rivers, roads and all kinds of military installations which were built in the frontier zone were increasingly beginning to resemble a ring surrounding the empire. Even though this system was originally designed for control purposes rather than for defence, its appearance had the effect of making the frontier more visible and tangible, thereby giving the *orbis terrarum Romanum* an increasingly less open appearance.

It must be stressed that the administrative and military boundaries of the empire were never hermetically sealed, and that the idea of an "empire without boundaries" was never relinquished.[141] After the reign of Augustus territorial expansion slowed down but it did not stop. At least until the time of Caracalla, the offensive spirit resurged whenever a particular emperor considered the opportune moment had come to launch fresh aggressive campaigns.

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[141] SHA *Sep. Sev.* 3,5.

Chapter 4
The rise of Chinese imperialism: the northern frontiers and foreign relations of the Western Han

1. World views and the political situation in the Qin and Western (Former) Han empires

In Chapter Two, I argued that the Warring States era from the early fifth to the late third century BC was a crucial period in the formation of Chinese identity and Chinese worldviews. After the seven major states had been unified into a single empire by Qin Shi Huang, the term *tianxia* came into increasing use, often to refer to a coherent, unified geo-political entity. Consequently, in most cases *tianxia* should be understood as corresponding to the modern concept of "empire" (*diguo* 帝國), a term which did not emerge in Chinese sources until the nineteenth century.[1] Despite this development, the term *tianxia*, "all under Heaven", also retained its literal meaning in the Early Imperial period. Using the Stele Inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang as a case study, I have examined the two meanings of the *tianxia* in the ancient texts. The broader meaning of *tianxia*, as stated earlier, had a strongly rhetorical sense which was used to highlight the grandeur of the territory under the authority of the Chinese ruler. Nevertheless, by the Early Imperial period, in most cases, as Yu Yingshi 余英時 suggests, *tianxia* had evolved into a "more purely political concept", as can be seen in the texts of the Stele Inscriptions.[2]

Qin Shi Huang had dreamed that control of the *tianxia* would be transmitted within his family on a permanent basis. In reality, the newly created empire collapsed very soon after his death. Only sixteen years after its unification, the *tianxia* fell apart again. Following a short period of turmoil and disorder, Liu Bang 劉邦 (256-195 BC), a junior officer from the peasant class and a native of the county of Pei 沛縣 (present-day Xuzhou 徐州, Jiangsu Province), finally seized the imperial throne after defeating the king of Chu, Xiangyu 項羽, in 202 BC. He assumed the title of Emperor Gao 高帝 (r. 202-

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[1] For a recent discussion of the use of the Chinese word *diguo* 帝國 and its English translation "empire" in Chinese literature, see Elliot (2014).
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195 BC) and was the founder of the Han dynasty which lasted for the next four hundred years.

Unlike the Qin regime, the Han dynasty had no connections with the aristocratic lineages of the pre-Qin period. In fact, during the first phase of their rise to power Liu Bang and his followers were no more than a group of rebel bandits operating in the territory of the old state of Chu in the declining Qin empire.[3] Alarmed by the rapid disintegration of Qin, Liu Bang and his advisors did their best to establish their power on a firmer footing. In their endeavours, the early Han rulers resorted to many of the administrative arrangements created by Qin Shi Huang, and there was also a high degree of ideological continuity with the Qin period.

When this situation is taken into consideration, it is not surprising that the broader concept of *tianxia* is to be found in various literary works composed in the early Western Han period. For example, Jia Yi 賈誼, a statesman who lived during the reign of Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 180-157 BC), makes the following comment on the relationship between the emperor and the inhabitants of the world:

> *According to the ancient exegesis, when traveling to the east, west, south and north, as far as a ship or cart can reach, and as far humankind can journey, even though the barbarian peoples dwelt there, there was no one who did not submit to the sovereign called Son of Heaven.*[4] 古之正義，東西南北，茍舟車之所達，人蹟之所至，莫不率服，而後雲天子。

In terms of the *wufu* (five-zone) theory described in Chapter 2, the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) was supposed to occupy the centre of the five zones, in contrast to the territory of the barbarians which was to be found in the outermost ring, which was named the *huangfu* 荒服, "the wilderness zone".[5] This theory neatly allowed the lands of the barbarian peoples to be part of the territory controlled by the wise kings of remote antiquity. The passage just quoted suggests that this idea still remained alive in the second century BC. During the Western Han period, all peoples were supposed to be subject to the

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[3] For the rise of Liu Bang and the formation of the new military meritocracy of the Han, see the monograph by Liu Kaiyuan 李開元 (2000) esp. 119-190.

[4] *Xinshu* 3,1 (*Wei Buxin*) 131.

[5] For the five-zone theory in the Confucian canons, see the discussion in Chapter Two, and Yu Yingshi (1986) 379.

authority of the Chinese emperor which extended to the outermost edges of the inhabited world.

The reality was completely different. More or less simultaneously with the establishment of the Han dynasty, the rise of the Xiongnu confederacy on the steppes of Inner Asia began to exert significant pressure on the northern frontiers of the Chinese Empire. The expansionist policies of the nomadic tribes undermined the position of superiority to which the Han imperial authorities aspired, and threatened the stability of the new government. Emperor Gao tried to resolve this problem by embarking on a major military campaign against the Xiongnu in 201 BC. Unfortunately, this military action ended in a humiliating defeat. Emperor Gao was besieged by the Xiongnu forces in Pingcheng 平城 (near present-day Datong, Shanxi province) for several days and almost died there.[6] Thereafter, for a period of nearly seventy years between this defeat and the early years of the reign of Emperor Wu, the Han government generally took a defensive stance towards the Xiongnu (for details, see the discussion below).

Perhaps not surprisingly, various Han intellectuals regarded the weakness of Han as unacceptable. This sentiment was particularly voiced by such Confucian scholars as Lu Jia 陸賈 and Jia Yi 賈誼, who reasoned that the pre-eminence of the barbarian tribes was not consonant with the emperor's position of authority. One of Jia Yi's essays contains the following passage:

> *The current situation in the world* (tianxia) *is upside down. I hope His Majesty can perceive this. The Son of Heaven is the head of all under Heaven. Why? Because the head is at the top. The barbarian people are the feet of all under Heaven. Why? Because the feet are at the bottom. Recruiting and giving orders to the barbarians is the concern of His Majesty, while paying tribute to the emperor is the ritual which the officials and subjects have to perform. Now the feet are at the top and the head at bottom. This turns the whole situation upside-down.*[7]
> 天下之勢，方倒縣，竊願陛下省之也。凡天子者，天下之首也，何也？上也。蠻夷者，天下之足也，何也？下也。蠻夷徵令，是主上之操也，天子共貢，是臣下之禮也。足反居上，首顧居下，是倒縣之勢也。

Jia Yi's critique clearly shows that he was worried about the relations between the Han and barbarian peoples (mainly referring to the Xiongnu). In his work,

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[6] *Hanshu* 94a, 3753.

[7] *Xinshu* 3,10 (*Jiexian*) 127.

Jia Yi does not expound on what strategies the Han government used, or should have used, to tackle the threat posed by the barbarians in the frontier regions, restricting himself to the observation that the hierarchical relationship existing between the emperor and the barbarians was the reverse of what it ought to be. Only if the emperor occupied a position of unchallenged superiority could the relationship between him and the barbarians be fitted into the five-zone theory of the Chinese classicists, in which the Son of Heaven occupied the centre of the earth under Heaven and the barbarians the most peripheral parts. Now the correct world order had been turned upside down, a state of affairs which Jia Yi found totally unacceptable.

In practice, Jia Yi's appeal had no discernible effect on the foreign policies or worldviews of the educated elite of the Han court. Certainly contributing to this apparent indifference was the presence of a less ambitious worldview according to which the *tianxia* was simply a geopolitical domain consisting of a fixed number of administrative units. In other words, the empire could be seen as a geopolitical entity composed of a certain number of commanderies, counties and kingdoms, all of which were under the rule of the Han emperor who was a member of the clan of Liu.[8] In this interpretation, the *tianxia* is understood as a clearly defined political and ethno-cultural entity which was transmitted within the house of Liu Bang.[9]

As already discussed in Chapter 2, various terms, including *sihai*, *hainei* and *sifang*, had been used to refer to the outer limits of the *tianxia* long before the unification of China in 221 BC. Such terms were transposed to the imperial era and widely used in literary works of the Qin-Han period and thereafter. After Liu Bang/Emperor Gao had crushed the rebellion of Ying Bu 英布 (黥布), the king of the Huainan kingdom 淮南王, in 195 BC he paid a visit to his hometown of Pei, where he invited his fellow villagers and old friends to a feast.

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[8] Under the Han capital Chang'an, *jun* 郡 (commandery) and *xian* 縣 (county) were the two basic administrative units. Moreover, Emperor Gao distributed vast territories to his allies and kinsmen as a reward for their support during the civil war. The feudal system which had been abolished by Qin Shi Huang and Li Si had been initially restored by Xiang Yu in the interval between Qin and Han, and was preserved by Liu Bang. The territories received by these men became kingdoms. For the administrative structures of the Western Han empire, see Bielenstein's monograph (1980) 4-109.

[9] The biography of Dou Ying claims that "the *tianxia* is the possession of the Emperor Gao and it is passed from generation by generation (within the family)". See *Hanshu*, 52; Shinichirō Watanabe 渡辺信一郎, trans. by Xu Chong (2008) 130.

At the height of this feast, the emperor sang a song he had composed himself, which was later named the "Song of the Great Wind" (*Dafeng ge* 大風歌):

> *The great wind blew forth and the clouds flew [away] and scattered. Now my might has been imposed upon all within the four seas (*hainei*), I have returned to my native village. Where shall I find brave men to guard the four quarters (*sifang*) of my land?*[10]
> 大風起兮雲飛揚，威加海內兮歸故鄉，安得猛士兮守四方。

Although the term *tianxia* does not appear in this text, it does contain the expressions *hainei* (within the seas) and *sifang* (four quarters). The "four quarters" guarded by the emperor's "brave men" are clearly coextensive with the *tianxia* of the Han empire. On these grounds it would seem that, ideologically speaking, the empire of Han was less open than the Roman empire at the time of Augustus.

A few months after reciting the poem, Emperor Gao returned to Chang'an where he issued an edict to commemorate the twelfth anniversary of his accession to the throne, taking the opportunity to warn the nobles of the empire not to rebel against Han rule. In this edict, the term *tianxia* is clearly used to refer to a geopolitical entity consisting of a series of hierarchically arranged administrative units. In this text the barbarians seem to have been excluded from the world order referred to and they were not expected to observe the laws and rituals of the Han. The text reads as follows:

> *I have been made the Son of Heaven, and thus far as Emperor (*di*) have possessed the* tianxia *for twelve years. I have subjugated the* tianxia *with the brave men and talented grandees of the empire; together we have pacified and reunited it. Among those of my followers who have distinguished themselves, I have established the best as kings, the next [best] as marquises, and moreover the least have been given the income of towns. Furthermore, some of the relatives of my important subjects have become marquises. All have been personally authorized to appoint their officials and levy taxes. Their daughters have become princesses. The marquises who have the income of towns all wear seals; we have granted them large residences. The officials [of the rank of] two thousand* shi*; we have moved to Chang'an to be granted small residences. Those who went to Shu and Han and subjugated the three [parts of the state of] Qin are all exempted [from taxes and services] from generation to generation. I might be said not to have been ungrateful to those talented officers and meritorious officials of the* tianxia*. Let those who rebel against the Son of Heaven without cause and*

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[10] *Hanshu* 1b, 74.

arbitrarily raise troops be punished by the military forces of the tianxia *and executed. Let this be published and announced to the* tianxia *so that it might clearly understand our intention.*[11]

吾立為天子，帝有天下，十二年於今矣。與天下之豪士賢大夫共定天下，同安輯之。其有功者上致之王，次為列侯，下乃食邑。而重臣之親，或為列侯，皆令自置吏，得賦斂，女子公主。為列侯食邑者，皆佩之印，賜大第室。吏二千石，徙之長安，受小第室。入蜀、漢定三秦者，皆世世復。吾於天下賢士功臣，可謂亡負矣。其有不義背天子擅起兵者，與天下共伐誅之。佈告天下，使明知朕意。

In Chapter Two, I noted that the distinction between *nei* 內 ('inner') and *wai* 外 ('outer') is a key concept in understanding the worldview of ancient China. From the mid to late Warring States period, these terms were frequently used in texts referring to the distinction between the *huaxia* (a general name for the Chinese people) and the *yidi* (a general name for the barbarian peoples living on the periphery of the Chinese world).[12] As argued in Chapter Two, between the fifth and late third centuries BC climatic changes on the northern frontier of the Chinese Central Plains sharpened the distinction between the farming populations of the Chinese states and the nomadic tribes of the north, thereby stimulating the economic and cultural cohesiveness of the agricultural zones. During the Early Western Han period the gap between the agriculturalists and the nomadic world of the northern steppe deepened, particularly after the rise of the Xiongnu empire. The threat posed by the formidable cavalry of the Xiongnu prompted the Han government to construct more fortifications on its northern border, thereby encouraging the stimulation of the emergence of an increasingly exclusive Chinese world order.

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[11] *Hanshu* 1b, 78. My translation is largely based on that of Dubs (1938) 55.

[12] As Yates has pointed out, "the relations between the elites, religious leaders, and ordinary people of the steppe, desert, and mountain fastness, between the outer regions (*wai*) and the emperors in Beijing, were very different from those that held between the emperors and the officials, local elites, and subordinate masses within (*nei*) China proper." See Yates (2001) 355-356. I have argued that the distinction between *nei* and *wai* had come into existence long before the creation of the Qin-Han empire. See my discussion in Chapter Two. The increasing disjunction between the agricultural society of China and the nomadic world of the north, in tandem with the establishment of the unified empire and the more or less simultaneous rise of Xiongnu power increased the importance of these territorial concepts.

Liu Bang had originally intended to build a new capital at Luoyang, the old capital of Luoyi of Zhou dynasty, the place it was assumed was located at the centre of the world (cf. Chapter 2). However, for the sake of security Lou Jing 婁敬, a senior minister, advised the emperor to establishing the capital in the homeland of Qin.[13] Lou Jing's proposal was supported by another senior official, Zhang Liang 張良.[14] Finally the capital was established in Chang'an (modern Xi'an 西安), a city which was situated only about 30 km to the east of the old Qin capital Xianyang. The region in which Chang'an was situated was named *Guanzhong* 關中 (Within the Passes). Throughout the Early Han period this remained the core region of the empire.[15] The area to the east of Mount Xiao 崤山 and Hangu Pass 函谷關 (in present-day Lingbao 靈寶), where Emperor Gao granted vast tracts of land to his kinsmen and supporters, was called *Guandong* 關東 (East of the Pass). Most other areas were divided into commanderies and counties which were directly administered by imperial officials.

On the basis of these arrangements, the early Han empire might be depicted as consisting of three zones, namely Guanzhong, Guandong and the remainder of the empire. The barbarian lands which were located outside the empire were conceptualized as making up a fourth zone. Furthermore, as I shall argue in Chapter Six, the humble origins of the imperial house of Liu stimulated various attempts to augment the legitimacy of the Han rulers by emphasizing the link between these rulers and Heaven as the highest power in the cosmos. According the political theories of Dong Zhongshu, for instance, the emperor, as "the Son of Heaven", played an intermediary role between Heaven and mankind.[16] A logical corollary of this theory was that the Han emperor should

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[13] As Lou Jing explained, the Qin area was protected by the Xiao Mountains, the Yellow River and the Four Passes. If an emergency should arise, an army of a million men could be instantly raised. Even there were disorder in the areas east of the Xiao Mountains, the area of Qin would remain safe. Using a wrestling metaphor, Lou Jing argues that as long as the emperor controlled the area of Qin, he will be in good position to strangle his enemy and hit the latter's back. See *Shiji* 99, 2716.

[14] Like Lou Jing, Zhang Liang gave various reasons for building the capital in the area of Qin. The advantages mentioned by him included the good defensive location of the region, the abundance of all kinds of materials and the fertility of the land. See *Shiji* 55, 2044.

[15] Chen Suzhen 陳蘇鎮 (2011) 230-234.

[16] About Dong Zhongshu's theory and his contribution to the development of the Chinese political cosmological thought, see Schwarz (1985) 363-381. A detailed

rule all of mankind, and indeed Confucius and Mencius had claimed that the true king leaves nothing and nobody outside his realm, and that his power is not constrained by distance.[17] For these reasons, the unbounded worldview of the Western Zhou period never disappeared entirely (cf. Chapter Two).

Since the Han emperors of the early second century did not control the territories of the Xiongnu, the persistence of this all-encompassing worldview could been a spur which stimulated intellectuals and emperors to contemplate the possibility of further territorial expansion. In actual fact, Han thinkers such as Dong Zhongshu do not seem to have been worried by the discrepancy between ideological representations and realities. In the following section, I shall investigate how the seemingly contradictory worldviews which can be found in early Han sources were fused, and how these worldviews affected actual decisions taken regarding the relationship between the empire and their Xiongnu neighbours during the Western Han period.[18]

2. Han worldviews and the relationship between the Han and the Xiongnu

When Augustus became the first emperor of the Roman empire, Rome had already established unchallenged military supremacy throughout the Mediterranean world. In striking contrast to this achievement, the Han empire established by Emperor Gao was immediately faced with mounting threats from a rising steppe empire on its northern frontier. This fundamental divergence between the steppe and the sown prompted the early Han emperors to seek different strategies to deal with their barbarian neighbours than those adopted by the Roman emperors of the first century AD.

Unlike the Roman armies of the early Principate, the Western Han army initially was in a weak position in any confrontation with the steppe peoples,

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discussion of Dong Zhongshu's theory of imperial sovereignty in relation to Heaven will be given in Chapter Six.

[17] L. S. Yang 楊聯陞 (1968) 26. It should be noted that the saying "nobody outside his realm" refers mainly to the idea that "all under Heaven" had been conquered by the ruler's moral power rather than by the use of military force. For the moral duties of Chinese rulers, see Chapter Six.

[18] Loewe also observes this tension. As he puts it, "An emperor was essential to the maintenance of government within the cosmology in which the rule of man was placed; but how far he fitted the ideals that philosophers expected is another matter." See Loewe (2002) 348.

both tactically and in terms of military equipment.[19] By the last decade of the third century BC, the Xiongnu confederacy had acquired a highly developed hierarchical military system under their charismatic leader Modu Chanyu 冒頓 單于 (234-174 BC).[20] Unlike the frontier soldiers of the Western Han period who were recruited from the farming population in the remote hinterland regions and were expected to serve for only one year, all adult Xiongnu males above a certain age were obliged to bear arms. The pastoral cavalry forces could move fast, making it relatively easy for the Xiongnu to raid Chinese territory on horseback. The Chinese infantry and chariots were no match for this highly mobile cavalry.[21] This imbalance was exacerbated by the fact that, after the bitter Chinese civil war, the victorious Emperor Gao had demobilized a large part of his armies in order to minimize the risk of future rebellions.

After the death of Emperor Gao, the power devolved to the Empress Dowager Lü 呂(Zhi 雉) and her clan until Emperor Wen 文 (Heng 恆 r. 180-157 BC) was enthroned with the support of some old ministers in 180 BC. The dynastic feuds pursued by various members of the House of Liu and the faction of Lü at this time distracted the Chinese rulers from realizing the necessity of investing resources in their frontier armies. As literary sources show, during the larger part of the reign of Emperor Wen and his successor, Emperor Jing 景 (Qi 啟 r. 157-141 BC), the Han empire adopted an policy of appeasement, sending the Xiongnu large amounts of grain, silk, cloth and other luxuries to secure peace on its northern frontiers.[22]

Shortly after the humiliating defeat of the Han armies led by Emperor Gao at Pingcheng, in 198 BC, on the advice of Lou Jing 婁敬, a senior Han official, the Han government signed a treaty with the Xiongnu.[23] Sima Qian

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[19] In terms of military capabilities the Han generally lagged behind the Xiongnu in the early period of the Han dynasty. This discrepancy emerges clearly from the essay by the Western Han statesman Chao Cuo. See Di Cosmo (2004) 203.

[20] On the formation of the Xiongnu state and the territorial expansion which took place under Modu Chanyu in the late third century BC, see Barfield (1989) 323-6; Di Cosmo (2004) 167-190; Yu (2008) 118-220.

[21] In order to deal with this weakness, Emperors Wen and Jing increased the size of the Han cavalry. See Di Cosmo (2004) 192-227, 235.

[22] For a detailed discussion of these payments, see Yu (1967) 45-47; 61; 64.

[23] The treaty, signed in 198 BC, contained four main provisions. 1. The Han had to send a princess to the Xiongnu Chanyu to be his wife; 2. Each year the Han court had to provide the Xiongnu with a certain amount of grain, wine, silk and foodstuffs; 3. The Han empire and the Xiongnu would be equal partners; 4. The boundary line between Han and Xiongnu was the Great Wall. See *Shiji* 110; *Hanshu* 43. Yu (1967) 41-42;

states that the treaty clearly stipulated that the Great Wall was to be the boundary line between the territory of Han and that of the Xiongnu. It also provided that all those peoples who drew the bows (引弓之國) beyond the Wall should be under the orders of the Chanyu, while all those wearing Han caps and sashes (冠帶之室) within the Wall were to be ruled by the Chinese emperor.[24] This treaty unambiguously demonstrates that, in the world of real politics, the Chinese emperor was assumed to constrain his authority within a specified geographical space. The upshot was that this reality formed a sharp discrepancy with the ideal of universal imperial rule developed by the Confucian literati of the Han period.

The discrepancy between Confucian ideology and the political and military reality is also illustrated by the letters exchanged between the Xiongnu Chanyu and the Han emperor recorded in historical accounts. Ban Gu's *Hanshu* 漢書 (The Book of Former Han) claims that the letters sent by Modu Chanyu to Emperor Wen contained the following passage: *The great Chanyu of Xiongnu inaugurated by Heaven sends [his] respects to the [Chinese] emperor and wishes [him] well* (天所立匈奴大單于敬問皇帝無恙).[25] The Chanyu states unequivocally the claim that his authority derived from Heaven, thereby asserting that he was the equal of the recipient in terms of status. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that Xiongnu Chanyu addressed the emperor as his "brother" (Kundi or Xiongdi 昆弟,兄弟).[26] These indications suggest that the relationship between the Xiongnu Chanyu and the Han emperor was regarded as a relationship between equals, at least by the former.[27]

It is interesting that the Western Han rulers do not seem to have been particularly concerned by this discrepancy between Confucian ideology and political reality. At least part of the explanation of this paradox is that the military weakness of the Han empire could be compensated by insisting on the cultural superiority of the Chinese emperor over the Xiongnu. After the death of Emperor Gao in 195 BC, Modu Chanyu sent a letter to Dowager Empress

Barfield (1981) 52; Chang (2007) 172. For archaeological evidence, including the tiles which were excavated from Han tombs in Baotou in Inner Mongolia in the twentieth century, see He Lin (1986).

[24] *Shiji* 110, 2902.

[25] *Shiji* 110, 2899; *Hanshu* 94a, 3756.

[26] In several letters sent to the Chanyu by Emperor Wen, the latter repeats that the Han and Xiongnu were brothers according to the terms of the previous treaty. See *Shiji* 110, 2902; *Hanshu* 94a, 3754.

[27] Di Cosmo (2004) 193.

Lü containing an offer of marriage. From the Chanyu's perspective, the proposal made sense because the customs of the Xiongnu allowed a man to marry his brother's widow (levirate), but from a Chinese point of view the offer was an unbearable insult. [28] Infuriated by this humiliation, Empress Lü summoned the chancellor, Chen Ping 陳平, and a number of senior officials to debate whether the Han should send out troops to punish the Xiongnu's arrogance. Pan Kuai 樊噲, an eminent general who had helped Liu Bang in his rise to power, boasted that he would speedily crush the Xiongnu army with a hundred thousand soldiers under his command. His confidence was rebuked by another statesman, Ji Bu 季布, who bitterly criticized Pan's plan for two reasons. He began by reminding those present of the painful defeat which the late Emperor Gao had suffered in 200 BC. Furthermore, he argued that the barbarians were not worth attacking:

> *The Yi and Di peoples are like beasts. It is neither worth even being glad if we receive compliments from them, nor worth being irritated by their insults.* [29] 且夷狄璧如禽兽，得其善言不足喜，恶言不足怒也。

In the end Empress Lü accepted Ji Bu's advice and wrote a respectful letter to the Chanyu in which she politely declined the latter's marriage proposal.

The "harmonious kinship" policy (*heqin* 和親) by means of which the early Western Han emperors tried to deal with the Xiongnu confederacy was not enough to guarantee the stability of the frontiers and dispel the hostility between the Han and Xiongu. From time to time, the Xiongnu army broke the peace and raided the northern frontier counties of the Han empire, extorting more subsidies.[30] In short, the enormous amount of subsidies paid by the Han emperor did not buy peace and the financial burdens of the Han government only increased.[31]

Another problem arose from the fact that the Han people was far less keen than the Xiongnu to exchange goods on the frontier. Whereas the Han court wanted to establish a clear border with "as few links as possible between

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[28] *Shiji* 110, 2879. About the Xiongnu people's customs, see Chin (2010) 327.

[29] *Hanshu* 94a, 3755.

[30] Barfield (1981) 53. Since all of the surviving sources are Han-biased, it is difficult to establish if Han army also broke the peace and interfered in Xiongnu affairs.

[31] According to Sima Qian, the annual Han subsidy amounted to less than 5,000 *hu* of grain, 10,000 *shi* of wine and 10,000 *pi* of silk cloth. See Barfield (1981) 53; Yu (1967) 48.

its border people and the Xiongnu", the latter desired exactly the opposite.[32] As a result of this inconsistency, the relationship between the two states remained unstable for the next century and a half. Aware of the Xiongnu's fondness for Han goods, some early Han statesmen urged the emperor to continue implementing the *heqin* policy, stating that they were convinced that the barbarians would cease to harass Han frontiers after their desires had been assuaged by material goods. This scheme, first proposed by Jia Yi, became known as the policy of the "Five Baits". Jia Yi stressed the best way of dealing with the barbarians was:

> *(1) to give them elaborate clothes and carriages to corrupt their eyes;*
> *(2) to give them fine food to corrupt their mouths;*
> *(3) to give them music to corrupt their ears;*
> *(4) to give them lofty buildings, granaries, and slaves to corrupt their stomachs; and*
> *(5) to provide gifts and shower favours on those Xiongnu who surrendered.*[33]

The *Shiji* recounts that this strategy was betrayed to the Xiongnu Chanyu by a Han captive named Zhonghang Yue 中行說.[34] Knowing the seductiveness of Han luxury goods, he warned the Chanyu not to be obsessed by Han goods or customs:

> *The strength of the Xiongnu lies in the very fact that their food and clothing are different from those of the Chinese, and they are therefore not dependent on the Han for anything. Now the Chanyu has acquired this fondness for Chinese things and is trying to change the Xiongnu customs. Therefore, although the Han sends no more than one-fifth of its goods here, eventually it will succeed in winning over the whole of the Xiongnu nation. From now on, whenever you receive any Han silk, put this on and try riding your horses through undergrowth and brambles! In no time your robes and leggings will be torn to shreds and everyone will see that silks are no match for the utility of felt and leather garments. Likewise, when you receive any Han foodstuffs, throw them away so that people can see that they are not as practical or tasty as milk and kumiss.*[35] 匈奴人眾不能當漢之一郡，然所以彊者，以衣食異，無仰於漢也。今單于變俗好漢物，漢物不過什二，則匈奴盡歸於

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[32] Lattimore (1940) 478-480; Yu (1967) *passim*., esp. 92-133; Barfield (1981) 54.

[33] Yu (1967) 37; Yang (1968) 27-9.

[34] *Shiji* 110, 2879. Chin (2010) 325.

[35] *Shiji*, *ibid*. This passage is translated by Watson (1961) 170 and also cited by Barfield (1989) 52.

漢矣。其得漢繒絮，以馳草棘中，衣袴皆裂敝，以示不如旃裘之完善也。得漢食物皆去之，以示不如湩酪之便美也。

The foregoing discussion would appear to show that the rulers and educated elite of the early Western Han period harboured ambivalent sentiments about Han relations with the nomadic peoples in the north. On the one hand, some Han officials, such as Jia Yi, were well aware of the awkward discrepancy between the reality in which the Han emperor was in a weak position when confronted with the expansionist policies of the Xiongnu and the ideal picture of universal imperial power. On the other hand, the Han emperor was very reluctant to end the threat posed by the Xiongnu by use of military force. Even Jia Yi thought that the best way to counter the barbarian threat was to corrupt the Xiongnu's minds by providing them with luxuries.[36]

Chao Cuo 晁錯 (200-154 BC), another prominent statesman living in the time of Emperor Jing who wrote several essays on military and frontier issues, came to a different conclusion. He was fully aware of the military power of the Xiongnu, pointing out that the Xiongnu soldiers were adept at horse-riding and shooting, galloping through rugged terrain and enduring harsh climatic conditions. Unlike Jia Yi, however, he believed that the Xiongnu's threat could only be ended by military resistance.[37] Despite his conviction, he was firmly opposed to the idea of carrying out any offensive campaigns against the Xiongnu, arguing that the best solution was the establishment of permanent garrisons of farmer-soldiers along the frontier.[38]

The first part of this chapter briefly touched upon the imperial worldview developed by Dong Zhongshu. In his opinion, the emperor occupied the centre of the cosmos, ruling all mankind by the mandate of Heaven. As a statesman, however, he seems to have been unconcerned by the

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[36] Loewe (2011) 107.

[37] For Chao Cuo's theories concerning the best way of dealing with the Xiongnu, see *Hanshu* 49, 2279 –2281.

[38] As he points out, "war is a dangerous thing …and the pursuit of victory is at the cost of human life. Once it has failed, it is too late to repent." This is why in his proposals to the emperor Wen Chao did not advocate launching any major campaigns against the Xiongnu. On the contrary, he urged the emperor to pay more attention to the consolidation of the frontier fortifications. For Chao Cuo's proposal concerning the establishment of new settlements along the borders, see *Hanshu* 49, 2283-2287. For a discussion of Chao Cuo's ideas and proposals, see Chang (2007) 147-150.

inferior position of the Han emperor in relation to the Xiongnu barbarians. Some of his views on this topic were recorded by Ban Gu:

> *It is principles which move a righteous man, while profits move an avaricious one. Peoples like the Xiongnu cannot be persuaded by talk of benevolence and moral principles. All one can do is talk to them about fine profits and to get them to seek links with Heaven. Let them contract only with Heaven. Therefore, give them rich profits to subdue their will, bind them to Heaven by oath, and take their beloved sons in charge as hostages so that they are emotionally involved. Even were the Xiongnu to attempt to make a change, would they be willing to forego the chance of gaining a rich profit? Would they practise deceit on Heaven? Would they like to see their dear children put to death? Taxes and the handing-over of gifts are not as high as the cost of an army, and the strength of a city's walls is not as effective as a promise agreed by men of integrity. What a benefit it would be to all if adults close to the borders could loosen their [war] belts and if their infants could be suckled in peace; if, with no enemy horse [cavalry] spying out what they could find at the defence lines, there would be no call to send emergency dispatches up and down the empire.*[39] 義動君子，利動貪人。如匈奴者，非可以仁義說也，獨可說以厚利，結之於天耳。故與之厚利以沒其意，與盟於天以堅其約，質其愛子以累其心，匈奴雖欲展轉，奈失重利何，奈欺上天何，奈殺愛子何！夫賦斂行賂不足以當三軍之費，城郭之固無以異於貞士之約，而使邊城守境之民父兄緩帶，稚子咽哺，胡馬不窺於長城，而羽檄不行於中國，不亦便於天下乎!

To judge from this passage, Dong was arguing that, when dealing with the Xiongnu, the emperor should not rely heavily on military force thereby creating enormous costs and disturbing the Han people of the frontier zone. Instead he urges the emperor to use a judicious combination of material benefits and emotional blackmail to keep the Xiongnu in check. This idea is very similar to the "Five Baits" approach advocated by his contemporary Jia Yi.

Much later, in the mid-first century AD, Dong's approach was vehemently criticized by the historian Ban Gu. As Ban Gu points out, the Chanyu had never allowed his sons to go to the Han court as hostages. Furthermore, he observes that, during the reigns of Emperors Wen and Wu, Han armies had successfully fought large-scale campaigns against the Xiongnu. In these confrontations the losses of men, horses and land had been evenly

[39] *Hanshu* 94b, 3832-3834. For Dong Zhongshu's ideas regarding the Xiongnu, see the analysis by Loewe (2011) 106-109. My translation is a slightly adapted version of that offered by Loewe. See ibid. 107-108.

balanced. Although the Han armies had captured new territories to the south of the Yellow River and set up the Suofang commandery to consolidate its gains, the Han government had lost the lands south of Zaoyang up to a distance of 900 *li*. Although the Xiongnu did occasionally send envoys to the Han capital, they also detained the Han envoys dispatched from the Han imperial court. Finally, Ban Gu criticizes Dong Zhongshu's lack of knowledge about the fortification of the frontiers and dismisses his plan to defeat the enemy through bribes as naïve.[40]

At first sight Dong's political ideas might seem to be a contradiction of the all-powerful image of the Han emperor, but closer inspection reveals that the military weakness of many Han emperors did not undermine prevailing ideas about the empire or the legitimacy of emperors. In Chapter Six I shall argue that Han ideas about the ideal emperor focused on the latter's role as a living moral example rather than any heroic military qualities he might possess. In other words, the reputation of the Chinese ruler depended, for the most part, on his success in disseminating morality and order among his Chinese subjects.[41] A wise ruler was supposed to have the charismatic power needed to persuade the barbarians occupying the remotest areas to acknowledge the superiority of the Han emperor, on account of the latter's benevolence and impeccable morality. On the other hand, since the barbarians living outside the empire were not regarded as subjects of the Han emperor, they were not seen as a target group in the emperor's project of moral transformation.

These observations help to explain why some literati of the early Western Han were not so much concerned about the military inferiority of the empire in its combats with the Xiongnu barbarians. As discussed in Chapter Two, the idea of Chinese moral and cultural superiority can be observed as one of the products of the strengthening of Chinese cultural-ethnic identity between the collapse of the Western Zhou dynasty and the creation of the unified Qin empire. Paradoxically, these feelings of cultural and moral superiority were reinforced rather than reduced as a result of the rise of the steppe empire in the north by the Western Han period.

During the Warring States Period, many Chinese philosophers had already formulated the view in general that violence was not the best way to

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[40] For Ban Gu's critique, see *Hanshu* 94b, 3831.
[41] Loewe (2002) 345. Roman emperors were also expected to pay great attention to their moral duties, see Noreña (2011) 37-100. However, during the Principate the reputation of the ruling emperor continued to depend largely on military successes. For a more detailed discussion of this topic see Chapters Five and Six.

achieve political ends. Partly for this reason, many Chinese rulers showed little interest in pursuing military glory and territorial expansion.[42] Most of them appear to have seen the creation of a clearly defined physical boundary and compliance with the demands of the Xiongnu rulers as the best way to counter the threat posed by the northern barbarians. Only when this approach had ended in failure did some Han turn to a more aggressive frontier policy.[43]

3. Military campaigns and territorial expansions (133-60 BC)

3.1. Major campaigns of the Han (133-119 BC)

It is not entirely clear why Emperor Wu decided to change the foreign policy regarding the Xiongnu. Both the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* recount that, although Xiongnu cavalry forces carried out small-scale raids into Han territory from time to time, no major incursions occurred during the reign of Emperor Jing.[44] When Emperor Wu ascended the throne, the harmonious pseudo-kinship policy was even reaffirmed by a clarification of the terms of the treaty and by increasing traffic in the border markets. Ban Gu records that the relationship between the Han empire and the Xiongnu grew less hostile and that border markets in the vicinity of the Great Wall boomed.

This felicitous period did not last long. Peace between the Han and the Xiongnu broke down in 136 BC. In this year a Xiongnu envoy came to Chang'an to visit the emperor with a marriage proposal from Chanyu Junchen 軍臣單于 (r. 161-126 BC). Emperor Wu convened a court conference to discuss this matter. Two statesmen, Han Anguo 韓安国 (d. 127 BC) and Wang Hui 王恢 (d. 133 BC), dominated the debate. The following year, Nie Wengyi 聶翁壹, a Chinese merchant from the frontier city of Mayi 馬邑, proposed that Wang Hui ambush the Xiongnu forces led by the Chanyu when the latter

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[42] For a discussion of violence and war in the Warring States period, see the seminal study of Lewis (1990) 53-96. For attitudes to warfare during the Qin and Han empires, see the final chapter of this dissertation.

[43] Since the early Han, the *heqin* policy was largely dictated by the military inferiority of the Han empire, but its existence does not prove that the Han elite was satisfied with the existing situation. On the other hand, it has to be said that the Han government tried to maintain peace with the Xiongnu by concluding a treaty in which the latter were treated as equal partners.

[44] *Hanshu* 94a, 3765.

visited the border. Wang submitted this proposal to the Emperor Wu, and another heated debate with Han Anguo ensued.[45] The details of the discussion are recorded by Ban Gu. As an experienced military official from the old frontier state of Yan 燕, Wang Hui had a deep knowledge of Chinese-barbarian relationships. As far as he was concerned, the appeasement policy had proved to be a failure, since it did not stop the Xiongnu from raiding the Chinese borders whenever they wanted. The main reason for their audacity, Wang Hui thought, was purely and simply that the Xiongnu did not fear the emperor. Moreover, Wang Hui believed that the Xiongnu's appetite for new territory could never be satisfied. Therefore he advised Emperor Wu to end the policy of appeasement and to subjugate the Xiongnu by force. Unlike most other literati, Wang Hui did not think that the Han army was inferior to the Xiongnu in the battlefield.

Wang Hui's proposal was rejected by Han Anguo, the Imperial Chancellor, who advised the emperor to continue the "peace and marriage" policy designed to appease the Xiongnu. Han Anguo emphasized the superiority of the Xiongnu's military strength, stating that the nomadic soldiers excelled in archery and that their speed could be compared to that of a hurricane or lightning. He also reminded the emperor of the fact that the two military campaigns which had been mounted during the reigns of Emperor Gao and Emperor Wen had yielded no positive results. Interestingly, as one of the court literati, Han Anguo also expressed his concern about the cultural gap existing between the Xiongnu and those inhabiting the Zhongguo (Central State). As he pointed out, since time immemorial the barbarians had upheld completely different institutions, rituals and customs to the Chinese. Therefore, as completely uncivilized people occupying the outermost parts of the world, the Xiongnu were not even worth worrying about.[46] Finally, he expressed his worry that a military advance into enemy territory would create immense logistical problems. This Sino-centric view is in line with those formulated by some other Chinese scholar-officials already mentioned.

Although Emperor Wu had begun to consider the possibility of attacking the Xiongnu, no military offensive was launched until 129 BC. In the autumn of that year, the Han court sent four generals, Wei Qing 衛青, Gongsun Ao 公

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[45] The debate is recorded at length in the *Book of Han Anguo* by Ban Gu, see *Hanshu* 52, 2398-2407.
[46] *ibid,* 2402.

孫敖, Gongsun He 公孫賀 and Li Guang 李廣, each commanding 10,000 cavalry, to fight the Xiongnu. This first campaign ended in failure. In 127 BC, however, General Wei Qing, who had set out from Yunzhong 雲中 with an army to march on Longxi 隴西, inflicted a heavy defeat on the Xiongnu force. This success resulted in the recovery of the region of Henan 河南地, where two new commendaries, Shuofang 朔方 and Wuyuan 五原, were established. The fortification works running along the Yellow River were also reconstructed at this time.

In 121 BC, the Xiongnu forces again suffered heavy losses when they were defeated by a Han army commanded by General Huo Qubing 霍去病. Having crossed the Yanzhi Mountain 焉支山 with 10,000 cavalry, he captured 8,000 Xiongnu soldiers during the first phase of his campaign. In the summer of 121 BC, he launched a campaign across Juyan 居延 from Longxi and Beidi 北地 and succeeded in bringing the Qilian Mountains 祁連山 under Han control. This campaign resulted in 30,000 Xiongnu soldiers and over ten commanders being captured. Angered by the defeat of his subordinate kings, Hunye (or Hunxie) 渾邪王 and Xiutu 休屠王, the Chanyu decided to summon them to his capital and execute them. When King Hunye learnt about this plan, he killed Xiutu and led 40,000 armed soldiers to surrender to Han. His action led to the creation of the five Subordinate States of Han in the five commanderies of Longxi, Beidi, Shangjun 上郡, Shuofang and Yunzhong in the region beyond the old garrisons to the south of the Yellow River. Once these were set up, Han officials transferred large numbers of poor people from Guandong (the area east of Hangu Pass) to populate the area of Henan (the area beyond the part of the Great Wall built by the Qin king, Zhaoxiang, to the north of the Yellow River).[47]

Only three years later, in 118 BC, Emperor Wu again dispatched his generals, Wei Qing and Huo Qubing, with 100,000 cavalrymen to mount a large-scale attack on the Chanyu's base in Mobei 漠北 after Xiongnu invasions of You Beiping 右北平 and Dingxiang 定襄 in 119 BC.[48] The army of Wei Qing confronted the Xiongnu's elite soldiers in the region of Mobei and inflicted another defeat on the Chanyu's army, forcing Ichise Chanyu to flee to

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[47] For Emperor Wu campaigns against the Xiongnu and the political arrangements which were made between 129 BC and 118 BC, see Chang (2007) 162-75.

[48] *Shiji*, 110; *Hanshu*,94a; Liu Yanwei 劉彥威 (1997) 11.

the northwestern regions. At the same time, the forces commanded by Huo crushed the army led by the Wise King of the Left at a distance of 2,000 *li* from Dai Commandery 代郡. The Xiongnu king escaped to the northwest with the remnants of his army, pursued by the Han army all the way to Hanhai 瀚海 (Lake Baikal). In the wake of these successes, the Han government now established military settlements along the Yellow River between western Shuofang and Lingju 令居. Between Lingju and Dunhuang, a chain of military posts, watchtowers and beacon fires was established along the Great Wall as a measure to reinforce the defensive lines. Although the Xiongnu did not stop harassing the northern frontier regions, these campaigns ended the Xiongnu's military superiority.

3.2. Expansion into the Western Regions and the triumph over the Xiongnu (139 BC-AD 9)

The rulers of Han had long realized that the military strength of the Xiongnu was based on their control of the multiple states of the Western Regions 西域, composed of a huge area to the west of the Yumen Pass (Yumen Guan 玉門關), which provided the Xiongnu with rich resources. In the light of this knowledge, the Han court dispatched Zhang Qian 張騫 to pay a visit to these western lands for the purpose of establishing an alliance. Zhang Qian's first journey took place in 139/8 BC. It was not a success as Zhang Qian was captured by the Xiongnu people and detained by them until 129/128 BC, when he managed to escape to the Western Regions. Crossing a number of states in the Tarim Basin 塔里木盆地 and Xinjiang 新疆, he finally reached Yuezhi 月氏, a powerful state in Central Asia. However, since Yuezhi had no intention of opposing the Xiongnu, Zhang Qian's mission was ultimately unsuccessful.

In 119 BC Zhang Qian was sent to the Western Regions by Emperor Wu for the second time. The aim of his mission was to "cut off the right arm of the Xiongnu (斷匈奴右臂)".[49] In other words, the Han court was trying to establish a military alliance with some of the states in the Western Regions which had been under the control of the Xiongnu. However, Wusun 烏孫, the most important state the Han was trying to win over, showed little interest in

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[49] *Hanshu* 61, 2692.

becoming an ally of the Han emperor, pointing out that it was located very far away from the Han empire and knew little about the latter. This negative response was also motivated by the fact that the Xiongnu had controlled Wusun and many other peoples in the Western Regions for many years, making the Wusun nobles reluctant to offend their overlords. Although the contemporary historian Sima Qian rated Zhang Qian's undertaking in travelling to the Western Regions highly, the fact remains that his two missions failed to produce any tangible results.[50]

Despite these unsuccessful diplomatic missions, Emperor Wu did not give up his intention of undermining the power of the Xiongnu by establishing control over the minor states in the Western Regions. Between 104 BC and 99 BC he even took the step of launching military operations against the oasis state of Ferghana (Dayuan 大宛), which was situated to the southwest of the areas inhabited by the Xiongnu, at a distance of no fewer than 12,559 *li* from the Han capital. Both Sima Qian and Ban Gu claim that the main reason for launching the Ferghana campaign was Emperor Wu's desire to acquire the legendary Ferghana horses.[51] In reality, the campaign was part of a long-term strategy devised to dismember the Xiongnu confederacy. Ever since the reigns of Emperors Wen and Jing, the Han court had been trying to breed more and better horses which would be a match for the formidable Xiongnu cavalry.[52] On this occasion, the first move of the Han court was to send two generals, Zhao Ponu 趙破奴 and Wang Hui, to attack Jushi 車師 and Loulan 樓蘭, two states occupying the Turfan depression and its northern edges. The rulers of these states were in the habit of detaining the Han envoys and goods on their way to the Western Regions, thereby blocking Han connections with Central Asia.[53] After an initial military setback in 104 BC, the Ershi General Li Guangli 李廣利 again attacked Ferghana in 102 BC. This time he won a decisive victory, and many states of the Western Regions now began to send envoys and tribute to the Han empire.

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[50] *Shiji* 123, 3170.

[51] This type of horse was known as the "blood-sweating horse". Its existence was unknown in Han China until Zhang Qian's return from the Western Regions. The Han sources record that Emperor Wu sent people to Ferghana with good horses and gifts to exchange these for horses. See *Shiji* 123, 3160.

[52] On the policy of horse-breeding in early Han, see He Pingli 何平立 (1995) 103-110.

[53] Yu (2008) 132.

In 54 BC, during the reign of Emperor Xuan (r. 74-49 BC), the Xiongnu empire was split into a northern and a southern part, principally as a consequence of a feud which had commenced around 60 BC. In 53 BC Chanyu Huhanye 呼韓邪 (r. 58-31 BC), ruler of the southern Xiongnu, expressed his willingness to submit to the Han emperor by sending his son to the capital of Chang'an. Two years later, in 51 BC, Huhanye came to Chang'an in person in order to offer large amounts of tribute and to make his submission official. Meeting Huhanye in the Ganquan Palace 甘泉宮, the emperor rewarded him with substantial gifts. Among other honours, Huhanye was accorded a privileged rank which was higher than that of any other dependent king.[54] The Han emperor ordered a large cavalry force to escort Huhanye back to Guanglu 光禄 (the northwestern part of present-day Baotou, Inner Mongolia) in the northern frontier zone, and the Han court allowed him to garrison the cities of this area with Xiongnu troops. One year later, Zhizhi Chanyu 郅支單于, the leader of another Xiongnu group, also sent envoys and tribute to the Han emperor as an overture towards establishing friendly relations. According to the sources, compared to its dealing with the Northern Xiongnu, the Chinese government accorded the Southern Xiongnu preferential treatment.

In 47 BC the two Han commanders of Chariots and Cavalry 車騎都尉, Han Chang 韓昌 and Zhang Meng 張猛, established a new alliance with Huhanye at Dong Mountain 東山 near the Nuo River 諾水.[55] Concerned about the rising power of the Southern Xiongnu, Zhizhi Chanyu led the Northern Xiongnu westwards, moving them all the way to Sogdiana (Kangju 康居).[56] In 36 BC, Han troops dispatched by the Protector-General Gan Yanshou 甘延壽 killed Zhizhi in this region.[57]

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[54] Cf. my discussion of Xiao Wangzhi's in the final part of this chapter.

[55] *Hanshu* 94b; Yu (2008) 141. The treaty announces that from now on the Xiongnu and the Han will be united in one family and that the descendents of the Han and the Xiongnu will not deceive or attack each other. Should there be robberies, the treaty stipulates that the governments on both sides must notify each other, and assume responsibility for punishment and compensation. If one party is attacked by enemies, the other must send troops to assist. Finally, it emphasizes that whoever violates the agreement will bring misfortune upon themselves.

[56] According to the *Shiji,* Kangju was a nomadic state whose customs resembled those of the Great Yuezhi. It was situated about 2,000 *li* to the northwest of the Ferghana region. See *Shiji* 123, 3161.

[57] *Hanshu* 70, 3009; 94b, 3802.

After learning about Zhizhi Chanyu's death, Huhanye sent a petition to the Han court in which he expressed his willingness to pay homage to Emperor Yuan 元帝 (r. 49-33 BC). When Huhanye visited the court in 33 BC, he received twice as many gifts as he had done in 51 BC. In response to Huhanye's proposal to strengthen Han-Xiongnu ties through marriage, it was decided that a concubine of the imperial court would become his wife. In other words, the *heqin* policy between the Xiongnu and Han recommenced but its content had been completely altered. During the final fifty years of the Western Han dynasty, the northern frontier remained relatively peaceful.

3.3. Han administration and colonization in the Western Regions after Zhang Qian

The large-scale military campaigns initiated in 129 BC during the reign of Emperor Wu profoundly changed the contours of Chinese historical geography. In the course of about three decades, Han territory was extended to the far-flung areas to the west of the Hexi Corridor 河西走廊. It has been calculated that between 129 and 90 BC as much as 1.5-1.7 million square miles of territory passed into the control of Han China.[58]

In order to establish permanent control over these newly conquered territories, the Han government introduced new administrative structures. As said, when King Kunye 昆邪 and 40,000 of his followers submitted to Han rule in 121/120 BC, the Han court established five special administrative units, which were called "the Subordinate States" (*shuguo* 屬國), in Longxi 陇西, Beidi 北地, Shangjun 上郡, Shuofang 朔方 and Yunzhong 雲中. Kunye's men were settled in these areas.[59] Later, four new commanderies, namely: Jiuquan 酒泉, Wuwei 武威, Zhangye 張掖 and Dunhuang 敦煌, were established in the western part of the Hetao Corridor 河套走廊, with the aim of checking the movements of the Southern Xiongnu. Collectively, these four commanderies became known as the *Hexi sijun* 河西四郡, "the Four Commanderies of Heixi".

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[58] Chang (2007) 215.

[59] The *Hanshu* records this office was originally established in the Qin dynasty, specifically to be in charge of those barbarians who had become subjects. It had been superseded after the fall of Qin until its re-establishment by Emperor Wu to govern the Xiongnu tribes which had submitted themselves. See *Hanshu* 19a, 735.

In the Western Regions the colonies of Jushi 車師, Bugur 輪台 (in the eastern part of modern Luntai, Xinjiang) and Kurla 渠犁 (present-day Korla, Xinjiang) were established to consolidate Han power in the region. The plan to increase the number of farmer-soldiers (*tuntian* 屯田) in Bugur proposed by Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊, which had been rejected by Emperor Wu, was finally carried out in the reign of his successor Emperor Zhao 昭 (r. 87-74 BC). In 60 BC, after the Rizhu king of Xiongnu 日逐 had submitted to the Han court, a special office, the Office of the Protector General of the Western Regions 西域 都護府, was established to govern these very extensive territories. The creation of this office signalled that the Han had gained secure control over these regions as far as the Ili Valley 伊犁谷地. By the end of the first century BC, the settlements of the "agricultural garrisons" extended all the way to the state of Khotan 于闐 and parts of the regions of Yarkant 莎車 to the west and southwest of the Tarim Basin.

Since the time of Modu Chanyu in the early third century BC, the ethnic group generally called the Donghu 东胡, which included the tribes of Xianbei 鮮卑 and Wuhuan 烏桓 who had originally lived in Inner Mongolia and then moved to Manchuria, and the Qiang 羌 of the northwestern frontier region, as well as the minor states of the oases of the Western Regions, had been under the control of the Xiongnu empire. During the reigns of Emperors Wu and Zhao, these states gradually won independence from the Xiongnu. It was an ephemeral independence as the vacuum left by the waning of the power of the Xiongnu was quickly filled by the Han empire. By the end of the first century BC, these nomadic states and tribes had been brought under Han economic and military control. To cope with the situation, in the early years of the first century AD, a new tributary system was developed. The chieftains of the nomadic peoples and states of the northern and western frontier zones now had to send their princes to the Han capital, where they were "lodged" for long periods. Furthermore, various types of goods had to be sent to the Han emperor.[60] In return, the tributary states and tribes annually received large amounts of gifts, including rice, other types of grain, fabrics and livestock, from the Han court, which also confirmed the legitimate status of their chieftains by granting them various official titles.[61]

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[60] Yu (1986) 416.
[61] Yu (1967) 45-51.

The Han government also sought to consolidate the Han military presence in the marginal territories by encouraging people living in the Chinese Central Plain to move into the frontier zones. During the initial decades of the Han dynasty, the various emperors followed the advice of Chao Cuo, who had recommended a policy of "safeguarding the border and establishing protection against the Hu enemies by encouraging people to develop agriculture." [62] Emperor Wen, for instance, transferred large numbers of labourers from the area of Guandong to the northwestern frontier regions.[63] Early in the reign of Emperor Wu, the Han army recovered the area of Henan which the Xiongnu had occupied during the Chinese civil war following the fall of Qin. The *Hanshu* reports that, immediately after this success, two new commanderies, Shuofang and Wuyuan, were set up in Henan and about 100,000 people were moved to the Shuofang area.[64] More migration programmes were carried out after the Han army had advanced westwards in the time of Emperor Wu. A large proportion of the population of the four commanderies of Hexi 河西四郡 is believed to have come from the commanderies of the interior regions. Furthermore, colonies were established in the far-off Western Regions beyond the Yumen Pass after the Han empire had gained control over the states of these areas. Military colonies were set up as far west as Bugur and Kurla. In the reign of Emperor Xuan, this programme of colonization was extended to the most distant parts of the Western Regions, with new colonies being established at Jushi 車師, Yarkant and Bixu Jian 北胥鞬.

Thanks to the bamboo strips excavated in places on the northern frontiers like Juyan 居延 and Dunhuang detailed information about the administrative networks of the northern and northwestern frontier regions of the Han empire is now available.[65] The study of Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 reveals that the administrative units of the frontier zones had a strongly military appearance. In the northern frontier commanderies under the Grand Administrator, for example, the principal task of the commandants 都尉

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[62] Chao Cuo's suggestions regarding the defence of the northern frontiers against the Xiongnu were recorded in the book which he wrote for Bangu; see *Hanshu* 49, 2278-2289.

[63] On the substantial Chinese migration into the northern and western frontier zones during the Western Han dynasty, see Ge Jianxiong 葛劍雄 (1997) 147-153.

[64] *Hanshu* 6, 170.

[65] Chang (2007) vol. 2, 70-129.

appointed was to deal with security issues in specific localities or areas.[66] In the reign of Emperor Wu, a chain of forts, beacon towers and watchtowers, with a total length of between 3,000 and 4,000 *li* (777 to 1,036 miles), was established across the vast expanse of Hexi.[67]

As large numbers of colonists were being settled in some of the newly acquired frontier regions, groups of barbarians who had surrendered were being established in other areas which were also integrated into the administrative system of the Han empire. As mentioned earlier, the office responsible for these areas was called the Office for the Subordinate States. Initially, this office was based Chang'an but when the Xiongnu king Kunye submitted to Han with a large number of followers in 121 BC, Emperor Wu ordered the establishment of five Subordinate States in the frontier zone to accommodate these people. The commandant of each of these Subordinate States was subordinate to the Grand Administrator of a neighbouring Han frontier commandery.[68]

The principal aim of the Han government in settling these barbarian groups was not to promote the agricultural development of marginal areas, but to protect the frontier lands against any future barbarian invasions. In the Western Han period this idea had already been put forward by some officials such as Jia Yi and Chao Cuo, but had lain dormant and was not implemented until the time of Emperor Wu.

4. Motives for territorial expansion

In the first part of this chapter, it has been argued that the first emperors of the Han dynasty did not pursue any expansionist policy. Their territorial ambitions appear to have been confined to maintaining control of those regions in which

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[66] For the administrative network revealed by the Han bamboo texts from the two Commanderies of Zhangye and Juyan in the Western Han period, see Chen Mengjia's brilliant research: Chen Mengjia 陳夢家 (1980) 37-135.

[67] Chen Mengjia (1980) 219; Chen Xiaoming 陳小鳴 (2002) 28. Chen Mengjia studied the fortification works in the border region of Juyan on the basis of the bamboo texts which were discovered in the 20th century.

[68] Yu Yingshi (1967) 72; Sun Yancheng 孫言誠 (1987). The Dependent State (*Shuguo*) had appeared during the Qin dynasty, but under a different name, *Shubang* 屬邦, which also means 'dependent state'. The name of the office was changed after the accession of Liu Bang. It is not clear which, if any, areas were administered by it between Emperor Wu's accession to the throne and the creation of the five Subordinate States in 121 BC.

Chinese civilization had taken root. Consequently, this assumption leads to the questions: Why did Emperor Wu and some of his successors decide to launch a series of large-scale military campaigns, some of which even reached the distant Ferghana region? How did the diplomatic missions and military expeditions organized in the period after 129 BC influence Western Han worldviews?

On the basis of the argumentation cited, several observations can be made about these issues. First and foremost, the massive territorial expansions of Han China which took place between the late second and mid-first centuries BC can be seen as an active response to the constant pressures exerted on its northern and western frontiers. Unquestionably, from the late third century, the Xiongnu confederacy repeatedly made excessive economic demands on the sedentary population of the Han empire.[69] In its heyday, the Xiongnu empire controlled a vast territory encompassing all of Mongolia and extending southwards to the Ordos region in the loop of the Yellow River in northern China.[70] In the west, Xiongnu influence extended as far as the Ili Valley and Bactria. Not satisfied with the exploitation of the resources of the pastoral states and tribes occupying these areas, the Xiongnu frequently used their cavalry to invade and plunder Chinese territories. Unable to defend the frontier regions effectively, the first emperor of the Han dynasty, Emperor Gao, had no option but to make a peace treaty with Modu Chanyu (the fourth Xiongnu ruler) in around 200 BC. This treaty marked the beginning of the *heqin* policy of appeasement. Nevertheless, it was soon obvious that this policy did not have the desired effect of stopping all Xiongnu attacks, partly because on the

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[69] Recent scholars have tended to pay more attention to the social and economic nature of Xiongnu society in order to explain why it relied so heavily on the products of other peoples, including the Chinese. As Barfield argues, because the steppe peoples lacked a system of tax collection, a few individuals (elite) regularly needed to be in possession of a large amount of material goods to distribute among their followers to maintain their power and control of his subordinates. This might explain why the Xiongnu made such excessive demands for products from China. As long as the Han government refused to open a market and exchange goods with the Xiongnu, raids were the only method to gain wealth. Had the Chanyu not been able to provide his tribesmen with material goods, his position would soon have been usurped by others. See Barfield (1981) 56; Namio Egami 江上波夫 (1988) 35, trans. Zhang Chengzhi 張承志; Di Cosmo (1994) 117. Because the stability of the Xiongnu empire depended heavily on extorting vast amounts of wealth from China obtained by through pillage, tribute payments, border trade and re-export of luxury goods, this type of empire is called a "shadow empire" by Barfield. See Barfield (2001) 10; Scheidel (2010).

[70] Rogers (2011) 220-221.

Xiongnu side the Chanyu did not have the absolute authority to restrain his subordinates from pillaging the Chinese towns of the frontier region.[71]

The ruling elite of the Han empire was fully aware of the threats posed by the warlike barbarian nomadic peoples of the steppe world. Nevertheless, prior to the reign of Emperor Wu few actually urged the emperor to develop an expansionist policy in response to this challenge. The reasons for this reticence were complex, but one noteworthy point is that, in the eyes of most Han Confucian officials, the barbarian territories on the periphery of the Han empire were not worth occupying. Yan Zhu 嚴助, a senior official in the reign of Emperor Wu, for instance, claimed that from time immemorial the territories of Hu and Yue had been uninhabited places and that conquering them would be a pointless undertaking.[72] Such a Sino-centric outlook was ubiquitous among the upper echelons of the Han empire, as various examples have shown above.

From the foregoing discussion it has also emerged that, by the late third century BC, the chasm between the pastoral nomadic culture of Inner Asia and the agrarian culture of the Chinese Central Plains had become so great that the emperors of the early and mid-second centuries BC showed little interest in extending their authority into the barbarian lands. In fact the reverse was true. The early Han emperors tried to limit the interactions between their subjects and the barbarian nomads. In this context it is worth pointing out that, throughout the Western Han period, the Great Wall of the northern frontier zone not only served to keep the barbarian enemies out but also performed an important function in preventing such Han subjects as peasants, slaves, convicts and traitors, from fleeing to the barbarian territories.

When Huhanye Chanyu visited the Han court in 33 BC and married a court concubine (cf. above), for example, he offered to garrison the Han northern border between Shanggu 上谷 and Dunhuang with his men, allowing the Han frontier troops to be demobilized. Hou Ying 侯應, one of the elder statesmen of of the Han government who was well-versed in frontier matters, gave ten reasons this proposal should be repudiated. Finally, Emperor Yuan vetoed the proposal on the grounds that the Han forces of the frontier zone had been posted there not only to fend off barbarian invaders, but also to prevent Chinese villains from escaping to barbarian territory.[73]

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[71] Jagchid and Symons (1979) 245.
[72] *Hanshu* 64a, 2777.
[73] *Hanshu* 94b, 3819.

In light of these considerations, it is not surprising that the Great Wall was regarded as an official and fixed boundary line demarcating the territories of the Han empire and the Xiongnu. Nonetheless, during the first half of the third century, the military superiority of the Xiongnu made it easy for them to violate the terms of the peace treaty, revealing the concept of a neat dividing line between the two empires to be an illusion. When marriage alliances, subsidies and the establishment of frontier markets failed to achieve lasting peace, the only option left to the Han emperor was to end the threat posed by the Xiongnu confederacy by military force. In other words, there are good reasons to think that the decision to invade the territories of the Xiongnu was the outcome of a long-term policy whose main objective was to defend and secure the northern territories of the Han empire.

5. The boundaries of the Western Han empire and the functions of the Great Wall

The radical territorial expansion and the extension of administrative networks, coupled with the expansion of military fortification works into the Western Regions during the reign of Emperor Wu and subsequent Han rulers, lead neatly to a discussion of the military and ideological functions of the Great Wall during the Qin and Han periods. One of the questions which has to be raised is whether or not the Wall can be seen as a clear demarcating line separating the territory of the Western Han empire from the external regions.

As already mentioned, Chinese written sources referring to the situation existing during the first half of the third century BC clearly identify the Great Wall as the boundary between the Han empire and the Xiongnu. What is more surprising is that this concept persisted after the collapse of Xiongnu power and the expansion of the Han empire into the area to the west of Yumen Pass and into the Western Regions beyond the Hexi Corridor under Emperor Wu. One piece of evidence which points in this direction is a passage from the *Hanshu* dealing with the first years of the first century AD. In the reign of Emperor Ping 平 (r. 1 BC-AD 6), five Chinese officials were sent from the Han capital Chang'an to the Chanyu's court to carry out an investigation after two Han officials from the Western Regions had fled to the territories of Xiongnu with their wives, children and subordinates. The Chanyu, in response to the rebuke that the Xiongnu should have not harboured the fugitives from the Western Regions for the reason that these regions now belonged to the inner

subordinate areas (*neishu* 内属) of Han, claimed that, during the reigns of Emperors Xuan and Yuan, the Great Wall had been confirmed as the borderline between the Han and Xiongnu. The Chanyu seized this opportunity to argue that the Western Regions were not a part of the territory of *Zhongguo* (the middle state, referring to Han), so that the decision to allow the two officials access to the Xiongnu territory could not be regarded as a violation of the treaty. The answer given by the Chinese envoys is quite interesting. They did not give a direct response to the Chanyu's explanation. Instead, they emphasized that the Xiongnu should hand over the fugitives as a gesture of their gratitude to the Han empire:

> *The Xiongnu people engaged in internecine attack which nearly led to the extinction of the state. Thanks to the grace of Zhongguo, which enabled (the Xiongnu) to evade this pitfall, they could keep their wives and children keep safe and unharmed, and ensure that their generation will be succeeded from generation to generation. Therefore, the Xiongnu people should recompense such a great kindness.*[74] 匈奴骨肉相攻，國幾絕，蒙中國大恩，危亡复續，妻子完安，累世相繼，宜有以報厚恩。

According to the *Hanshu*, the Chanyu was persuaded by this argument, apologized and handed the two fugitives over to the Chinese envoys. Thereafter, new rules were drawn up which stipulated that four kinds of fugitives, namely: Chinese from *Zhongguo* (Han), people from Wusun 烏孫, peoples from the states of the Western Regions (西域諸國) and the people from Wuhuan 烏桓, would not be allowed to enter Xiongnu territory without the consent of the Han.[75]

This episode suggests that, until the end of the Western Han at least, the Great Wall continued to be regarded as marking the borderline between Han China and the Xiongnu. On the other hand, it also appears that, as the result of the massive westward expansion which had taken place after 129 BC, the geographical limits between the Han and the Xiongnu had become ambiguous. Not only were the Western Regions situated outside of the Great Wall, they also lay beyond those areas which had been used to settle the large numbers of Xiongnu who had surrendered to the Han government. If these regions were to

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[74] *Hanshu*, 94b, 3818.

[75] *Ibid.*, 3819.

be regarded as belonging to "the inner subjects" of Han, the Great Wall no longer constituted the demarcation line between Han and the Xiongnu.

This is not the place for an extensive discussion about the origins and functions of the Great Wall in Chinese history, but a few short observations directly relevant to the argument of this chapter are unavoidable.[76] First and foremost, the English term "Great Wall" is a misnomer, since the Chinese phrase "Long Walls"長城 is to be interpreted as referring to a series of walls rather than to one single structure. During a period of two thousand years running from the Qin period down to the Ming dynasty 明 (1368-1644), various walls were built, destroyed and repaired. Although these walls clearly fulfilled multiple purposes, the principal aim of the emperors in the Chinese Central Plain who built, repaired or rebuilt them was to protect the sedentary agricultural society of the south against the nomadic pastoralists of the north.

In reality, the aim of keeping the barbarians out was achieved only during certain periods of Chinese history. For instance, after the end of the Eastern Han in 220, Chinese history succumbed to a long period of chaos and division which lasted nearly 300 years until the Sui 隋 (581-619) re-unified China. During the Tang 唐 dynasty, Chinese power was again extended beyond the Wall, penetrating deep into Central Asia. After the decline of Tang more than ten nomadic tribes built up states in the Central Plain. The Song 宋 (960-1279) dynasty was of Chinese origin but was engaged in a permanent struggle against a variety of northern nomadic states. Of the last five unified dynasties in Chinese history two, the Yuan 元 (1271-1368) and Qing 清 (1636-1911), were established by nomadic peoples who had invaded China from beyond the Great Wall.[77]

These observations do not alter the basic fact that these walls were built primarily for the purpose of defending the agricultural areas against the

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[76] For a general study of the Great Wall over time, see Waldron's seminal monograph (1990). Waldron argues that it was not until the late period, probably by the Ming dynasty, that the Great Wall came to be regarded as marking the cultural and ecological border between Chinese and barbarians in the north. For a critical assessment of this theory, see Tackett (2008), a study focusing on the concept of the Great Wall as marking the border between Northern Song and its northern neighbours.

[77] For a brief chronological synthesis of peace and war in the northwestern frontier regions and for a short discussion of the rise and vicissitudes of Chinese dynasties from the Han to the Ming, see Jagchid and Symons (1989) 52-78. Tackett (2008) 104-108 surveys the early history of the Great Wall between the pre-Qin period and the Tang dynasty.

barbarian nomadic peoples from the north. Similar defence systems were created to secure newly conquered areas. Sima Qian reports that, after expelling the Xiongnu from the Henan area, Qin Shi Huang established forty-four counties along the Yellow River which were protected by military posts 塞 on the banks of the Yellow River. After the Qin general Meng Tian had established control over the areas of Gaoque 高闕, Yangshan 陽山 and Bei Jiazhong 北假中, military posts and barriers 亭障 were constructed to keep the Rong people 戎 in check.[78] As Di Cosmo has demonstrated, some sections of the Qin walls were built in newly conquered areas, supporting the view that some of the walls which were constructed in various periods of Chinese history served offensive goals, but of course that observation, valuable as it may be, is fully compatible with the view that *most* of the wall-building projects of the Qin-Han period were carried out to increase security and as part of a long-term strategy for dealing with the threat posed by the Xiongnu.

The migration policies of the Western Han emperors were also informed by defensive considerations. Large numbers of Chinese convicts were moved into Gaoque, Yangshan and Bei Jiazhong to populate these remote areas, primarily with the aim of blocking any future barbarian invasions. During the Western Han period, Emperor Wu's decision to set up five Subordinate States to accommodate about 40,000 Xiongnu who had surrendered also served this purpose.

In his book about the economic relationship between the Han and the Xiongnu, Yu Yingshi raises the important question of whether the five states were located within or outside the Han borders. Although the exact whereabouts of these states cannot be determined, the fact that they bore the names of the five newly established frontier commanderies shows that they must have situated in close proximity to these commanderies.[79] According to the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, those Xiongnu tribes which had surrendered were

[78] In the *Annals of the First Emperor*, Sima Qian does not make clear what kind of barrier was constructed.

[79] The five subordinate states were Longxi 隴西, Beidi 北地, Shangjun 上郡, Shuofang 朔方 and Yunzhong 雲中. According to the study by Xin Deyong 辛德勇, the term *gu sai* refers to the defensive fortification lines built by the state of Qin in the reign of the king of Zhaoxiang. Until 127 BC when Wei Qing recovered the area, these lines functioned as the real border between Zhongguo and Xiongnu. See Xin Deyong (2009) 256-284.

accommodated not far beyond the "old military posts" (*gusai* 故塞) in the area of Henan.[80]

During the first years of the Western Han, the area of Henan was re-occupied by the Xiongnu and Emperor Gao was forced to conclude a peace agreement which made the Great Wall the formal boundary between the Han and the Xiongnu. However, because various systems of walls existed in the northern regions, it was not always easy to tell where the boundary line ran. After the Han re-conquest of the Henan area around 120 BC, the military posts and forts along the bank of the Yellow River which had been erected by the Qin people in the era of Meng Tian were repaired. As just stated, although the five Subordinate States must have been located near these posts, unfortunately, it is unclear whether they were situated within or just outside of the wall built in the Qin dynasty.

The absence of a clear dividing line between the Han empire and those areas controlled by neighbouring political entities has led Owen Lattimore to formulate his well-known theory that one should think in terms of a frontier zone rather than in terms of "an absolute line of cleavage".[81] As observed by Yu Yingshi, the five Subordinate States were situated beyond the frontier commanderies, and at least some military fortifications might have been constructed beyond the area of permanent settlement in order to prevent the people of the frontier zone from fleeing to the barbarian nomads.[82] Viewed in this light, the settlement of large numbers of submissive Xiongnu in the newly established subordinate states might be seen as one element in a defensive policy whose purpose was to protect the Han empire against future invasions, not only with the help of fortification walls, watch towers and garrison posts but also by creating a buffer zone inhabited by barbarians who were controlled by the Han government.

6. The impact of territorial expansion on Han worldviews

Emperor Wu's successful campaigns against the Xiongnu extended Chinese imperial hegemony to the distant Western Regions. This led to a broadening of geographical horizons. In the course of the first century AD, with the further development of Confucian thought and the theory of the Mandate of Heaven, a

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[80] *Shiji* 110, 2887-2888 (蒙恬死……匈奴得寬，復稍度河南，於中國界于故塞).
[81] Lattimore (1941) 341.
[82] Yu (1964) 73.

partial resurgence of an unbounded worldview of the pre-Qin period can be observed. Wang Chong 王充 (AD 27-97), a philosopher living in the early Eastern Han dynasty, highlights this idea in two passages from his *Discourse Balance* (*Lunheng* 論衡):

> *Now the emperor has received the Mandate of Heaven and ascended the throne. He has inherited the accomplishments of the past, and in every aspect all was replete. The* sihai *(four seas) now became unitary, and all under Heaven presented a stable and peaceful order. The auspicious heavenly objects are so abundant, and the resonance between Heaven and Man is so highly tuned…The people of Yuechang used to pay the House of Zhou a white pheasant as tribute. Nowadays, the Xiongnu, the Shanshan and the Ailao pay cattle and horses [to the House of Han]. In the time of Zhou, the royal domain was limited to five thousand* li, *whereas now the territory of Han has been extended beyond the* huangfu *area (wild zone). Cattle and horses are more precious than white pheasants; the tribute from nearby submissive lands is less valuable than that from the distant regions. The people of Rong and Di in ancient times have now become Chinese. Those who were naked in the past are now dressed in Han garments. Those who used to have their heads bare, now wear Han caps. Those who had bare feet now wear shoes with thick soles. Rocks are now transformed into fertile lands and the savage have become civilized people. Pits and mounds are smoothed, and the intransigent transformed into civilians. If this is not peace, what else is?[83]*

> 今上即命，奉成持滿，四海混一，天下定寧，物瑞已極，人應訂隆……周家越常獻白雉，方今匈奴、鄯善、哀牢貢獻牛馬。周時僅治五千里內，漢氏廓土，收荒服之外。牛馬珍於白雉，近屬不若遠物。古之戎狄，今為中國；古之躶人，今被朝服；古之露首，今冠章甫；古之跣跗，今履商舄。以磐石為沃田，以桀暴為良民，夷堋坷為平均，化不賓為齊民，非太平而何？

> *Holding a candle in the night, wherever the light shines, all can be measured. All under Heaven is exposed to the sunshine, which can hardly be measured/which is impossible to measure. Sailing a boat on the Rivers Huai and Ji, all the twists and turns can be discovered. Venturing on to the East (Yellow) Sea, south and north cannot be distinguished. As a consequence its breadth is difficult to assess and its depth can scarcely be measured/is impossible to measure. Han morality is so vast it is like unto the sunlight or the outer expanse of the ocean. People know this. Those who are not wise do not comprehend how powerful the Han is.[84]*

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[83] *Lunheng, Xuanhan.*

[84] *Lunheng, Xusong.*

夜举灯烛，光曜所及，可得度也；日照天下，远近广狭，难得量也。浮于淮、济，皆知曲折；入东海者，不晓南北。故夫广大，从横难数；极深，揭厉难测。汉德酆广，日光海外也。知者知之，不知者不知汉盛也。

As discussed in Chapter 2, this broad worldview had come into existence long before the creation of the Han empire. However, as the two passages just quoted show, by the time of the early Eastern Han, the idea that the Han emperor exercised a kind of universal dominance had become closely bound up with the ideological claims about the emperor's moral superiority and his relationship with Heaven. The central point Wang Chong is making is that the power of the Han morality reaches the farthest regions under Heaven.[85] In this sense, as Michael Nylan has recently put it, by the Eastern Han period the term *tianxia* was generally used to refer to "the imagined community that depended upon the moral ruler's exemplary consciousness that he held his lands in trust for the ancestors above and the people below."[86]

Although some Han scholars claimed that the lofty virtues of the Han emperor and the mandate he had received from Heaven entitled him to rule the entire terrestrial world, most of them did not subscribe to Wang Chong's highly rhetorical vision that morality had been raised to Han standards in every part of the inhabited world. When the Xiongnu ruler Chanyu Huhanye visited Chang'an in 51 BC, a conversation took place at court as to how the Chanyu was to be received. Chief Minister Huang Ba 黃霸 and Imperial Councillor Yu Dingguo 于定國 suggested that the etiquette which was used during visits of subordinate kings of the Han empire should be also accorded the Xiongnu, since the shining light of the emperor's sacred morality had reached the four quarters of the earth and because the Xiongnu had expressed their submission by offering gifts and pledges of loyalty. Nevertheless, this proposal was criticized by Xiao Wangzhi 蕭望之 who offered the following counter-argument:

The Xiongnu's ritual customs and calendar are different from those of the Han, and [moreover] they used to be Han's enemy. (Therefore) it would be better not treat them as a subject, but to rank them above Han's subordinate kings. Now the outer

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[85] I shall discuss this point of view in Chapter 6.
[86] Nylan (2008) 43.

barbarians have gone down on their knees and called themselves fan[87] *of Han, and the Central State extends them courtesy but does not make them subjects. This is the amity of the* Jimi *(loose reign policy), and the reward/harvest of modesty and success.*
單于非正朔所加，故稱敵國，宜待以不臣之禮，位在諸侯王上。外夷稽首稱籓，中國讓而不臣，此則羈縻之誼，謙亨之福也。

Eventually, the emperor did follow Xiao Wangzhi's advice and issued the following decree:

I have heard that the Five Emperors and Three Kings [of legendary antiquity] were not able to achieve a civilizing transformation and administration [throughout your area]. Nowadays the Chanyu of Xiongnu sees himself as a subject fan *on the northern frontier and has adopted the Han calendar. I am not yet prepared to extend the morality to your people, but I shall treat you kindly as guests, and order that the Chanyu's rank be superior to that of the Han subordinate kings. I admire [the fact] that you regard yourself as a Han subject but I shall not allude to it.*
蓋聞五帝、三王教化所不施，不及以政。今匈奴單于稱北籓，朝正朔，朕之不逮，德不能弘覆。其以客禮待之，令單于位在諸侯王上，贊謁稱臣而不名。[88]

These texts show that even when the Han emperor had achieved hegemony over the barbarian peoples in the mid-first century BC, no attempt was made to incorporate these peoples fully into the civilized world of China.

7. Rome and China compared

To what extent did the pattern of imperial expansion which can be observed in the case of Han China resemble the pattern followed by the Roman conquests of the last centuries of the Republic and the first centuries of the Empire? And what can be said about developments in Chinese and Roman worldviews following the establishment of the Han and Augustan empires?

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[87] The term *fan* 籓 generally means "foreign" or "barbarian". It is a discriminatory word which was widely used to denote all non-Chinese peoples, tribes or foreigners who were regarded as culturally inferior. It remained in use until the period of the Qing dynasty when it was used to refer to the foreign peoples mainly from European countries. For a good discussion of this term, see L. S. Yang (1968) 10. By demoting themselves to the rank of *fan*, the Xiongnu leaders were expressing their submission.
[88] On the event see *Hanshu* 78, 3282-3283; 94b, 3833.

As stated, Roman expansion during the Republic followed a centrifugal pattern in which clearly defined boundaries with neighbouring political entities played an insignificant role. In the course of the first century BC, when Rome established control over the entire Mediterranean and parts of North-West Europe, Roman generals, politicians and members of the educated elite borrowed the Hellenistic ideology of world domination to define the logical outcome of this centrifugal process. The Virgilian phrase *imperium sine fine* refers not only to the ultimate goal of Roman imperialism, but also implies that Augustus pronounced that the whole world (*orbis terrarum*) acknowledged Roman superiority, on the basis of its unrivalled military strength.

Although the rhythm of Roman expansion did slow down in the latter years of the reign of Augustus, various later emperors still thought it necessary to embark on ambitious military campaigns and hence the worldview which had been formed in the Late Republic was not radically transformed during the first two and a half centuries of the Empire. As late as the early third century, the Roman emperors continued to assert that Roman world was spatially unlimited, as revealed in the inscriptions on the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus.

From the late first century AD onwards, the boundaries of the Roman administration did gradually become more clearly defined as increasing numbers of allied kingdoms on the periphery of the empire passed under direct Roman control and Roman emperors, although provincial governors continued to claim the right to intervene in the affairs of barbarian kingdoms or tribes. In the military sphere natural barriers and man-made military installations, such as legionary and auxiliary camps, watchtowers, palisades and ditches certainly played a part in protecting the provinces of the empire against barbarian attacks, but it is not an inevitable corollary that these natural and man-made features were regarded as boundary lines separating Rome from non-Roman territory. The gradual development of a more or less permanent system of defence-works was parallelled by an increase in a sense of 'frontier consciousness', but this development did not influence Roman emperors and educated members of the Roman upper class to abandon the open worldview developed since the Late-Republican and Augustan periods.

The early Chinese empire had a very different approach to territorial expansion. Not least because the gap between the economy and society of imperial China and the pastoral nomads of the north had become unbridgeable, the Chinese emperors tried to demarcate their empire from the barbarian tribes occupying the northern steppes. When Qin Shi Huang established the first

unified Chinese empire, the concept that the emperor's power was, or should be, unbounded coexisted with the idea that the *tianxia* ruled by the emperor was a relatively closed political and cultural entity from which the barbarians were excluded. As Drompp has pointed out, in Han China, since "natural boundaries" were believed to exist between the agricultural regions of the Han empire and the northern pastoralists, geography was conceived as a dimension of identity.[89]

The Han conquest of the vast Western Regions under Emperor Wu could have strengthened or revived ideological claims to world domination. However, although the establishment of Han hegemony over the Western Regions certainly broadened Chinese horizons, it did not result in the abandonment of the traditional worldview. The way in which Huhanye Chanyu's offer of submission was dealt with in 51 BC shows that, even as this late date, no attempt was made by the Han emperor to incorporate the Xiongnu into the administrative and cultural *tianxia* of his dominion.

Did the contrast between the basically open worldview which dominated Roman ideology in the early Principate and the far more closed Chinese mental map correspond to a differences in policies or strategies for dealing with neighbouring states and external threats? In recent scholarship, the question of whether Roman foreign policy was fundamentally aggressive (B. Isaac) or primarily reactive and based on *ad hoc* considerations and decisions (F. Millar) has been a matter of dispute. Although this issue continues to be debated, consensus can be easily reached on the fact that, throughout the whole period of the Principate there was no state in the Mediterranean which had the capability to challenge Rome's hegemony. In my view, this situation made it possible for Roman responses and policies in the field of foreign relations to remain highly flexible, thereby rendering the debate about whether Rome was fundamentally expansionist or primarily passive more or less meaningless. As the history of the Principate demonstrates, the Roman empire could either undertake aggressive moves (such as Claudius' conquest of Britain, Trajan's Arabian and Parthian Wars and Septimius Severus' British campaigns) or merely respond to changing circumstances on the frontier (as happened during the last decade of Tiberius' reign and in a sense even when Marcus Aurelius launched the Marcomannic War).

From its very foundation, the Western Han empire found itself in a totally different situation. Since the final years of the third century BC, the

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[89] Drompp (1989) 141; Rogers (2012) 215.

aggressive southward expansion of the Xiongnu under their charismatic leader Modu Chanyu had put the Chinese northern border under pressure, and during the first phase of Han-Xiongnu relations the highly mobile and formidable Xiongnu cavalry forces placed the Han military in a weak position. Senior Han officials, mainly literati, maintained a strong Sino-centric tone in their responses to the threats posed by barbarian nomads, who were described as birds or beasts, living beyond the four seas, outside the civilized world (*hua wai zhi di* 化 外之地) and even as not deserving to be ruled as the Han subject.[90] Some scholars, among them Jia Yi and Chao Cuo, were less rhetorical and more realistic and therefore criticized the imperial government for its acceptance of the military inferiority of the Han empire. The first emperors of the Han dynasty tried to neutralize the Xiongnu threat by means of the "harmonious kinship" (*heqin*) policy, but this proved not only financially burdensome but also failed to prevent the Xiongnu from raiding the frontier provinces. In the long run these factors prompted the Han government to rethink its policy. From the early 120s, Emperor Wu's military campaigns radically reversed the relationship between Han and Xiongnu, carrying Han military power as far as the Western Regions.

In Chapter 3 it has been argued that the Roman conquests of the first and second centuries AD should not be interpreted against the background of an expansionist tradition which had deep roots in Roman republican history. In striking contrast to this situation, Chinese imperialism did not begin to take shape until about a century after the establishment of the first unified Chinese empire. In other words, whereas Roman imperialism was driven by an old tradition of aggressive militarism, Chinese imperialism should be seen as the byproduct of a policy whose principal aim was to put an end to the continuous pressures emanating from the grassland regions.

Another interesting point of comparison concerns the presence, or absence, of what Luttwak has called a "grand strategy". The current majority view is that, contrary to what Luttwak has suggested, the Roman emperors of the late first to early third centuries AD did not develop any coherent strategy for the defence of the empire, and that what Luttwak sees as a coherent policy is largely the product of modern hindsight.[91] If, however, the concept of a

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[90] The non-Chinese barbarian peoples were stereotypically described as birds or beasts in the classical Chinese literature which predates the imperial period. For the discussion, see Pines (2005) 59-102.

[91] Whittaker (2004) 29; Gruen (1978) 564.

"grand strategy" is interpreted to refer to a series of disconnected attempts to steer Roman frontier policies in a new direction, it is actually possible to maintain that certain decisions taken by Roman emperors were indeed informed by strategic considerations. Examples include the *consilium* which Augustus left for Tiberius, Domitian's withdrawal of the Roman army from Scotland and Hadrian's approach to frontier policies in the Near East and Britain. On the other hand, Luttwak's critics are right to the extent that such measures never developed into anything closely approaching a coherent and long-term frontier policy. Instead, the surviving sources tend to convey the impression that emperors did not feel bound to the policies of their predecessors, so that frontier policies fluctuated in an almost random manner.

Compared to their Roman counterparts, the emperors of the Qin and Han empires adhered to a fairly coherent long-term policy in their dealings with the nomadic tribes and states of the north. From the late third century BC, this policy was designed to maintain a relatively clear separation between the agricultural zones of the south and the vast grasslands of the north. It was this policy which prompted successive Qin and Han emperors to build, extend or repair the series of Great Walls.[92] Of course, this is not to suggest that the Great Wall was a insuperable obstacle to interaction between the inhabitants of the Han empire and the nomadic peoples living beyond it. As emphasized by Lattimore, it is better to think in terms of a symbiotic and interactive relationship between the agricultural and nomadic zones.[93] What is sometimes overlooked, however, is that the Great Wall played an important part in supervising and controlling all movements generated by this symbiotic relationship and that Lattimore's observations are fully compatible with the idea that the *primary* function of the Great Wall was to deny the nomadic population of the northern grassland free access to the agricultural regions within the wall.

As mentioned earlier, the First Emperor sent Meng Tian with about 300,000 troops to attack the Hu tribes on the northern borders. As a result, Qin

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[92] As early as the pre-imperial age of China in the fourth and third century BC, the western and northern fringes of a number of Chinese states experienced increasing tensions with various nomadic tribes on the northern frontier. However, various states, among them Zhao, Qin and Yan, did manage to achieve territorial expansion in their struggles with the northern tribes. Thereafter walls were built in an attempt to consolidate control over the expanded agricultural zone. In this sense, it can be argued that the construction of the Great Wall in the pre-imperial period was the outcome of the military expansionist policies of the agricultural states. This theory is developed and presented in full in Di Cosmo's 2004 monograph.
[93] Rowe (2007) 760-761.

gained the area of Henan, and a new wall was built between Lintao and the Ordos region. Since the newly acquired areas were not very suitable to arable farming on account of their arid climate and poor opportunities for irrigation, the conquest of Henan and the construction of a new wall must be understood as aimed at achieving the dual aim of imposing control over the Hu people and of keeping the Xiongnu out of the Hetao Plain.[94]

Later emperors continued to adhere to the Qin policy of protecting the empire against the Xiongnu and other nomadic tribes living beyond the northern and western frontiers, and invested further resources into strengthening the frontier fortifications. As noted above, Chao Cuo wrote three essays in which he urged Emperor Wen to pay attention to the security of the northern and western frontiers, namely a Proposal on Matters of Arms (*Yan Bingshi Shu* 言兵事疏), a Proposal on Guarding Borders and Encouraging the Development of Agriculture (*Shoubian Quannong Shu* 守邊勸農疏) and a Proposal on Migrating People to Man the Garrisons (*Mumin Shisai Shu* 募民實塞疏).[95] Although these treatises cover three different topics, they are all based on the idea that strengthening the defences of the frontier zone is the best way to keep the empire safe from barbarian attack.[96]

An explicit statement concerning the defensive function of the Great Walls is to be found in the *Book of the Late Han* (*Houhan Shu* 後漢書), composed by Fan Ye 范曄 (394-445) during the Eastern Han period:

> *Heaven created the mountains and rivers, the Qin built long walls and the Han constructed fortresses and walls. The purpose of all these [activities] is to divide the interior from the exterior, and to distinguish those [people] of different traditions.*[97] 天設山河，秦築長城，漢起塞垣，所以別內外，異殊俗也。

Although this is a late text, it supports the conclusion that, at least during the Qin and Han periods, social separation and military defence were the most important functions of the Great Walls. As the treaty between the Han and the Xiongnu shows, it was still seen as the boundary line between two states, at least until the late 130s BC. The military victories of the period 129-90 BC

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[94] The area was roughly bounded by the Great Wall of King Zhaoxiang of Qin and the loop of the Yellow River. See *Shiji* 112, 2954; Xin (2009) 262-263.
[95] On these proposals, see Chang (2007) Vol. 2, 9.
[96] See the notes about Chao Cuo in the pages above.
[97] *Hou Hanshu* 90, 2992; Waldron (1990) 42.

changed the balance of power between the Han empire and the Xiongnu. Besides the vast lands of the Hexi Corridor formerly held by the Xiongnu, even the Western Regions were now brought under the Han control. Nevertheless, even these very ambitious military campaigns could be interpreted as examples of "active defence" which stemmed from the desire to end the threat posed by the Xiongnu.[98]

In the Roman world there were similar stone-built walls (such as Hadrian's Wall), palisades, ditches, legionary forts and watchtowers. It cannot reasonably be denied that these constructions, as well as various major rivers, such as the Rhine and the Danube, helped to protect the provinces of the empire from barbarian attack. Nonetheless, there are strong reasons to accept the current consensus that the principal purpose of these installations was to facilitate control over the populations of the frontier zone. The Great Walls of the Qin and Han empires likewise played a part in keeping the population of the empire under control, but in these empires this purpose was clearly seen as a secondary function of walls which had been built primarily for defensive reasons.

The foregoing observations help to achieve build up a better understanding of the logic of territorial expansion in the early Roman and Western Han empires. Since the 1970s specialists in the field of Roman imperial history have tried to find an explanation for the slowing down of Roman territorial expansion after the Augustan period. According to J. C. Mann, the pace of the slackening of imperial expansion was not planned but simply the result of "inertia".[99] Brunt argues that military expansion became less important because the emperors of the Principate were expected to play other roles in addition to that of military *imperator*.[100] Focusing on the material benefits of warfare, Sidebottom claims that Roman emperors had multiple ways of

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[98] For the concept of "active defence", cf. Di Cosmo (2004). The principal focus of the discussion which took place between the two senior officials, Han Anguo and Wang Hui, in 135 BC was on the question of whether the Han empire should send troops to attack the Xiongnu enemy. Although Wang Hui's proposal was strongly opposed by Han Anguo and his supporters, the two officials were agreed that campaigning deep into the Xiongnu lands was too dangerous. Eventually, Emperor Wu accepted Wang Hui's proposal to send troops to capture the Changyu alive by trickery. Only when this plot failed, did the Han emperor decide to embark on a more aggressive course to deal with the threat posed by the northern barbarians.

[99] Mann (1979) 181.

[100] Brunt (1990) 169-176.

enlarging their territory. [101] Whatever the best explanation might be, it is imperative not to lose sight of the fact that imperial expansion continued after Augustus, albeit in a more piecemeal fashion. In the next chapter the discussion will show that territorial expansion through conquest was still seen as an effective way by which emperors could win personal glory and prestige and by which to reaffirm the power of Rome.

The vast majority of Qin and Han emperors showed little interest in foreign wars and military conquest. Nevertheless, this disinterest which did not stop these emperors from claiming unrestricted imperial sovereignty throughout all under heaven, but as will be shown in Chapter Six, they did so from a very different perspective than their Roman counterparts.

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[101] Sidebottom (2005).

Chapter 5
Roman emperors and territorial expansion

1. The roles of Roman emperors in the Principate

Although Rome had become an empire before it had an emperor, once autocracy was established, as the first man (*princeps*) the emperor needed to perform various tasks imposed on him by his position as the leading statesman of the empire.[1] On certain works of art, emperors appear as heroic conquerors clad in military attire, but on other objects they are portrayed as benefactors in civic dress. Starting with Augustus, the emperors of the Principate assumed responsibility for keeping the city of Rome adequately supplied with grain, and provincial cities which had been hit by earthquakes or destroyed by fires could ask the emperor for financial support. In the religious sphere, the emperor was the *Pontifex Maximus*, and in the provinces statues of emperors were set up in sanctuaries dedicated to the imperial cult. In brief, an emperor was expected to play a gamut of roles which corresponded to the expectations of various groups of people, ranging from senators, ordinary Roman citizens, soldiers to subjects without citizen rights.[2]

Again the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* offers some good insights into the multiple roles which Roman emperors were expected to play. Throughout the *Res Gestae*, Augustus emphasizes his excellent relations with the Senate, representing himself as a leading statesman who surpassed his fellow senators not in power but only in authority.[3] As revealed in the first chapter, the theme of world conquest occurs mainly in Chapters 3-4 and 25-33 of the text. Although in many cases Augustus and his successors entrusted the army to their senatorial peers who fulfilled their commission under the auspices of the

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[1] From countless discussions of these topics, I single out Millar (1977) 355-361 and 422-424.

[2] Since the main focus of this chapter is the military image of the emperor, I shall not try to provide a detailed discussion of each and every role which a Roman emperor played. My aim is merely to call attention to the fact that the legitimacy of imperial rule depended not solely on the military achievements of emperors and the generals fighting under their auspices. A secondary aim is to allow a broad comparison between the roles played by Roman and Chinese emperors.

[3] *RG* 34,3.

emperor, Augustus was the *imperator* of the Roman army.[4] In emphasizing his good relations with the army, in Chapters 16-17 Augustus draws attention to the sums of money which he expended on the veterans who had completed their military service and had been settled in colonies. Besides his military functions, Augustus had various civil tasks. In Chapters 5 and 18 of the *Res Gestae*, Augustus lists the distributions of grain and money which he made to the urban plebs of Rome. In Chapters 7 and 10, he focuses on his religious roles as chief priest, augur and member of the board of Fifteen Men (*quindecimvir sacris faciundis*) responsible for the supervision of foreign cults which had been adopted at Rome. Chapter 8 deals with his censorial duties pursuant to membership of the Senate and arranging the holding of the census. Finally Chapters 18-24 are devoted to his role in organizing various games and to the construction programmes which were carried out during his reign.

Augustus' successors were expected to play the same roles, and they were censured if they failed in these tasks.[5] For example, Suetonius criticizes Tiberius for showing very little interest in holding games or in initiating building projects.[6] When Nero died in 68, he was detested for his cruelty and immoral way of life not only by senators but also by many ordinary citizens, despite the fact that during his early reign he had enjoyed immense popularity among soldiers and the majority of the Roman plebs on account of his generosity in disbursing large sums of money and the enthusiasm he had displayed for organizing games and spectacles to entertain the populace.[7] Titus was praised for his endeavours in dealing with catastrophes, first the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 and then a huge fire and a plague in the city of Rome.[8] Domitian had a deeply problematic relationship with the Senate, but continued to enjoy the support of the army and remained popular both with the Roman plebs and with the provincial population because he organized many shows in Rome and dealt competently with food shortages in the province of Asia.[9]

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[4] *RG* 4,2. *IRT* 301, Campbell (1994) 72.

[5] Zanker (2010) 46.

[6] Suet. *Tib.* 28.

[7] For the popularity of Nero and the "bread and circuses" during his reign, see Griffin (1984) 104-112. Mayer (2010) 119-126.

[8] Suet. *Tit.* 8,4.

[9] Suetonius offers a detailed account of Domitian's public entertainments. See Suet. *Dom.* 4,1. For the public shows organized in the reign of Domitian, see Jones (1992) 105.

Olivier Hekster has rightly pointed out that "the popularity of members of the *Domus Augusta* had much to do with the fact that they were the sole beneficiaries of the brilliant glory of the triumph and from Domitian and his successors, the only ones who could please the populace with games and spectacles."[10] However, in spite of the popularity an emperor might earn for providing bread and circuses, his reputation also depended on the way in which he performed his other duties. Under the Republic consuls, praetors and tribunes had been responsible for carrying out various juridical duties. From the time of Augustus emperors were personally expected to hear cases, to preside over jury sessions and to hand down verdicts.[11] Tacitus' *Annales* are full of references to emperors presiding over trials or investigating cases while presiding over a tribunal either in the Senate House or in the Forum. In the second century, Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius are reported to have handed down many judgements.[12]

The administrative duties of an emperor included answering letters sent by his *legati* in the provinces and receiving ambassadors dispatched by cities or envoys from friendly states or tribes. Countless examples are to be found in Tacitus' *Annales*, in Cassius Dio's *Histories*, in Pliny the Younger's *Epistulae* and in the writings of Fronto.

Last but not the least, all Roman emperors were commanders-in-chief of the imperial army. During the Principate, the military title *imperator* usually took pride of place in the emperor's titulature, even though they were no longer expected to lead each and every military campaign in person.[13] Images of the emperor as *imperator* were disseminated on coins, in the form of sculptures, on reliefs and through other media, not only for the purpose of reinforcing the loyalty of the legions but also to broadcast the message of their military *virtus* and efficient military leadership to a wider audience.[14] In the city of

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[10] Hekster (2001) 21.

[11] To give just one example, when Claudius was administering justice in the *Forum Romanum* in AD 51, he was surrounded by an angry mob which complained about the shortage of grain. See Tac. *Ann.* 12,43,1; Suet. *Claud.* 18,2. Millar (1977) 229. For the various legal instructions given and decisions made by Roman emperors, like *edicta, mandata, rescripta* and *decreta*, see Sirks (2001) 122.

[12] For imperial hearings and the emperor as a judge see Millar (1977) 229-240.

[13] For the use of the name Imperator Caesar by Augustus, see Syme (1958) 172-188.

[14] Recent scholarship has paid a great deal of attention to the role of Roman coins in shaping imperial images and disseminating them to provincial communities. See, for instance, Wallace-Hadrill (1986); Ando (2000); Noreña (2013). In regard to imperial portraits, it is still a matter of contention whether this reflects the interplay between the

innumerable monuments, memorials such as the Arch of Titus and the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were erected,[15] and statues depicting the emperor wearing military garb are found not only in Rome but in many provincial cities as well.[16] There can be no doubt that the reputation of the emperors of the Principate depended not only on their track record in providing "bread and circuses" to the population of the capital city but also on their ability to create and maintain an image of military prowess by various visual arts and materials.

Ever since the time of Mommsen, the nature of Roman imperialism, and the forces which drove this process, have been fiercely debated.[17] However, in their discussions of this issue scholars have focused mainly on the Republican period, offering various interpretations of the motives and factors lying behind the rise of Roman power in the Mediterranean. Ancient historians have shown far less interest in how the dynamics of Roman imperialism were sustained in the Early Imperial period.[18] It is true that few scholars believe that incentives for Roman aggression had entirely ceased to operate after Augustus, for the simple reason that some further expansion took place and, not least, because Rome maintained its ascendency over the peoples of the Mediterranean world and North-West Europe for another two hundred years. What is a matter of dispute is exactly how Rome managed to achieve this objective. Did Rome continue to adopt an offensive stance and hence normally take the initiative, or did it develop an essentially passive and defensive frontier policy?[19]

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emperor and the local communities, following a "centre-periphery" pattern. In any case, there can be no doubt that the reception and reshaping of imperial images by local communities are important topics. See Rose (1997) 108-120; Price (1984) 170-206. For some case studies see Mayer (2010) 114-119, dealing with portraits of Augustus created by Samos, and Osgood (2012) on an altar dedicated to Claudius by the people of Ravenna.

[15] Arch of Titus: Hannestad (1988) 124-132; Trajan's Column: Hannestad (1988) 154-167; Coarelli (1999) and below. For a discussion of the city of Rome as a theatre for representations of imperial power, see Wallace-Hadrill (2003) 189-206. On the military imagery of Roman emperors in the city of Rome, see Koortbojian (2010).

[16] Statues of emperors wearing cuirasses have been found throughout the empire, but it is difficult to say how many of these were created in provincial cities. For a general discussion of the military imagery on the basis of statues found in the provinces, see Højet (2005) 182-184.

[17] I have addressed this point in the first chapter of the thesis.

[18] Sidebottom (2005) 317.

[19] Two starkly different opinions in scholarship held by Millar and Isaac can be observed here. Both Millar and Isaac refute the theory of a Roman grand strategy put

The principal aim of this chapter is to explore the incentives for territorial expansion in the Early Roman empire (AD 14-AD 211). I shall argue that some key features of the bellicose culture of the Republican period, including a martial ethos and the pursuit of military glory and prestige, continued to play an important role during the Principate.[20] One of my points is that this ideology was not merely a rhetorical device or a tool of imperial self-presentation, but also had an important bearing on foreign policies. In many cases considerations of martial glory and prestige do actually appear to have been the main reason for territorial expansion. On the other hand, while some important continuities in values can be observed, there is no reason to think that these continuities ever led to the creation of a long-term, scientifically based "grand strategy". As the research shows, the imperial decision making of the emperors of the Principate remained quite elastic. As a general rule, Roman emperors launched their campaigns whenever they thought such an undertaking might be useful or necessary. The reason this flexible approach could be maintained was that Rome's power in the Mediterranean world remained unchallenged.

2. Military values as incentives for expansion: from Augustus to Septimius Severus

The role of military honour and *virtus* in shaping Roman imperialism can hardly be overestimated. [21] Although Roman politicians of the Middle and Late Republic subscribed to the theory of the just war (*bellum iustum*), war generally tended to be heavily eulogized.[22] Pragmatically, a successful campaign not only

forward by Luttwak, but Millar maintains a relatively traditional view in terms of imperial policy making in the early empire. Taking into account the limited means of communication and lack of information, he concludes that, "the (Roman) imperial power was largely static or inert, and its activity stimulated by pressures and initiatives from below." Whereas Isaac believes that the Roman government was highly autonomous in the issue of imperial policy making. According to Isaac, down to the reign of Diocletian at least the stance of the Roman army in the East was on the whole quite aggressive; see Millar (1966) 156-166; (1982) 1-23; Isaac (1990) 372.
[20] David Potter (1996) 55, attempts to distinguish the Roman ideology of war, world conquest and pragmatic military policies and activities.
[21] On *virtus* as a key element in the aristocratic ethos during the Republic, see Rosenstein (2007) 133-136.
[22] On the subject of the glory of imperial expansion in the late Republic and Early Empire, see Brunt (1990) 288-333. On the Roman concept of the "just war", see Cicero, *de officiis* 1,34–36. Cf. Albert (1980); Brunt (1990) 305-314.

brought land, slaves and other types of booty, it was also the most immediate way for Roman aristocrats to acquire glory and gain access to high office. [23] It has been argued that the existence of this highly militaristic culture fuelled the territorial expansion which ultimately resulted in the establishment of Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean world during the second century BC. [24] Remarkably, the pace of conquest was maintained during the civil wars of the period 90 BC-45 BC. As the careers of Sulla, Pompey, Caesar and Crassus show, aggravated competition between ambitious Roman generals, mingled with traditional bellicose values, acted as a catalyst for further territorial expansion.[25]

Augustus established a dominant position in the state, but did everything in his power to stress the continuity of republican values and traditions. In the *Res Gestae*, he emphasizes his military *virtus* in order to highlight the continuation of the ancestral martial ethos.[26] He even claims to have surpassed the *summi viri* (best men) of the Republic by achieving victory over Parthia. In reality, he had only managed to persuade the Parthians to return the Roman standards by means of diplomacy. In the *Forum Augusti*, the figures of Aeneas and the other most prominent members of the *gens Iulia* were displayed, reflecting Augustus's aspiration to link "himself and his family to the gallery of Republican *duces*, *triumphatores*, as heir to the grandest martial traditions of the state."[27] Cogently, the statue from Prima Porta shows Augustus as a grandiose

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[23] See Hopkins (1978) 25-47; Harris (1979) 9-53; Rosenstein (2006) 366-367. In his insightful book *Imperatores victi*, Rosenstein shows that ultimately many unsuccessful commanders still managed to reach high office. See Rosenstein (1990). But this does not contradict the view that military honour was an important asset for young aristocrats trying to obtain high office. For a good discussion of the military ethos of the aristocratic elite of Republican Rome and its relationship with the political aspirations of this group, see Rosenstein (2007) 132-147, esp. 136f. In her *Triumph in Defeat* (2014), Clark argues that, during the middle Republic, "the outcomes of Roman wars were not decided solely on the battlefield, but ultimately by the Senate's verdicts." See Östenberg's review (2014). This suggests that the Roman senatorial elite during the middle Republic did not see military defeats as a source of irreparable damage to the reputation of the commanding general. But Clark also points out that, after the mid-second century, the Senate gradually lost patience with defeated generals.

[24] See Chapter 1.

[25] For an analysis on the relationships between the "great individuals" of the late Republic and the Roman Senate, see Christian Meier's influential monograph, Meier (1980).

[26] On attitudes regarding the Republican tradition under Augustus, see Eder (1990) 71-122; Gowing (2005) 17-27. For a discussion of aristocratic honours during the Empire, see Lendon (1997) 30-106.

[27] Ovid, *Fast.* 5,563-566; Suet. *Aug.* 31,5; Dio 55,10,3; For the *Forum Augusti* see Zanker

general wearing a cuirass and stretching his right arm as he addresses his soldiers.[28] On a practical level, Augustus reinforced his relationships with the army by looking after the material interests of both serving soldiers and veterans. In the *Res Gestae* he draws attention to the many veteran colonies he established.[29] In AD 6 he set up the *aerarium militare*, from which military pay and the costs of retirement schemes could be covered.[30]

During the first decades of the empire, territorial expansion was driven by various factors and considerations. Nevertheless, unquestionably the pursuit of military prestige was a crucial element. If this were not so, it is hard to explain why Augustus went to the trouble of sending his armies to such remote areas as Ethiopia, Arabia and Free Germany. Posing as the guardian of traditional Roman values, Augustus skillfully shifted public attention away from the painful civil war at home to the periphery of the world where Romans sacked towns, subdued peoples and achieved important victories.[31]

In the reign of Tiberius, the boundaries the empire remained more or less stable. It can be speculated that Tiberius decided to follow Augustus's posthumous advice, but it also seems relevant that, as one of Augustus' most successful generals, Tiberius had already covered himself with substantial military glory before he became emperor.[32] When Tiberius ascended the throne in AD 14, he was already fifty-six years old and decades of campaigning and declining physical strength might have diminished his enthusiasm for further direct involvement in military affairs.[33] According to Suetonius, after Tiberius' retreat to Capri some new military and administrative offices were left vacant

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(1968); (1988) 213, f.166; Hannestad (1988) 83-89; Brunt (1990) 412-413.

[28] Hannestad (1988) 50. On the statue of Prima Porta, see Hannestad (1988) 50-56, fig. 34 in 52; Zanker (1989) 175-176, 188-189.

[29] *RG*, 16.

[30] Cass. Dio 55,25,1.

[31] Of course, Augustus also highlights the peace and order which he had brought the Roman people. But, as mentioned in Chapter One, he took care to remind the readers of the *Res Gestae* that the *pax Augusta* had been established by military victories.

[32] Tiberius as a beloved general was favoured by his soldiers, see Vell. Pat. 2,104. For Tiberius' military success during his early years, see Levick (1972) 21. Tiberius mentioned his military glories in one letter which he sent to Germanicus in AD 16, see Tac. *Ann.* 2,26,1.

[33] As a member of the imperial house, Tiberius had had a glorious military career before he retired to Rhodes in 6 BC. This is also one of the reasons Augustus, after losing several intended successors (first Marcellus, followed by Gaius and Lucius), decided to recall and adopt him in AD 4. For the imperial succession, see Sattle (1953) 486-530; Levick (1972) 779-781; (1976) 31-47; Swan (2004) 86.

for many years.[34] Nor does Tiberius seem to have been concerned about the fact that some parts of Roman territory were *de facto* occupied by barbarian peoples.[35] Tiberius' apathy to affairs of state and foreign policy stood in sharp contrast to the activist policies of his predecessor and elicited some sarcastic comments from Tacitus.[36]

The reigns of Gaius (Caligula) and Claudius witnessed a revival in imperial interest in the pursuit of military prestige. Unlike Tiberius, both Gaius and Claudius lacked military experience when they ascended to the throne. When he was only two to three years old Gaius had accompanied his father, Germanicus, during the latter's campaigns in Lower Germany, and Germanicus' enormous reputation enabled Gaius to raise support from the army at the critical moment when Tiberius died in AD 37. Nevertheless, the family connection with Germanicus did not fully compensate for the fact that, unlike almost all other men of the Julio-Claudian family, the young Caesar had never undertaken any military duties.[37] Shortly after Gaius had oppressed Gaetulicus' conspiracy, he left Rome in 39, travelling first to Gaul and then to the German frontier.[38] Since Tacitus' account of Gaius' military actions on the Rhine frontier during AD 39 and 40 does not survive, the motives behind the young emperor's northern expedition must remain a matter of speculation.[39] What can be said is that there is nothing either in the literary sources or in the archaeological record to suggest that the Rhine frontier was under serious threat after the revolt of the Frisii in 28.[40] Suetonius' account of Gaius' campaign is sarcastic, while Tacitus dismisses it as a *ludibrium* (farce). The most likely reading of the situation is that Gaius' advance into Germany and his

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[34] Tac. *Ann.* 1,80.

[35] Tac. *Ann.* Suet. *Tib.* 37,1; 41.

[36] Tacitus criticizes Tiberius' indifference to the provocation of the Parthians. See Tac. *Ann.* 3,74; 4,31-2. Mann (1976) 177.

[37] Augustus' closest relatives, like his nephew Marcus Marcellus, his right-hand man (and son-in-law) Marcus Agrippa, his two grandsons Gaius and Lucius, as well as Tiberius and his brother Drusus were all military men.

[38] Gaius' hopes of attaining military prestige are revealed by his fantasy of riding in a chariot dressed as a *triumphator* or as Alexander the Great. As Barrett comments, he "was not immune to the attractions of military glory, and it was inevitable that he would feel the need to emulate his forebears". See Barrett (1989) 125; Suet. *Cal.* 19,2,52; Cass. Dio 59,7,1;17,3.

[39] On Gaius' military activity in 40, see Bicknell (1968) 496-505.

[40] Tac. *Ann.* 4,72-74.

abortive plan to conquer Britain reflected the young emperor's unrealistic wish to win military glory as a successful military commander. [41]

However, his uncle Claudius' conquest of Britain in 43 unambiguously shows that the bellicose ideology of the Republican period continued to play an important part in practical policy making during the empire. When Claudius assumed the purple, he was already fifty-one years old. Unlike Tiberius, however, he had not won any military victories before his accession. Suetonius reports that he had long been barred from taking up any public duties because of his supposedly inadequate mental and physical capacities.[42] Therefore it is not surprising that, no doubt also aware of his father's fearsome military reputation, Claudius hastened to join his general, Aulus Plautius, in launching a campaign against the Britons as soon as his position as emperor was secure.[43] The conquest of Britain in 43 went smoothly.[44] After the defeat of Caratacus, Claudius led the Roman troops into Camulodunum (modern Colchester) which subsequently became a veteran colony and the headquarters of the new province of Britannia. Six months after leaving Rome, Claudius returned to the capital where he was awarded a grand triumph by the Senate. Later, Claudius issued coins to advertise his military successes and he probably also built a triumphal arch bearing an inscription stating that he had been "the first to subject barbarian tribes beyond the Ocean to the rule of the Roman people".[45] In AD 49, he extended the *pomerium* or religious boundary of the city, a gesture indicating his success in extending the territory of the Empire.[46]

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[41] Suet. *Cal.* 43,1; Tac. *Germ.* 37,5. Suetonius reveals that Gaius' German campaign was not a well-planned military action. Caligula was originally persuaded by someone to supplement the troops of Batavians, and only after that did the idea of a campaign form in his mind. This example demonstrates that the policy making in the Early empire was a matter of individual whim, not of precise planning.

[42] Suet. *Cal.* 2,2; 4.

[43] On the motives behind Claudius' British conquest, scholars have had few disagreements: the pursuit of military prestige and the intention to strengthen the nexus between him and his army were main purposes. See Levick (1990) 137-139. Osgood (2011) 86.

[44] For the outline of the Claudian invasion, see Mattingly (2007) 95-97. The latest version: Osgood (2011) 84-106.

[45] *CIL* VI 40416. The reverse of *RIC* I Claudius, 30 shows the architrave of a triumphal arch inscribed with the phrase DE BRITANN(IS). See also *RIC* I Claudius 33 and *RIC* I Claudius, 44. The relief from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias depicts the heroic image of Claudius and the captive Britannia. See Smith (1987) 115-117; Pl, XIV, no.6.

[46] Eck (2000) 236.

Unlike his predecessor, Nero never visited any of the frontier camps and had not commanded any Roman army. Nevertheless, there are reliable indications that he realized the importance of maintaining good relations with the soldiers. Tacitus and Cassius Dio note that he was displeased with his mother's open interference in military affairs.[47] He also tried to capitalize on the military successes of his generals and on other events which might have been interpreted as demonstrating Roman military or political superiority. After Corbulo had invaded Armenia and captured the capital city of Artaxata in AD 58, Nero was saluted as *imperator*, and one of the relief panels from the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias, constructed between c. AD 20 and c. AD 60, shows Nero threatening a collapsing Armenia.[48] Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio report that when king Tiridates of Armenia visited Rome in AD 66, he was diademed and entertained by Nero. On this occasion, Nero himself was again saluted as *imperator*, offered laurels on the Capitol and closed the gates of the temple of Janus to mark the end of warfare.[49] Although Nero never led the army to the front in person, a considerable amount of territorial expansion took place during his reign. He received twelve (possibly even thirteen) salutations as *imperator*, fewer than Claudius (who received twenty-seven) but still an impressive number.[50]

During Vespasian's reign, despite the fact that several client kingdoms were annexed by Rome,[51] no new conquests were attempted. Part of the explanation might be that Vespasian had acquired a substantial amount of military prestige before coming to power. The case of Titus is somewhat similar. Titus had emerged as an eminent and popular general when he was serving in his father's army in Syria.[52] The victory over the Jews and the sack of Jerusalem

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[47] Cass. Dio 61,8,1.

[48] For the salutation see Tac. *Ann.* 13,41. For a good discussion of the relief panels from Aphrodisias, see Alcock (2002) 90-93. While the panel from Aphrodias depicts Nero as the conqueror of Armenia, there is no reliable evidence that he ever claimed the title *Armeniacus*. The abbreviated legend ARMENIAC, which appears on didrachms and hemIdrachms of Nero which were struck in Caesarea in AD 59 may mean *Armenica* (sc. *victoria*) rather than *Armeniacus*. See Mattingly (1965) clxxxv; Bedoukian (1971) 11.

[49] Suet. *Ner.* 13. This sequence of events shows that Nero was trying to represent *pax* as the welcome result of successful warfare.

[50] For the territorial expansion which took place in Nero's reign, see Chapter Three. For his salutations as *imperator* see Griffin (1984) 231-233.

[51] Luttwak (1976) 60.

[52] Mucianus' praise of the military qualities of Titus is recorded by Tacitus in Histories, see Tac. *Hist.* 2,77.

in 73 enhanced his military reputation. Coins showing the legend IUDAEA CAPTA circulated all over the empire.[53] After his death, Domitian erected a triumphal arch in the Forum Romanum to commemorate his brother's victory over Judaea.[54] In actual fact, the Judaean campaign of Vespasian and Titus was fought to quell a regional revolt rather than with the aim of enlarging the territory of the empire. Even the successful oppression of a rebellion generated sufficient military prestige to bolster the legitimacy of the imperial house.

Domitian was twenty-nine years old when he became emperor in September 81 but, unlike Vespasian and his brother Titus, he lacked sufficient military honours when he ascended the throne. This deficiency appears to have been his main reason for launching an offensive against Germania Libera, the result of which prompted Tacitus' comment *tamdiu Germania vincitur.*[55] In 83 he celebrated a triumph to crown his successful campaign and received the title Germanicus.[56] The Chattian War resulted in a modest extension of Roman territory, giving the Romans control over the Taunus Ridge and the Wetterau region. As seen in Chapter Three, a series of forts, watchtowers and roads was established in this region.[57]

Taking a broad view of military expansion between the final years of Augustus and Domitian's death, it can be said that, of those campaigns which were fought during the ninety years following the battle of the Teutoburg Forest, only the conquest of Britain resulted in a substantial extension of Roman territory, and that Britain was also the only area in which the Romans continued to pursue a consistent offensive policy right up to the end of the first century AD.[58] Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that all emperors of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties tried to obtain at least a certain amount of military prestige and that the intimate connection between military success and the legitimacy of imperial rule continued to stimulate further territorial expansion.

The accession of Trajan marked the beginning of a new period of vigorous Roman expansion. Lacking the aura of an Italian aristocratic origin,

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[53] Hannestad (1988) 119, fig.75; Beard (2003) 557.
[54] For the Arch of Titus, see Hannestad (1988) 124-32. *LTUR s.v.* Arcus Titii (Via Sacra).
[55] Tac. *Germ.* 37.
[56] Jones (1990) 129. For the title appearing on official documents and coins, see Kneissl (1969) 43–57; Buttrey (1980) 52–56.
[57] Schönberger (1969) 155-164; Webster (1985) 192; Jones (1990) 129.
[58] Whittaker (2008) 302.

Trajan might have felt that he needed military honours to win the approval of the Senate and the Roman people. [59] Despite the fact that his ambitious conquests in Arabia, Dacia, Armenia and Parthia were prompted by a variety of factors, there can be no doubt that the pursuit of military glory was a cardinal concern in launching these wars.[60] The image of Trajan as a fellow-soldier and commander-in-chief of the army is clearly reflected on Trajan's Column. The giant Adamklissi monument which was erected in the eastern frontier province of Lower Moesia likewise underlines his martial qualities.[61]

Immediately after Trajan's death in 117 the new emperor, Hadrian, radically revised the expansionist policies. As mentioned in Chapter Three, he withdrew the army from the Lower Danube, thereby restricting the new Roman province of Dacia to the area within the Carpathian mountains. In Britain he built a wall with the aim of facilitating the task of controlling the movements of the barbarian tribes of the north. On the south-western German frontier a new system of wooden palisades and trenches was created to consolidate the *Agri Decumates*. In Africa, the *Fossatum Africae* was established to regulate the movements of transhumant pastoralists. During the early 130s Hadrian's generals suppressed the revolt of Bar Kokhba in Judaea, but no aggressive military expeditions were launched during his long reign. His goal was clearly to maintain the Roman empire within well-defended boundaries.[62]

The fact that Hadrian opted for a non-expansionist policy by no means implies that he had little interest in military affairs. On the contrary, many sources refer to Hadrian's good relations with the imperial army. Before his accession to the throne, he had had a long career in the frontier armies.[63] After he had become emperor, his frequent inspections of military camps during his

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[59] Trajan's father served as commander of a legion under Vespasian in the Jewish War and then became consul. Trajan himself spent many years in the army before his accession. He was appointed consul in 91, and afterwards returned to Germania with three legions. He remained on the German frontier until the news of the assassination of Domitian in AD 97 was delivered to him by Hadrian. See SHA *Hadr.* 2,5. For the early life of Trajan, see Bennett (1997) 20-27.

[60] For the adoption of Trajan and his succession, see Kienast (1968), to be read with Todd (2001) 324-331.

[61] On Trajan's Column, see Lepper and Frere (1988); Packer (1997) 113-120; Lancaster (1999) 419-439; esp. Coarelli (1999). On the Adamklissi monument, see Rossi (1971) 55-65.

[62] According to the *Epit. de Caes.* 14,10 Hadrian claimed: "I have achieved more by peace than others by war." Cf. Campbell (2002) 135.

[63] Ando (2000) 316.

constant journeys clearly expressed his concern for the well-being of the soldiers. Various writers record that Hadrian attached great importance to military discipline.[64] There is also a rich collection of numismatic evidence highlighting Hadrian's intimate relationship with the praetorians and with the imperial legions of the frontier provinces.[65] This approach to military affairs appears to have won broad approval, as Hadrian's conservative frontier policy did not elicit much criticism from senatorial writers.[66]

Antoninus Pius adhered broadly to Hadrian's approach to imperial policies.[67] However, because he had not achieved any martial successes before his accession, he urgently needed a military victory to bolster his reputation. With this in mind, it is not surprising that, shortly after ascending the throne, he launched two aggressive campaigns, one on the frontiers of Upper Germania and Raetia and another in Britannia.[68] Since there are no indications that the north-western frontiers were under any threat in this period, these campaigns appear to have been driven mainly by ideological considerations. Following these attacks, Antoninus Pius was acclaimed *imperator* in 142, whereafter he issued commemorative coins advertising his military prowess.[69] Once he had obtained the requisite military *gloria*, Antoninus Pius never again undertook any other military expeditions. In this respect his approach to military policies resembles that of Claudius, another emperor who lacked military credibility at the beginning of his reign. As stated in Chapter Three, multiple factors played a part in military decision making during the Principate, but the military policies adopted by Claudius and Antoninus Pius strongly suggest that the desire to

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[64] Cass. Dio 69,9,4; *Epit. de Caes.* 14. 11.

[65] Campbell (1994) 74. Many of these coins shows Hadrian dressed in military costume. On some coins he is accompanied by one or more military officers, while others depict him addressing soldiers from a platform. Hadrian on horseback is also a popular scene. For examples, see *BMC* III, Hadrian no.1313; *BMC* III, Hadrian no. 1672.

[66] From his perspective as a Roman senator, Dio Cassius comments that in general Hadrian was an excellent emperor, in spite of the fact that many people were murdered at the beginning and at the end of his reign. See Cass. Dio 69,23,2.

[67] For a more extensive discussion, see Chapter Three.

[68] Cf. Chapter Three.

[69] Several coins struck in AD 143-144 refer to Antoninus Pius' military successes. On the obverse of one of these coins, Antoninus Pius appears wearing a laurel wreath. On the reverse, the image of *Virtus* holding a spear appears, with the legend VIRTUS AVG. see *RIC* III Antoninus Pius, 102. The obverse of another coin which was minted in 143-144 also shows the emperor wearing a laurel wreath, while the reverse depicts a flying Victory holding a trophy in her hands. See RIC III Antoninus Pius, 109 a. For similar coins, see *RIC* III Antoninus Pius, 104, 105a, 106, 110, 111a.

increase the legitimacy of imperial rule remained a major stimulus for military conquest, especially in the case of those emperors who had not built up any military prestige before their accession to the throne.

During the first years of Marcus Aurelius' reign, pressure on the northeastern Roman frontiers intensified. The sources suggest that initially Rome was reluctant to launch large-scale attacks against barbarian tribes which were harassing provincial territory.[70] Nevertheless, there are also indications that military honour still played an important role. For example, the revolt which took place in Syria in 161 offered Lucius Verus an excellent opportunity to attain military glory, although he also earned the dubious reputation for incompetence in commanding the army. After putting down the revolt and restoring peace to Syria, the Roman army boldly advanced into Armenia. The capture of the capital Artaxata in 163 earned Verus the title Armeniacus.[71] Both Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus were hailed as *imperator*, and coins were minted in Rome to advertise the victory. On some coins a personified Armenia can be seen sitting on the ground and surrounded by weapons. On some types the image of Mars holding a trophy appears.[72] Another coin which depicts Lucius Verus sitting on a tribunal and crowning a king has the legend REX ARMENIIS DATUS.[73]

In 165 Avidius Cassius led an army to the Euphrates, where a major battle took place at Dura-Europos. In the aftermath of this battle Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, one of the most important cities of the Parthian empire, was sacked. In the following year, Verus' army crossed the Tigris and appeared in Media, earning Verus the title Medicus. As Birley explains, these wars "resulted in a modest extension of Roman territory with the annexation of land as far as Dura."[74]

Any attempt to elucidate the exact reasons for the military campaigns of the first and second centuries while trying to assess the role played by military provocations or to judge the validity of territorial claims made by Rome and by

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[70] This can be clearly sensed in Dio's account in Books 72 and 73.

[71] SHA *Ver.* 7,1,2; SHA *Marc.* 9,1. *CIL* VIII 19690; *CIL* X17; *AE* 1960, 21.

[72] *RIC*, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus 191.

[73] For *aurei*, see *BMC* [II H 18] IV no. 300ff. For sesterces, no. 1099ff. Hannestad (1988) *op. cit.* 219; 399, n.286.

[74] On Verus' military activities in the East, see SHA *Ver.* 5-11; Cass. Dio 71,1,3. Birley (2000) 165; Birley (2008) 194-195. In the *Historia Augusta*, Verus is depicted as a corrupt general who led a life of luxury and debauchery. The author has a low opinion of his capacities as a military commander.

other political entities leads to the inevitable conclusion that it very difficult to determine whether Rome played an active and aggressive role in most of these conflicts or was merely passively responding to challenges originating from outside the Roman world. Therefore, little can be gained by entering into this debate.[75] Whatever the exact motives behind these conflicts might have been, it must be emphasized that the emperors of the Principate, as their Republican predecessors had done, could freely use the option of initiating military violence to satisfy their appetite for glory if they thought such an action was desirable or necessary. On the other hand, they also had the option to end wars if this suited their best interests. During the last years of Marcus Aurelius' reign, for example, if the *Historia Augusta* is to be believed, the emperor planned to annex the lands beyond the middle Danube and establish two new provinces, Marcomannia and Sarmatia.[76] Immediately after his father's death, Commodus gave up this plan and stopped the nascent war with the Iazyges, the Quadi and the Marcomani. Having done so, he hastened to Rome to enjoy a comfortable life.[77] He did not escape unscathed as his indifference to military glory incurred the criticism of various members of the Senate, including his father's right-hand man Pompeianus and the historian Cassius Dio.[78]

Even as late as the early third century, some emperors still continued to subscribe to the military ethos of earlier centuries. Septimius Severus might justifiably be described as the most aggressive emperor since Trajan. Although up to a point his military policies might have reflected his background and personality,[79] they can also be seen as having been partially driven by the need to strengthen the new emperor's legitimacy after the civil war of the years 193-197. In the early years of his reign, Septimius Severus undertook various campaigns in the eastern territories, first in Armenia and followed by incursions into Arabia and Parthia. The victory he won over the Parthians in 198 earned

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[75] Potter (1990) holds a similar opinion.

[76] SHA *Marc.* 27,10.

[77] Cass. Dio 73,1.

[78] Cass. Dio 73,1,2; Hdn. 4,6-7.

[79] Severus was the first Roman emperor to originate from Africa. Before his accession to the throne, he had had a long career in the army. He first served as *legatus* of the *Legio IV Scythica* in Syria under the provincial governor Pertinax in 181-183, and then as *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in Gaul. After fulfilling the governorship of Sicily and attaining the consulship in 190, he became governor of Upper Pannonia with three legions under his command in 191. He proclaimed himself emperor in April 193. The civil war strengthened his relationship with the legions in the East. See Birley (1988) 58; 63; 83.

him the title Parthicus Maximus.[80]

In 208, when he was already sixty-three years old, he launched a new expedition against the barbarians of northern Britain. The contemporary historian Herodian claims that, on the eve of the war, the Britons sent envoys to Severus to discuss terms of peace, but Severus dismissed their offers and went ahead with his preparations for the war as he was eager to "gain a victory over the Britons and the title of honour".[81]

Herodian reports that Septimius Severus vigorously continued to pursue military success until his death.[82] Archaeological evidence from Carpow confirms that he had planned to occupy northern Britain permanently, a project which had not been attempted since Agricola.[83] During the campaign he restored Hadrian's Wall and his expedition to Britain earned him a title Britannicus in 209.[84] One of the inscriptions on the Arch of Severus explains that the monument had been erected *ob rem publicam restitutam imperiumque populi Romani propagatum*, "because of the restoration of the state and because the Empire of the Roman people has been enlarged."[85] Septimius Severus' annexation of northern Mesopotamia and his invasion of northern Britain are evidence that an individual's desire to obtain or increase military prestige was still a strong stimulus for territorial expansion.

One of the conclusions which emerge from the foregoing discussion is that, instead of being just the "icing on the cake", concerns fuelled by a desire for prestige and legitimacy were still a major factor in Roman military policies.[86] During the Republic, fierce competition among aristocratic families for military honours had been an important factor in the expansion of Roman territory and the emergence of the Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean world. From the early Principate, the emperors quickly monopolized the highest military honours, such as the right to be acclaimed *imperator*, the right to celebrate *triumphalia* and the right to preside over various military festivals.[87] Certainly all

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[80] SHA *Sev.* 16,2; Hdn. 3,91,12.

[81] Hdn. 3,14,5.

[82] Hdn. 3,15,2-3.

[83] Birley (1971) 182. Intensive excavations have been conducted at Carpow in the last half century, see Birley (1971) 254, no. 21.

[84] SHA *Sev.* 18,2; *ILS* 431.

[85] *CIL* VI, I 033 = *ILS* 425.

[86] Alcock and Morrison (2001) 279.

[87] About these military honours, see Campbell (1984) 120-148. In 19 BC L. Cornelius Balbus was granted the honour of celebrating a full triumph for his military success

these sources of prestige had become imperial monopolies by the end of Claudius' reign at the latest. Several passages in Tacitus' *Annals* suggest that Tiberius was not happy with Germanicus' successes in the German frontier region, and that letters were sent to stop him from undertaking any further military expeditions. Elsewhere Tacitus informs his readers that in 48 Claudius discouraged Corbulo's ambition to take military action against the Chauci because he was worried that the latter's military accomplishments would dwarf his own martial achievements. This led Corbulo to lament how fortunate the republican generals had been.[88] In the *Agricola* Tacitus reveals that Agricola's successes in Britain aroused Domitian's jealousy and resulted in the former being summoned back to Rome.[89] In the late second century Laetus was killed by Septimius Severus because his excellent reputation with the soldiers had incurred the latter's odium.[90]

Even if most military honours were monopolized by the emperors, it does not follow that the contest for them had completely disappeared. In what follows, I shall focus on two forms of rivalry which certainly persisted. The first of these competitions was between Roman emperors and their predecessors; the second was rivalry between generals.

3. Rivalry with predecessors and peers

After Tiberius there was hardly any need for emperors to become personally involved in military campaigns since *legati* could be commissioned to undertake various military missions under the auspices of the emperor. Any victories won by these *legati* were attributed to the emperor. However, the fact that they no

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against the Garamantes. This was the last time that someone who was not a member of the imperial house held a triumph. See Ehrenberg-Jones (1955) 36. In AD 22 Blaesus successfully put down the Tacfarinas rebellion, which had lasted for years. He was given an honorary triumph and hailed as *imperator* by his soldiers. Subsequently only emperors were acclaimed *imperator*. See Tac. *Ann.* 4,74,1. The last ovation awarded to someone no belonging to the imperial house was that of A. Plautius, in AD 47. See Tac. *Ann.* 13,32; Suet. *Claud.* 24,3. The surviving sources record only two senators who were given the prerogative to proclaim their military fame through a new cognomen. See Vell. Pat. 2,116,2; Cass. Dio 55,28,4, Florus 2.31, Suet. *Cl.* 24. See also Talbert (1984) 362–364. For the monopolization of these honours by the emperors of the early Principate, see Campbell (1984) 120-53. On *cognomina.* see Vell. Pat. 2,116,2; Cass. Dio 55,28,4, Florus 2.31, Suet. *Cl.,* 24. See also Talbert (1984) 362-364, Campbell (1984) 358-362.

[88] Tac. *Ann.* 11,20.
[89] Tac. *Agr.* 42.
[90] Cass. Dio 76,10.

longer had to dirty their hands in warfare by no means implies that the emperors of the Principate no longer felt the urge to seek military glory. As already mentioned, some emperors who felt deficient in military honours, such as Claudius, Domitian and Antoninus Pius, were clearly keen to obtain them. In addition to trying to achieve at least some military successes to bolster the legitimacy of their rule, emperors were also competing with their Hellenistic, Republican and imperial predecessors.

As noted above, Claudius' received twenty-seven acclamations as *imperator*, more than any other emperor. In this way he attempted to escape the shadow cast by his earlier life and to prove that he was able to do better than any other member of the imperial family.[91] Suetonius relates that Domitian embarked on a campaign in Gaul and Germany with only one aim: he wanted to equal his brother in power and status.[92] Prior to his accession, in order to demonstrate that his military skills were not inferior to those of his brother Titus, he even convinced his father to send him to Parthia to assist the Parthian king, Vologaesus, against the Alani.[93] Both Augustus and Trajan consciously tried to emulate Alexander the Great. The former paid his respects at Alexander the Great's tomb in Alexandria after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra.[94] The Mausoleum of Augustus as well as the claim to world domination, which is mentioned in the *Res Gestae*, reinforce the impression that Augustus attempted to rival Alexanders's exploits.[95] About one hundred years later, after the subjugation of Parthia, Trajan arrived in Charax (Basra), at that moment the easternmost part of the Roman Empire. Cassius Dio reports that when the emperor stood on the bank of the river and watched a merchant ship sailing to India, he lamented that he did have the opportunity to surpass Alexander the Great because his age prevented him from conquering the regions farther to the east.[96] Even Commodus, who showed little interest in military matters, took the title Conqueror of the World shortly before his death in 192.[97]

During the Principate, non-imperial generals had to be very aware of the possibility that the pursuit of military glory might arouse the jealousy or enmity

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[91] Eck (2000) 235.
[92] Suet. *Dom.* 2,1.
[93] Suet. *Dom.* 2,2.
[94] Suet. *Aug.* 18,1.
[95] Levi (1947) 206; Nenci (1958) 290-298; Zanker (1988) 72-77; Cooley (2009) 4, 36-37.
[96] Cass. Dio 68,29,1-2; Bennett (1997) 202.
[97] Speidel (1993) 109.

of the emperor. However, this does not mean it is possible to jump to the conclusion that the commanders of the Early Imperial period lost any desire to win glory because they had been reduced to being mere puppets of the emperor, and there are clear indications that successful commanders were generally admired.[98] Tacitus reports that, when the Romans and foreigners in Syria learned of Germanicus' death, they paid their respects to their beloved general.[99]

It also appears from the literary sources that ambitious generals were still intent on achieving honours and rivalry between generals in the pursuit of glory remains a stock theme in Early-Imperial literature. After Dolabella had defeated Tacfarinas in 24, for example, he requested an honorary triumph. Tiberius rejected this request because he feared that Dolabella's reputation would overshadow that of the emperor's uncle, Junius Blaesus.[100] The governor of Upper Germania, Antistius Vetus, planned to build a canal between the Saône and the Moselle by which goods could be more conveniently transported to the Rhine and the North Sea. Because he was jealous of Antistius, the imperial governor of Gallia Belgica refused to allow him to bring the army into his province to complete the project.[101] Gaius Suetonius Paulinus' aggressive policy in Wales seems to have been motivated in part by his desire to rival Corbulo's military reputation after the latter had achieved enormous successes in Armenia.[102] During the civil war of 68/69, two commanders of Vespasian's army, Mucianus and Antoninus, fell out with each other because they were both seeking military glory.[103] Unquestionably, Domitian's decision to recall Agricola from Britain was also prompted by jealousy.

4. Public opinion

Throughout the duration of the Principate, not only emperors and generals of senatorial background, but large sections of the population were interested in

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[98] Campbell (1975) 27.
[99] Tac. *Ann.* 2,73. In more than one place in Tacitus' narratives, Germanicus is compared to Alexander the Great, expressing immense regret about his death at such a young age.
[100] Tac. *Ann.* 4,26,1.
[101] Tac. *Ann.* 13,53,4.
[102] Tac. *Ann.* 14,29,5.
[103] Tac. *Hist.* 3,52. Tacitus also records the competition between Valens and Caecina for glories, which resulted in their defeat by Otho. Tac. *Hist.* 2,23.

military achievements and territorial conquest. Some emperors enjoyed great posthumous reputations among the Roman population, and in most cases these reputations were based on military successes achieved during campaigns of conquest. All Roman emperors were highly sensitive to public opinion and played on it by disseminating images depicting them as *imperatores* conquering towns and peoples in the peripheral regions of the world. A wide variety of visual media continued to broadcast propagandistic messages acclaiming Rome's military prowess, as discussed above. In many cities of the empire, monuments carrying symbols of the emperors' martial valour show that imperial messages conveying military successes were positively received by the inhabitants of the empire.[104]

Significantly, some emperors were criticized for their indifference to state affairs and military matters. Although Augustus had retrieved Roman hostages and standards from the Parthians by diplomacy, both Virgil and Horace expressed their expectation that one day Augustus would subjugate Parthia by force.[105] Nero was completely uninterested in leading troops. Suetonius says that he even toyed with the idea of withdrawing the army from Britain, but gave the plan up because such a step might incur disrepute.[106] Tacitus complains about Tiberius' passivity in imperial affairs, which aroused the contempt of the Parthian king, Artabanus III.[107] Both Pliny the Younger and Cassius Dio criticize Domitian for spending huge amounts of money to make peace with Rome's enemy, Decebalus of Dacia.[108] Commodus is likewise blamed by Herodian for ending the war on the Danube frontiers by dispensing huge sums of money rather than by force.[109]

Taken together, the literary and epigraphic sources leave no doubt that traditional values emphasizing military conquest and victory remained one of the most important motives for imperial expansion in the early empire.[110] There are in fact indications that this ideology continued to play a part in imperial policy making until at least the mid-third century.[111] While countless

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[104] For the relationship between the emperor and urban elites in the Early Empire, see Ando (2007) 359-377.
[105] Hor. *Od.* 4,15,23; Verg. *Aen.* 6,719-807.
[106] Suet. *Ner.* 18,1.
[107] Tac. *Ann.* 4,32; 6,31,1.
[108] Plin. *Pan.* 12,2; Cass. Dio 67,7.
[109] Hdn. 1,6,6-8; Mattern (1999) 178.
[110] Harris (1979) 9-53; Woolf (1993) 182.
[111] As Woolf has pointed out, "Military glory was still a desideratum" in the imperial period. Woolf (1993) 183.

publications refer to the first two centuries of the Principate as the period of the *pax Romana*, it was a time in which many wars were fought.[112] The concept of the *pax Romana* refers primarily to a situation in which the outbreak of civil wars had become extremely rare. On the frontiers, violence continued much as before, and the intervals between peace and war were nearly always of short duration. Although the pace of territorial conquest slowed down after Augustus, the fundamentally positive attitude to warfare did not change significantly during the Principate.

As Campbell has pointed out, *viri militares* still accounted for a substantial proportion of senators during the first and second centuries AD,[113] and almost all men belonging to the imperial house or closely related to it took up posts as military tribunes shortly after receiving their *toga virilis*. As the account of Dio shows, the military tribunate still functioned as the inevitable stepping-stone for sons of senators aspiring to gain entry into the Senate.[114]

As Table 1 shows, almost all Roman emperors of the first, second and early third centuries AD acquired personal experience of commanding troops in the frontier zones either before or after their accession. Young Octavian joined Caesar's army for the campaign against Pompey's sons in Spain, and it was during this campaign that Caesar first noticed his qualities. Although Augustus himself was not regarded as a remarkable general, the list of imperial family members who were favoured by Augustus, from Marcellus, Drusus, Gaius and Lucius down to Tiberius and Germanicus, shows that military qualifications played an important part in his choice of possible successors. His two grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, who were later adopted, were sent to the army shortly after they had assumed the *toga virilis*. Both the brothers Drusus Nero and Tiberius, his stepsons, also proved notable generals. Young Germanicus was given the command of the army which was sent to suppress the revolt of the Pannonians and the Dalmatians in AD 6. His outstanding military achievements made him extremely popular with Roman soldiers and civilians alike.[115] In contrast to this renown, because Agrippa Postumus and

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[112] See Woolf (1993). In a recent article, Mattern discusses banditry and revolts in the Principate; see Mattern (2010).

[113] On *viri militares* in the Republic, see De Blois (2000). On *viri militares* in the empire, see Campbell (1975) 12. Campbell also points out that there was no guarantee that all *viri militares* would attain consular rank. See Campbell (1976) 16.

[114] Cass. Dio 67,11,4.

[115] Tacitus devotes a lot of space to describing the virtues of Germanicus and the tremendous reputation he enjoyed among both soldiers and citizens. See Tac. *Ann.* 1,33;

Claudius failed to demonstrate their capacity to command an army, they were detested by Augustus and Livia.[116] After the death of Germanicus in 19, Tiberius' son Drusus emerged as the most promising successor. Tacitus refers to a letter of recommendation written to the Senate by Tiberius, in which the emperor stressed that Drusus had matured after an eight-year probation period in which he had repressed mutinies, brought wars to a successful conclusion, and had been awarded a triumph and two consulships.[117] These examples suggest that military experience continued to be an important factor in selecting imperial successor during the early Principate.

Emperors	*Vir militaris*	Heirs	*Vir militaris*
Augustus	√	Gaius Caesar	√
		Lucius Caesar	√
		Tiberius	√
Tiberius	√	Germanicus	√
		Drusus	√
Caligula	√	--	--
Claudius	√	Nero	×
Nero	×	--	--
Galba	√	Lucius Piso	√
Otho	√		
Vitellius	√		
Vespasian	√	Titus	√
Titus	√	--	--
Domitian	√	--	--
Nerva	×	Trajan	√
Trajan	√	Hadrian	√
Hadrian	√	Lucius Aelius	√
		Antoninus Pius	×
Antoninus Pius	×	Lucius Verus	√
		Marcus Aurelius	√
M. Aurelius	√	Commodus	√
Commodus	√	--	--
Pertinax	√	--	
Didius Iulianus	√	--	
Sep. Severus	√	Caracalla	√

2,43; 2,69; 3,1-7; 3,49. Suet. *Cal.* 3-5.
[116] Suet. *Aug.* 64,1; *Claud.* 2; Cass. Dio 55,32,1;
[117] Tac. *Ann.* 3,56,7.

Table 1. *Military experience of Roman emperors, 27 BC-AD 211*

When Gaius was still very young, Germanicus took him with him to the frontier camps, where he was nicknamed "Caligula" by his father's soldiers.[118] Likewise, after Claudius' conquest of Britain, he granted the honorary title Britannicus to his natural son. [119] Suetonius records that he often took Britannicus in his arms and commended him to the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard.[120] Some twenty-five years later, Vespasian had been acclaimed *imperator* by the army in Judaea before he made his bid for throne. His military qualities are celebrated by Flavius Josephus.[121] When Titus was in his early twenties, he had already served as a military tribune in Germany and Britain and built up a military reputation.[122] This helped to pave the way for his being designated successor to the throne by Vespasian.[123] This also explains why Vespasian's younger son, Domitian, was so eager to launch a campaign against the Chatti in AD 83, regardless of the fact that the military glories resulting from Agricola's successful military exploits in Britain were supposed to accrue to the emperor.[124]

In the period of the new dynasty which began with Nerva and Trajan, although all emperors with the exception of Commodus were created by means of adoption, martial qualities continued to play an important role in the imperial succession. After the oppression of the conspiracy under Aelianus, Nerva announced the adoption of Trajan, a notable general who was holding the governorship of Upper Germany at the time. The Senate and Nerva knew that Trajan had massive support among the army.[125] When Hadrian became military tribune of the *Legio II Adiutrix* in 94, he was only eighteen years old. Since Hadrian had accompanied Trajan during the two Dacian wars as well as the Parthian War, there can be little doubt that his military talent had won him the emperor's favour.[126] Viewed in this light, Hadrian was a logical candidate for

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[118] Suet. *Cal.*, 9,1.
[119] Suet. *Claud.* 17; Scullard (2011) 253-255.
[120] Suet. *Claud.* 27,2.
[121] See Jos. *BI*, Books 3 and 4.
[122] Suet. *Tit.* 4,1; Tac. *Hist.* 2,77,1.
[123] Jones (1984) 99. Vespasian was the first emperor to be succeeded by one of his natural sons.
[124] Tac. *Agr.* 39; Jones (1992) 128.
[125] Cass. Dio 68,3.
[126] It was Hadrian who delivered congratulations to Trajan when the latter was adopted by Nerva in 97.

succession to the imperial throne, although the surviving sources claim that his adoption and designation as successor owed much to Trajan's wife, Plotina.[127] Immediately after his adoption by Hadrian in 136, Aelius was made consul and then governor of Pannonia with *imperium proconsulare*. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Lucius Verus had achieved some important military victories, even though he was not credited with the same military capacities as some other candidates for the imperial throne.[128] Marcus Aurelius had never done military service in the frontier provinces before becoming emperor, but he sent his co-ruler, Lucius Verus, to the East, permitting him to carry out campaigns against Parthia and Armenia.[129] In the speech which he gave the soldiers after becoming emperor in 181, Commodus recalled that his father had often taken him to the military camps when he was a child.[130] Although the possibility that this speech is a literary creation of Herodian cannot be discounted, the fact that Marcus Aurelius took Commodus with him during the Marcomannic campaign of 175, when he was only thirteen years old, suggests that his father did try to keep him away from a life of ease in Rome. On his deathbed Marcus Aurelius commended his son to his statesmen and army commanders, asking them to assist Commodus in state business and military affairs.[131]

The sources for the early third century demonstrate the continued vitality of the tradition of taking young princes to the frontier provinces to give them a taste of military life. Septimius Severus dispatched his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, to the army camps, wishing them to gain military glory by fighting against the barbarians instead of being corrupted by the luxuries and pleasures of the city of Rome.[132] When Severus died during the British campaign in 211, both his sons were serving in the expeditionary forces in the frontier zone.

As Table 1 shows, between 27 BC and AD 211 only three out of twenty-one emperors, Nero, Nerva and Antoninus Pius, never acquired any military experience before or during their reigns. In the time of the Republic, Roman

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[127] Cass. Dio 69,1,1; SHA *Hadr.* 4,10.

[128] SHA *Ael.*, 3,5.

[129] The author of the *Historia Augusta* records that when Lucius Verus was young he lacked honour in both civil and military life. This might have been the reason his (adoptive) brother, Marcus Aurelius, decided to send him to the Danube to lead the army and tackle the increasingly thorny frontier problems in the region. Subsequently Lucius Verus gained a series of victories and titles in the East, although Herodian downplays his military exploits.

[130] Hdn. 1,5,3.

[131] Hdn. 1,6,8; SHA *Com.* 3,5.

[132] Hdn. 3,14,2; 3,14,9.

aristocrats had had to do ten years of military service before they could hold public office at Rome.[133] In the Principate young male members of well-to-do senatorial or equestrian families could begin upon administrative careers without fulfilling this requirement. Nevertheless, it appears from Tacitus that good generalship continued to be regarded as proof of virtue,[134] and military experience and military success were still important to those aspiring to gain access to the top ranks of Roman society.[135] This helps to explain why the Senate continued to contain a significant proportion of *viri militares*.[136]

Agrippa's outstanding military talents enabled him to become the right-hand man of Augustus for decades until his death in 12 BC. Galba's success in maintaining strict discipline in the Rhine legions impressed Gaius when he visited the army at Mainz in early 40.[137] Domitius Corbulo was entrusted with major military missions during the reign of Claudius and Nero, giving him the opportunity to display his extraordinary military prowess.[138] Agricola was appointed governor of Britain for ten years and he used this position to campaign deep into Scotland in 85.[139] Albinus' victory over the barbarian tribes on the Rhine frontier attracted the attention of Commodus.[140] During the Principate competition among members of the Roman ruling class still existed. Unlike their Republican predecessors, senators and *equites* were now principally competing for the emperor's attention, but military achievements clearly continued to play an important part in this process.[141]

From the emperor's perspective, war and military conquest were a very important means of strengthening the connection between the imperial family and the army.[142] The mutiny which broke out on the Pannonian and Rhine frontiers in AD 14 offers a good example of this assertion. The revolt began in the legionary camps of Pannonia when Augustus died and Tiberius succeeded

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[133] Polyb. 6,19,2-5.
[134] Tac. *Agr.* 39. Tacitus mentions the competition which existed between the governors in Britain for the sake of military glory.
[135] Campbell (1976) 18.
[136] *Ibid.*, 12.
[137] Suet. *Gal.* 6,3.
[138] On the career of Corbulo, see Syme (1970) 27-39; Vervaet (2003) 436-464.
[139] Levick (1999) 159.
[140] SHA *Alb.* 6,3-4.
[141] As Hopkins puts it, "in order to be a top official (ordinary consul or supplementary [suffect] consul), the successful contestant had to have held a whole series of administrative posts." See Hopkins (2009) 188.
[142] See Campbell (1984) 382-401.

to the throne. After learning about the crisis, Tiberius sent his son, Drusus, to the Pannonian frontier. After he had arrived, Drusus told the mutinous soldiers that the Senate would consider their complaints to do with payments and conditions of service, whereupon the soldiers shouted that it was not the Senate but the emperor who should be concerned about these issues.[143] When Germanicus, the highest commander of the eight legions on the Rhine, realized that the situation was getting out of hand, he forged a letter in the name of Emperor Tiberius in which it was recorded that the army's requests were met.[144] Concerned that his wife and son, Agrippina and Caligula, might be attacked by the disgruntled soldiers, Germanicus decided to send them to the lands of the Belgic Treviri. When the soldiers apologized for their recklessness, he reproached them gravely. Recalling the glorious history of the first and twentieth legions, he reminded the soldiers of the benevolence of Tiberius, their former commander, who had recruited his soldiers personally and fought many battles at their side. By emphasizing the affinity between the emperor and his soldiers, he managed to quell the revolt.[145] According to Tacitus, he played on the mutineers' sense of guilt by offering them the opportunity to redeem themselves by advancing into German territory, an operation which led to the territorial expansion during the early reign of Tiberius.[146]

There were many methods to cement or reaffirm the nexus between the emperor and the soldiers, but the best one was to command the army in person or to entrust other members of the imperial family with the responsibility for important expeditions. Although some emperors showed little enthusiasm for either of these options, many did not hesitate to embrace them.[147] Augustus entrusted the command of his armies to close family members. Caligula's German campaign of AD 39 served the purpose of reinforcing the loyalty of the legions of Upper Germany.[148] When the news of the rebellion of Galba reached Rome in AD 68, Nero began to make plans for a military expedition. According to Suetonius, Nero boasted to his friends that he would be able to win over the soldiers of the frontier zone simply by showing them his tears. The anecdote sounds ludicrous, yet it does reflect the standard image of the

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[143] Tac. *Ann.* 1,26,4-6.
[144] Tac. *Ann.* 1,36.
[145] Tac. *Ann.* 1,42; Campbell (1984) 34-5.
[146] For the northern expedition launched against Germans, see Tac. *Ann.* 1,50-2,24
[147] Nero and Commodus showed little interest in commanding armies.
[148] The conspirator Gaetulicus served as governor for ten years from 29 to 39. About the conspiracy, see Barrett (2001) 91-114.

emperor as a fellow-soldier and commander-in-chief of imperial armies.[149] Fifteen years later, Domitian decided to undertake the command of the legions which crossed the Rhine in the Chattian War of AD 83.[150]

Trajan excelled in his role as imperial *dux militum*.[151] Hadrian did not show the same enthusiasm for leading the army to war, but he did spend a large amount of time visiting Roman legionary bases and supervising army drills and manoeuvres, and he showed a keen interest in the daily lives of officers and ordinary soldiers.[152] Marcus Aurelius sent his co-ruler, Lucius Verus, to the Danube frontier to command the army, not only because he wanted to keep him away from the luxurious life in Rome but also because he wanted to strengthen the ties between the army and the imperial family.[153] A few decades later, Caracalla was fond of posing as a fellow-soldier among the troops stationed on the German frontiers.[154]

5. Conclusions: some thoughts on the roles of Roman emperors

The literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources leave no doubt that the Republican emphasis on martial virtues continued to play an important part in Roman foreign policy and in imperial self-presentation during the Principate. After the reign of Augustus, almost all wars were fought outside Italy, in such remote corners of the Roman world as North-West Spain, Syria, Germany, the Danubian region and North Africa. Nevertheless, traditional military values remained strong. Military qualities were regarded as an important criterion in choosing a successor to the imperial throne. As we have seen, Roman emperors were expected to play multiple roles, but among these that of commander-in-chief remained of paramount importance, as shown by imperial titulature, images and legends inscribed on Roman coins,[155] formulaic texts inscribed on monuments, literature and all kinds of material images. The Roman soldiers had

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[149] Suet. *Ner.* 43,1.

[150] Domitian arrived in Gaul in 82. Initially, he pretended to be conducting a census, but suddenly turned on the Chatti. See Jones (1992) 128.

[151] Campbell (2002) 134.

[152] Cass. Dio 69,9.

[153] SHA *Ver.* 4,3.

[154] Hdn. 4,7,4.

[155] For the imperial portraits on Roman coins, see King (1999) 123-146. For military style, see King, *op. cit.*, 133.

to swear an oath of allegiance to the emperor, and emperors were expected to address the troops in person when visiting the legionary camps.[156]

Unquestionably emperors did enjoy considerable freedom in emphasizing some aspects of their roles at the expense of others. Some emperors, such as Nero, Antoninus Pius and Commodus, showed minimal interest in commanding armies during their reigns. Making a completely different choice, Augustus, Trajan and Septimius Severus showed a keen interest in seeking territorial gains during their long reigns. Caligula, Claudius and Domitian showed some interest in territorial expansion, but the offensives which took place during their reigns mainly served the purpose of increasing the emperor's prestige. After their ascension to the throne, Tiberius, Vespasian and Hadrian were better known as politicians than as military generals, although each of them had had a long career in the army and were not lacking in military prestige. During their reigns, most frontier issues were dealt with by diplomatic means rather than by military force.

One of the conclusions which emerges from this chapter is that Roman imperialism during the Principate was both flexible and complex. As far as the foreign policies of individual emperors are concerned, there was no strict rule which had to be followed. Augustus' imperial policy was generally offensive, but unlike Trajan and Septimius Severus, he rarely interfered personally in military affairs. Nero did not present himself as a *dux*, but it is fallacy to conclude that he was a non-militaristic monarch. On the contrary, with regard to territorial expansion Nero was much more ambitious than the other two emperors in his group, Antoninus Pius and Commodus. Marcus Aurelius spent a great deal of time with the Roman legions on the Danubian frontier, but it cannot be inferred from this that he was militarily more aggressive than his predecessor Antoninus Pius.

Precisely because different emperors followed different foreign policies and adopted different attitudes to military affairs, Millar's claim that the Roman empire played a passive role in relationships with barbarian or hostile nations is an oversimplification. On the other hand, exactly the same is true of Isaac's monolithic claim that, "the frontier policy of Rome in the east was intermittently but persistently aimed at expansion."[157] It seems more realistic to say that in deciding to take either a passive or a more active and aggressive stance towards hostile barbarian states or tribes, Roman emperors were

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[156] Campbell (1984) 65-84.
[157] Isaac (1988) 372.

prompted by considerations relating either to their personal prestige or by what they believed to be the political and military interests of the empire. A key factor in all this was that, whatever roles the Roman emperors decided to play, Rome's unchallenged military and political superiority ensured that it was always able to respond elastically to changing situations on the frontier issues. Antoninus Pius, who is regarded as one of the most unwarlike emperors in Roman history, pushed the German-Raetian *limes* forward and built a new wall in Scotland. Whatever his motives might have been, these actions illustrate that Rome enjoyed much more freedom than its opponents in changing its foreign policies.

Given the freedom to manoeuvre enjoyed by Rome during the Principate, it is in a way not surprising that the history of territorial expansion shows such a varied picture during this period. Certainly, the traditional militaristic ethos remained alive, stimulating imperial interest in territorial expansion. Lucius Verus was given the unofficial title of *propagator imperii* and a medallion issued in AD 178 which celebrates the successes of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus also bore the legend *propagatores imperii*.[158] As late as the early fourth century, Constantine the Great was referred to as *propagator orbis* in an inscription.[159] While the foreign policies of individual emperors show much variation, this emphasis on successful warfare and territorial expansion as a source of imperial prestige and legitimacy sets Early-Imperial Rome apart from Qin and Han China where emperors were not expected to excel in military leadership or indeed to become personally involved in military affairs at all.

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[158] Birley (2000) 184.
[159] *AE* 1969, 70.

Chapter 6
The Son of Heaven: from the Great Unifier
to the Wise Monarch

1. The roles of the Chinese emperors of the Qin and Han dynasties

Unlike Rome, China had a long-standing tradition of monarchy before the Empire emerged. Although Qin Shi Huang is seen as the first emperor in Chinese history, in many respects the duties he was expected to fulfill and the roles he was expected to play were determined by the monarchic traditions of the pre-Qin period.

One century before the unification of China in 221 BC, Qin had attained great power as a result of Shang Yang's reforms. These reforms significantly weakened the influence of the hereditary aristocratic families and helped to centralize power in the hands of the Qin rulers. Benefiting from this strong basis, Qin Shi Huang managed to incorporate all Chinese states within a unified empire. As noted in Chapter Two, he changed the title of the Qin monarch from king to "August Thearch" to underline the fact that his power exceeded that of all previous overlords and kings. Interestingly, when Liu Bang and his followers established a new dynasty in 202, he decided to keep the title of "August Thearch", despite the fact that Qin Shi Huang had been deeply detested by many of his subjects.[1]

The roles that the early Chinese emperors played reflected the long-standing traditions of Chinese monarchy and kingship. Nevertheless, these roles were not static and some important new developments took place. For instance, by carrying out various sacrifices the emperor highlighted his close connections with the highest deities, a tactical move which allowed him to endow himself with superhuman powers which, on paper, liberated him from all the restrictions of the terrestrial world.

The Chinese emperor was much more than the lawgiver and the supreme judge, he was the embodiment of law and justice; he had the authority to override existing laws.[2] This situation contrasts sharply with the case of his

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[1] *Shiji* 8, 379.

[2] In contrast to the Roman emperors, Chinese emperors seem not to have participated in lawmaking and they did not often intervene in particular law cases. Instead, an emperor usually appointed or ordered certain officials to tackle various kinds of judicial or legal matters.

counterpart in Rome, where "good" emperors were supposed to subscribe to the principle *leges super principem*.[3]

The Chinese emperor was also the head of the administration. No important political decision was made without consulting the emperor. Although imperial decision making usually meant that the emperor discussed specific issues with court officials,[4] it should be noted that the extent to which emperors applied themselves to state business depended on the actual capabilities and on the character of the reigning monarch. Sima Qian records that the First Emperor was a diligent ruler who spent a great deal of his time reading and responding to submissions written on bamboo strips.[5] In contrast to his diligence, the early emperors of the Western Han dynasty showed less enthusiasm for dealing with public affairs. Part of this neglect can be attributed to the fact that, during the early Han period, court culture was influenced by the Huang Lao doctrine which decreed that emperors should adhere to the principle of "reigning without interference" (*Wuwei er zhi* 無為而治).[6] In practical terms, this doctrine meant that the emperor was expected to respond passively to the propositions submitted by his subjects.[7] However, this is not to say that all early Han emperors remained indifferent to all practical matters. As already discussed, the degree of their active involvement in administrative affairs depended on the inclinations and personalities of the individual emperors.[8]

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[3] Plin. *Pan.* 65,1: *quod ego nunc primum audio, nunc primum disco, non est "princeps super leges" sed "leges super principem"* (*what I now heard, and what I just now learned, is not "the princeps is above the laws", but "the laws are above the princeps"*). The *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* also refers to the principle *leges super principem*, although the *princeps* is said to be exempt from certain laws. See *ILS* XI 244 = McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 1-2; Ferri (2003) 74, n.179.

[4] Examples can be found in Chapter 4 in which I address Han foreign policies towards the Xiongnu.

[5] *Shiji* 6, 258.

[6] A doctrine of *wuwei* is set out in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, a work produced at the court of Liu An 劉安 (180-122 BC), who was a cousin and rival of Emperor Wu. The author of this treatise argues that "the ruler of people" (*renzhu* 人主) should remain quiescent and take no part in public affairs. For a translation of three chapters of this treatise and a commentary, see Major (1993). For the latest studies on the *Huainanzi*, see the collected papers edited by Queen and Puett (2014).

[7] As the *Huainanzi* says, "the method of the ruler of mankind is such that he is situated in a position in which no positive action is taken; he sets in motion orders which are not spoken." See Loewe (2004) 555.

[8] Emperor Wu was a famously ambitious monarch, his keen intervention in almost every aspect of the state affairs elicited the criticism of some conservative senior

For example, both Emperor Wen and Emperor Jing were praised by Sima Qian because during their reigns the people of the empire were exempted from various corvée duties and not disturbed by constant demands for them to do military service.[9] The approach of these emperors stands in sharp contrast to that of Emperor Wu whose energetic interference in almost every aspect of state affairs elicited bitter criticism from some senior officials after his death. In this context it should be remembered that, during the reigns of Emperors Wen and Jing, the Han empire was at a grave disadvantage in its dealings with the Xiongnu on the northern frontiers. In contrast to this, Emperor Wu launched a series of ambitious military campaigns which resulted in the total defeat of the Xiongnu and also significantly extended Han territory. Interestingly, a close look at the historical accounts relating to the Western Han period reveals that Emperor Wu's achievements did not win him much praise in the classical texts.[10] During the final years of his reign, Emperor Wu himself issued an edict in which he admitted that his imperial militaristic policies had seriously disturbed the population of the empire and had provoked many complaints.[11]

Needless to say, although much more can be said about imperial roles in Qin and Han China, even this very brief survey is enough to reveal some of the distinctive features of Chinese conceptions of the roles emperors had to play. In the first part of this chapter, I shall focus specifically on the relationship between Chinese emperors and the army. Obviously, the Chinese emperor had the final say in decision making to do with military affairs,[12] but in striking contrast to Roman emperors, Chinese emperors rarely appeared on the battlefield to take personal command of their armies. On the contrary, almost all the emperors of the Qin and Han empires avoided direct involvement in warfare and violence. It is my contention that this difference between Roman and Chinese ideas about the relationship between the emperor and the army is connected to the difference in Roman and Chinese worldviews which has been discussed in the first two chapters as well as to differences in actual military

officials. See Tian Yuqing 田餘慶 (2004) 55-61.

[9] *Shiji* 10-11, 413-449.

[10] For Ban Gu's general appraisal on the life of Emperor Wu, see the *Hanshu* 23, 1101. For Sima Qian's implicit criticisms of his contemporary, Emperor Wu, see Durrant (1995) 159, n.35.

[11] *Zizhi Tongjian* 22, 739. For the discussion about the edict, see Chen Suzhen (2011) 282-289.

[12] Some examples are given in Chapter 4 in the discussion of the policies for dealing with the Xiongnu at court.

policies. In brief, an examination of the relationship between Chinese emperors and the army helps us to discern some of the distinguishing features of the workings of imperial power in Qin and Han China, and it simultaneously illuminates some of the driving forces behind the frontier policies pursued by Chinese emperors between the late third and late first centuries BC.

2. The anti-militaristic tradition in Pre-Imperial and Early-Imperial China

Students of ancient Chinese history are familiar with the thoughts of Confucius and his followers, who argued that the best way to subdue an enemy was not by violence but by the exercise of benevolence, righteousness and ritual. Such ideas can be traced back to the fifth century BC or even earlier. It should be noted that from the late Spring and Autumn period, especially during the Warring States period when the so-called "Hundred Schools" (*Baijia* 百家) of Thought became a dominant force in Chinese intellectual life, an anti-warfare mentality became increasingly common among the members of the elite. Master Mo (Mozi 墨子 d. 391 BC), the founder of Mohism, was the most famous anti-war thinker of the early Warring States period. His antipathy to war is well reflected in his philosophical ideal of "universal love" (*jianai* 兼愛) and "no offensive warfare" (*feigong* 非攻).[13] Developing Confucian thought, Mencius emphasized the ruler's *de* 德 (virtue) and *ren* 仁 (benevolence), claiming that the wise ruler should use his superb moral qualities rather than force of arms to attain the unification of the *tianxia*.[14] Master Zhuang (Zhuangzi 莊子 d. 280 BC), the most prominent representative of Taoism after Laozi 老子, similarly stressed that violence was not the optimal way to solve conflicts.[15] A basically

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[13] About the theory of war propounded by Mozi and his followers, see Huang Pumin 黃樸民 (1995); Paul van Els (2013).

[14] In Mencius' opinion, the sole righteous reason to begin a war is to eliminate despotic rule. Nevertheless, Mencius maintains that, if the ruler is sufficiently benevolent, war and violence can and will be avoided, and the entire world will be peaceable and unified. This idea is clearly reflected in the dialogue between Mencius and King Lianghui 梁惠王. The latter asked Mencius how the *tianxia* could be pacified. Mencius replied that, to be at peace, the *tianxia* would have to be unified. The king then asked who could unify the *tianxia*, and Mencius replied this could be done by a person who is not obsessed with killing. See *Mengzi* 1,6: 12.

[15] Lewis sees Mencius as the most forthright pacifist in ancient China. See Lewis (1990)

negative attitude to warfare is even to be found in the writings of the school of Militarism. In *The Art of War* (*Sunzi Bingfa* 孫子兵法), a well-known military treatise ascribed to Sun Wu 孫武 (544-496 BC), the author subscribes to the view that not fighting is the best way of subduing the enemy.[16]

From the mid-Warring States period, an increasing number of educated men became aware of the fact that power could be obtained only by using violence, and this change of heart prompted the emergence of more positive attitudes towards warfare. Shang Yang, the architect of the reforms of the Qin state in the fourth century BC, stressed the crucial roles of both warfare and agriculture in the struggle for the supreme power in a state. He believed that a wise monarch should mobilize all available resources to develop farming but also not neglect to prepare for war.[17] Han Fei 韓非 (280-233 BC), a philosopher and Shang Yang's successor in Legalism, who was also a Qin statesman, emphasized the crucial role of warfare in bringing about political unification.[18] He frowned on the Confucian values which emphasized the ruler's personal morality, arguing that a state could not rise to prominence if the ruler despised warfare.

Nevertheless, the Legalists' concern with military strength did not mean that they saw war as the best option if the ruler's political goals could be achieved in other ways. What they did argue was that active preparation for warfare was the only effective way to achieve unification. On the eve of imperial unification, an increasing number of educated men saw warfare as an

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129. Personally I think Zhuangzi possibly goes even farther than Mencius in condemning fighting. Zhuangzi opposes violence in any form. In the eyes of Zhuangzi, because they were involved in killing and provoked hostility Huangdi, King Tang of Shang and King Wu of Zhou were not as wise as the Confucian and Mohist thinkers thought. See *Zhuangzi* 8,29: 260.

[16] See *Sunzi*, 3: 21. Paul van Els has pointed out the flaws in the simplified anti-thetical views of the pro-war and pro-peace advocates. See van Els (2013) 14.

[17] Shang Yang's thought is reflected in various chapters of *The Book of Lord Shang* (*Shangjun Shu* 商君書). For the importance of agriculture and warfare, see such chapters as *The establishment of foundamentals* (*Liben* 立本), *Agriculture and war* (*Nongzhan* 農戰), *Attention to law* (*Shenfa* 慎法) and *Making orders strict* (*Jinling* 靳令). For an English translation of the *Shangjun Shu*, see Duyvendak (1928).

[18] Interestingly, although Hanfei stresses the importance of military strength in the rise of the state, he places little value on the ruler's personal valour and military spirit. Hanfei was adamant that the ruler should remain in his palace, regulating the state by assigning rewards and punishments and by exercising cruelty and cunning. See Moody (2011).

important means by which to establish a rich and powerful state, but even in their eyes military effort was nothing more than a device by which to end discord, bolster the monarchy and achieve unification.

The stele inscriptions which were set up by First Emperor of the unified empire reflect Qin attitudes to war. For the purposes of this investigation the following five passages are of particular interest:

> *He launched punitive attacks against rebellions. His might shook the four extremities. His martial virtue and righteousness extended to the four regions. …Thenceforth, the Emperor unified the* tianxia, *under one lineage. Warfare shall not occur again!* 討伐亂逆，威動四極，武義直方……乃今皇帝，一家天下，兵不復起。[19]

> *The black-headed people are at peace and tranquil, and do not use weapons and armour.* 黔首安寧，不用兵革。[20]

> *The six states had been restive and perverse, greedy and criminal, slaughtering endlessly. The Emperor felt sympathy for the multitudes, so he mobilized his troops to campaign and display martial virtue.* 六國回闢，貪戾無厭，虐殺不已。皇帝哀眾，遂發討師，奮揚武德[21]。

> *Disaster and harm were cut off and stopped, and arms shall forever be halted.* 淄害絕息，永偃戎兵。[22]

> *The six kings were despotic and rebellious, greedy and criminal, arrogant and violent…. Relying their strength, they grew overbearing, and frequently put arms and troops into action… By righteouness and awesome might we exterminated them…* 六王專倍，貪戾傲猛……負力而驕，數動甲兵……義威誅之……。[23]

As these texts are highly rhetorical, they should not be interpreted as a reflection of the emperor's true feelings towards violence. Nonetheless, from a comparative perspective it is noteworthy that, in his *Res Gestae*, which is equally rhetorical, Augustus displays a radically different attitude towards warfare. As

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[19] Inscription of Mt Yi, 4-6; 28-30.
[20] Inscription of Mt Langxie, 55-56.
[21] Inscription of Mt Zhifu, 16-21.
[22] Inscription of Mt Zhifu Dong-guan, 17-18.
[23] Inscription of Mt Kuaiji, 19-20; 23-24; 31.

are Augustus' military feats, Qin Shi Huang's martial prowess is obviously presented in a positive light. However, unlike the *Res Gestae*, which celebrates the subjugation of foreign countries and peoples, the First Emperor does not present his military achievements as a splendid enterprise, despite the fact that the newly unified empire adopted Legalism, noted for its more positive attitude towards warfare, as its basic ideology. Instead of being celebrated as a glorious activity *per se*, war is presented as a righteous activity whose purpose was to eliminate the atrocities and ruthlessness of the six kings and to liberate the people of the *tianxia* from their enslavement to despotic rule.[24] This assertion is emphasized by the fact that waging war without a righteous purpose is condemned; the unquestionable message of the last text. In other words, after despotism has been obliterated, peace and order have been restored and the *tianxia* has been unified, fighting must stop.

Adopting the same attitude to warfare found in the stele inscriptions, the *Shiji* reports that, after the six states had been eliminated, weapons were collected from the length and breadth of the *tianxia* and taken to the capital city of Xianyang, where they were melted down and used to fashion twelve metal statues of men.[25] While this was happening, the imperial army was redeployed to the frontiers under the command of various generals. Distancing himself from the military sphere, the emperor devoted himself to restoring social order, law-making and implementing various radical cultural and economic reforms designed to solidify the unification of the empire.

In his seminal work on violence in early China, Mark Lewis points out that, by the sixth and fifth centuries BC, an anti-militaristic culture had taken root in China and that, from this period, it became far less common for the rulers of warring states to lead their troops in person.[26] Instead, soldiers were entrusted to the hands of generals who were professional military men. The reasons behind this development can be sought in the declining importance of the city states and the concomitant rise of territorial states after the decline of Zhou. During this process, changes in weaponry and other military innovations exacerbated the cruelty of war. Simultaneously, the numbers of men needed to wage a war increased dramatically. As a result, after the sixth and fifth centuries

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[24] In classical texts, this type of war is sometimes referred to as *yi bing* 義兵, the righteous war. I shall discuss it and its difference with the Roman *bellum iustum* in the final section of this chapter.

[25] *Shiji* 6, 239.

[26] Lewis (1990) 15-52.

BC, warfare was no longer a predominantly aristocratic activity.[27] After the introduction of quasi-universal military service, the states of Pre-Imperial China grew much more bellicose and aggressive, and the divide between military and civil society simultaneously deepened with the emergence of professional generals.[28] The new military specialists needed to have a thorough grounding in military affairs and the skill required to command armies. After military command had been transferred to these professional generals, they enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in military affairs.

Some might want to attribute the ideology of anti-militarism simply to the ideals formulated by Confucius and his followers. Although the influence of Confucianism cannot be denied, it would be a mistake to see it an autonomous force operating independently of military and societal developments. Confucianism claimed that a wise ruler should be able to ensure the harmony and compliance of everything under heaven by exercising the power of virtue rather than by using force. This philosophy made it clear that it made no sense for a ruler to lead armies.[29] It should be noted that, during the same period, non-Confucian schools of thought also attached little importance to the ruler's military ethos and duties, as mentioned above. These anti-militaristic ideologies perfectly fitted the circumstances of the Warring States period in which military leadership was, in most cases, transferred to subordinate generals. Monarchs were simply not supposed to become too deeply involved in military affairs.[30]

In classical literary sources, some references can be found to kings leading their armies in person. The most famous example is that of King Wuling of Zhao 趙武靈王 (r.325-299 BC) in the middle of the Warring States period.[31] Through a series of reforms, King Wuling forced the Zhao nobles to adopt the same clothes as the Hu barbarians and to learn how to wield a bow on horseback. Nevertheless, such examples are extremely rare in early China. Even the aggressive policy of King Wuling, whose territory extended into present-day Inner Mongolia and was therefore on the frontline, had been developed in response to the constant raids of the nomadic tribes living on the northern borders.[32]

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[27] Rosenstein (2009) 40.
[28] Lewis (1990) 127.
[29] For example, Mencius stresses that the virtues of the ruler eliminated any need for a commander. See Lewis (1990) 129.
[30] *Sunzi* 9: 75.
[31] About King Wuling of Zhao and his reforms, see *Shiji* 43, 1806*ff.*
[32] For the motives of the military actions of King Wuling of Zhao, see Di Cosmo's

Although intense warfare and high levels of violence were the hallmarks of the last phase of the Warring States period, all the victorious armies of Qin were commanded by professional generals. In striking contrast to the situation in the Roman empire, Chinese rulers had ceased to command armies and to involve themselves personally in military affairs long before the foundation of the empire.[33] This clear distinction between civilian and military affairs continued to exert a profound influence on Chinese dynastic culture, and contributed to the rise and persistence of conceptions about the responsibilities and duties of rulers in which martial qualities and achievements did not play any significant part.

3. Soldiers and civilians in the Qin and Western Han periods

In his monograph on the military meritocracy of the early Western Han period, Li Kaiyuan 李開元 describes in elaborate detail how after the collapse of Qin, as a sort of regional "bandit group" Liu Bang and his followers step by step built up a large-scale military and political entity. So successful were they that, in only a few years, the Liu Bang group had established an empire encompassing the territories of Qin.[34] Quoting a statement made by Liu Bang himself, Li Kaiyuan concludes that control over the *tianxia* was established by weapons and on horseback.[35] After the creation of the Han empire, all senior posts at the imperial court and in the central government, like that of the Chancellor 丞相, the Supreme Commander 太尉 and the Imperial Councillor 御史大夫, were awarded to close friends of Liu Bang who had won military honours during the latter's bid for power.[36] At the same time, a new "meritocratic class" consisting of approximately 600,000 men who had given Liu Bang military support was created.[37] This class became the new nobility of Han society.[38]

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analysis, Di Cosmo (2008) 134-138.

[33] I shall leave the main comparative discussion of this issue in the summary at the end of the chapter.

[34] This work has become an influential monograph on studies of early Chinese imperial history in Chinese and Japanese scholarship, but has not yet been paid sufficient attention by Western scholars.

[35] *Cf.* Section 4 of this chapter.

[36] According to Li Kaiyuan, old friends from Liu's hometown accounted for 47% of the highest offices during the reign of Emperor Gao and for 67% during the reign of Empress Lü. See Li (2000) 158; Wang Aihe (2001) 33.

[37] Li Kaiyuan (2000) 225.

In the period immediately following the foundation of the Han empire, the emperor realized that he had to rely on the men who had supported him. Therefore, when Emperor Gao ascended the throne, many prominent ministers were granted large tracts of land to "share the *tianxia*" (*gong tianxia* 共天下).[39] Later, the emperor would fear that his reign was under threat from those of his former supporters who maintained armies in their allotted territories. Therefore, shortly after the establishment of Han, many generals, among them Han Xin 韓信, Xin of King Han 韓王信, Ying Bu 英布 and Lu Wan 盧綰, were murdered on the pretext that they had rebelled against the new emperor. After Emperor's Gao's death, power devolved into the hands of the Empress Dowager Lü and her family and the position of the Western Han nobility was weakened even more.[40]

In the previous section, attention was drawn to the fact that Chinese rulers had been in the habit of entrusting military commands to professional generals since the Warring States period. However, during the Qin and Han empires the distinction between military commanders and civil administrators became less rigid. As before, the task of carrying out military missions was often entrusted to people who had ample military experience and a specialized knowledge of fighting. Nevertheless, many of these men had not been specifically trained as generals, and their long careers were often not exclusively spent in the army. A civil official could become a general by imperial appointment. Conversely, some famous military commanders of the Western Han period, like Zhou Bo 周勃, Wei Qing, Li Guang 李廣, Huo Qubing and Gongsun He, went on to pursue civil careers in the local or central administration after building up a military reputation by commanding armies against the barbarians. It should be emphasized that there is nothing to suggest that military glory was regarded as an important asset to those wishing to pursue an administrative career. The conclusion is rather that, as soon as the stability of the new regime was ensured, the Han emperors began to build up a vast bureaucratic apparatus which was thoroughly civil rather than military in character.

During the reign of Emperor Wu, the government set up a new system for recruiting government officials. Those aspiring to posts in the imperial

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[38] *ibid.*

[39] Qin Jincai 秦進才 (2004).

[40] For the nobility of the Western Han, see Loewe (2004) 279-323.

administration now had to pass an examination which focused on the presence or absence of various virtues, such as intelligence and excellent virtue (*xianliang* 賢良), uprightness (*fangzheng* 方正) and filial piety and integrity (*xiaolian* 孝廉).[41] Military talent and prestige did not play a part in this competition. Some generals were appointed to prominent positions but principally because they were related to the Liu family rather than on account of their military experience or their popularity with the troops. The most obvious examples are Wei Qing and General Ershi Li Guangli in the reign of Emperor Wu.

Shifting the focus of attention to the armies of the Qin and Han empires, it is difficult to avoid the impression that these were far less professional than their Roman counterparts. On paper, the laws of the Qin and the Western Han stipulated that all adult males had to undergo regular military training and to serve in the army, although only for a very short period.[42] In practice, a large proportion of the population obtained immunity from military obligations by paying a special tax.[43] Lei Haizong's 雷海宗 data reveals that, during the twenty-six foreign wars which were fought during the reign of Emperor Wu, there were at least six campaigns in which the main body of Han troops consisted of such irregular soldiers as convicts, vagrants and foreigners.[44] As mentioned in Chapter Four, Chao Cuo advised Emperor Wen to establish military colonists in the frontier zone with enough land to support themselves by growing their own food. This recommendation reveals the weakness of the early Han imperial army.

4. The emperors, the frontiers and the army

When Qin Shi Huang created his unified empire, the dominant worldview was based on the opposition between the Chinese world, which was conceptualized as a political and geographical entity, and the rising nomadic empire of the

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[41] *Ibid.* 175. For the system of recruitment adopted by Emperor Wu, see Loewe (2004) 119-154. For the recruitment and training of officials in the Western Han period, see Yan (2004) 65-70; Loewe (2011) 136-42. For the transformation of the system for selecting officials and the role of examinations between the Western Han period and the Six Dynasties, see Yan Buke (1991).

[42] About the Western Han corvée service and military system, see Lao Gan 勞榦 (1943); Huang Jinyan 黃今言 (1982); Zhang Zhifei 臧知非 (1988); Huang Shuihua 黃水華 (1998); Shigechika Hiroki (1986).

[43] Xie Guihua 謝桂華 (1989); Zhu Shaohou 朱紹侯 (1990) 3-8.

[44] Lei Haizong (2001) 32.

northern steppe. Later this binary worldview became even more entrenched. The distinction between the two geographical concepts of *nei* 內 (inner) and *wai* 外 (outer) became even more important than before, the nomadic barbarian peoples of the steppe, including the Xiongnu, now being regarded as the "other people" who did not belong to the world of the *huaxia*.

As noted in Chapter Two, some of these ideas seem to have taken shape before the foundation of the empire. Some states, in particular Qi and Zhao, had begun to build parts of the Great Wall to mark themselves from the nomads.[45] After Meng Tian's successful attack on the barbarian tribes living beyond the northern frontier of the newly created empire, a new section of the Great Wall was constructed north of the Yellow River.[46] The importance of the construction of the Great Wall in Chinese history cannot be overstated, as O. Lattimore recognized in his classic work *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*.[47] During the next two millennia interactions between the Chinese agrarian world within the Wall and the nomadic world beyond the Great Wall played an important part in Chinese history.[48]

In what follows, I shall focus on the roles that the Qin and early Han emperors were expected to play after the process of unification had been completed and the new conception of a non-barbarian *tianxia* had been established.

I have already referred to the fact that the First Emperor tried to prevent potential rebellions by ordering all the weapons in the old six states to be collected and melted down. Furthermore, the Qin government tried to promote cultural unity on an intellectual level by burning the canonical scriptures (*fen-shu* 焚書) and by burying six hundred Masters and Confucians alive (*keng-ru* 坑 儒).[49] Harsh laws were promulgated to prevent revolts. From the stele

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[45] It should be noted that the construction of the Great Walls in some states on the northern borders in the mid-late Warring States period was not always motivated by defensive considerations. Drawing attention to the Great Wall of Zhao, Baiyin Chagan argues that the principal purpose of the construction of the Great Wall along the Yin mountain range on the Zhao border during the reign of King Wuling was an attempt to expand the amount of arable land controlled by Zhao. See Baiyin Chagan (2000) 81-86.

[46] See Chapter 4.

[47] Lattimore (1951) esp. 13-27.

[48] For a critical assessment of the view that the Great Wall marked the boundary line between the nomadic world and the agrarian Chinese world, see Di Cosmo (2004) 127-160. For the functions of the Great Wall in early imperial China, see Chapter 4.

[49] Qin Shi Huang's real attitude to the Confucians is a matter a dispute. Some scholars pointed out that those who were buried alive by Qin Shi Huang were not Confucian

inscriptions it appears that the emperor also made a series of inspection tours, at least partly for the purpose of strengthening the relationship between himself and the millions of commoners inhabiting the *tianxia*.

Although the Qin and early Han emperors took various measures to prevent future rebellions, they showed little interest in expanding the territory of the empire into the so-called *haiwai*, "the outside world".[50] As a general rule, as far as their relationship with the army was concerned, these emperors followed the Pre-Imperial tradition of avoiding personal involvement in military affairs and appointed professional generals to carry out campaigns and fight battles. Of all the emperors of the Western Han dynasty only Emperor Gao, the founder of the Han empire, actually commanded an army against the Xiongnu during the military campaign of 200 BC. As we have seen, this military adventure ended in a total disaster. Licking its wounds, the Han government now adopted a more defensive frontier policy and, until the end of the Western Han dynasty, not a single military campaign was led by the emperor in person, even after Emperor Wu (r. 141-87 BC) had embarked on a more aggressive military policy.[51]

In stark contrast to the rulers of the Roman empire, who took pride in being addressed as *imperator*, the emperors of the Qin and Han periods never assumed any title referring to a military role.[52] The reason for this is quite simply that the Chinese emperor was not expected to lead his soldiers to or on the battlefield. In fact, any attempt to persuade the ruler to become involved in war was seen as highly problematic and dangerous. When Emperor Gao was troubled by the advice of his statesman about Lu Jia, who was in the habit of arguing that the *tianxia* could be conquered only from horseback rather than by studying the Classics, the latter warned the emperor that, even if the *tianxia* were to be taken by weapons, it could not be ruled in the same way.[53] His advice was praised by the emperor.

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scholars but Magic Masters. See Zhou Fang (2013); Pines (2013) 232-233.

[50] For a detailed discussion the frontier policies of the Qin and early Han emperors, see Chapter 4.

[51] For a more detailed discussion of frontier policies and the relationship between the Han empire and the Xiongnu, see Chapter 4.

[52] So far none of the generals of Shi Huangdi's famous terracotta army has been identified as the First Emperor. See Falkenhausen, Thote, Pines *et al.* (2008); Pines (2013) 2.

[53] Emperor Gao took pride in the fact that, as a commoner, he conquered the world by "wielding a short sword". See *Shiji* 8, 391.

Another example is presented by the execution of Chao Cuo 晁錯 (200-154 BC). It is said that an important reason for having him killed was that he had tried to persuade Emperor Jing 景帝 (157-141 BC) to quell the rebellions of the seven kingdoms in 154 BC by commanding the imperial army in person.[54]

In the early Western Han era, two fundamental factors reinforced this anti-militaristic ideology. The first of these, as argued in detail in Chapter Four, was that the rise of the powerful Xiongnu confederacy on the steppe in the last decade of the third century, an event which happened to coincide with the creation of the Han empire in the south, impeded expansion to the north. The defeat of the army led by Emperor Gao in 200 BC prompted the Han government to implement an appeasement policy devised to maintain peace and stability in the frontier zone. The second of these factors was that the early Han rulers seem to have felt that the economy and society of their recently created empire needed to recover after the devastations and atrocities of the civil war. This suggestion does go some way towards explaining the popularity, in early Han times, of the Huang Lao doctrine, according to which the emperor should interfere as little as possible in public affairs.[55] For example, when Minister Cao San 曹参 displaced Chancellor Xiao He 萧何 and took charge of state affairs, the emperor expressed his discontent about Cao San's inactivity in administrative issues, suspecting this negligence could be attributed to his own apathy towards public affairs. Cao San countered this criticism by claiming that it was the primary task of the monarch and his Chancellor not to neglect their duties rather than to take the initiative.[56]

As Confucianism gradually gained prominence, the emperors' moral and civic virtues were paid an increasing amount of attention. It is true that the military successes of Emperor Wu elicited a certain amount of praise when his

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[54] *Shiji* 101, 2747. This was not in fact the most fundamental reason for the execution of Chao Cuo. But, in the eyes of Chao Cuo's antagonists at court, his attempt to persuade the emperor to go the battle presented the best pretext for demanding his death. Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), a famous poet and politician in the Song dynasty, who wrote an essay entitled "On Chao Cuo" (Chao Cuo Lun 晁錯論), rightly pointed this out. See *Su Shi Wenji*, Vol. 4, 107-108.

[55] van Ess (2007) 246.

[56] See *Shiji* 54, 2029-2030. Cao San's reply does not give an accurate picture of Han administration since, as the right-hand man of the emperor, in the early Han period the chancellor was expected to supervise many public affairs. Nevertheless, the story illustrates that the Huang-Lao doctrine was a real force in early Han politics.

aggressive militaristic policy towards the Xiongnu brought spectacular successes. However, in this context it should be noted that when he ascended the throne, the emperor was actually called Liu Che. It was only after his death that he was "canonized" as Emperor "Wu" 武 (martial), evidently because of this martial feats. This assumption raises a problem since because Liu Che's aggressive military policies were criticized both during the final years of his reign and after his death, it is by no means obvious that the title "Wu" should be interpreted as a reflection of a widely shared positive appreciation of his military feats and territorial expansion. In fact, according to the sources, widespread disapproval of Liu Che's policies prompted the Han statesmen to debate whether or not he should be granted any posthumous title at all.[57] When the title was eventually bestowed, it might have been intended as descriptive rather than as unambiguously positive and honorary.

Whatever the case might be, it should not be overlooked that, even though Emperor Wu is regarded as one of the most bellicose monarchs in Chinese history, he never actually gained any experience in commanding the army during his long reign. The only military activity over which this emperor is reported to have presided was a triumphal ritual organized to celebrate the victory which his generals had won over the Xiongnu in 111 BC.[58]

In a nutshell, it is a truism that warfare played an important part in shaping Chinese worldviews. As a result of the power of the Xiongnu nomads living on the periphery of the newly founded Chinese world, initially Chinese rulers did not find themselves in a position from which they could try to establish hegemonic power over the entire far eastern world. Emperor Wu (or his generals) managed to eliminate the Xiongnu threat and conquered many new territories, but his principal aim appears to have been making his empire safe from external attack. The traditional attitudes to warfare and the loose relationship which existed between Chinese rulers and their armies acted as disincentives for pursuing continuous territorial expansion. Unlike their Roman counterparts, the emperors of the Qin and Han dynasties appear to have had little interest in pursuing universal domination over foreign lands and people by military means. This striking difference raises the question of exactly how the idea of "empire" was conceptualized by Chinese intellectuals.

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[57] Loewe (2006) 346.

[58] Loewe (2009) trans. Wang Hao 王浩, 148.

5. The emperor as a moral sage

5.1. The de of Qin 秦德

Various Han sources attribute the rapid demise of Qin to its deficiency in *de* 德, "virtue", or "morality". Jia Yi, a statesman living in the early Western Han period, wrote a famous and thought-provoking essay entitled *Guo Qin lu* 過秦論 (On the Faults of Qin) in which he adopted precisely this position towards Emperor Qin Shi Huang and his son, Qin Ershi 秦二世.[59] As a Confucian thinker, Jia Yi produced good reasons to explain the failure of Qin in terms of a failure to observe the code of conduct (*li*) and righteousness (*yi*), both of which were paramount principles in Confucian morality.[60] The First Emperor and his ill-fated empire were held up as a warning to Han rulers so that they should avoid the faults of Qin. Those writers who tried to convey this message painted a picture of Qin Shi Huang and Qin Ershi which stands in total contrast to the idealized images of the ruler delineated in Confucian ethics.[61] In the light of the

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[59] The entire essay can be found in the biography of Shi Huangdi by Sima Qian. See *Shiji* 6, 276-84. This essay can also be found in Jia Yi's politico-ethical treatise, The New Books (*Xinshu* 新書). For the study of Jia Yi's Xinshu, see Charles Sanft's unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Münster, 2005).

[60] *Xinshu*, *baofu* 保傅, 183-185. In contrast to the long-standing dynasties of Shang and Zhou, Jia Yi sees extremely cruel punishments untempered by any moral cultivation as an important reason for the speedy downfall of the Qin. On *li* in Jia Yi's writings, see Chen Suzhen (2011) 145-148.

[61] In the Chinese political landscape, which was dominated by Confucian thought from the early Eastern Han period to the late Qing period, views on the First Emperor have been constantly reshaped by Chinese rulers to serve specific political purposes. Since roughly the early decades of the 20th century, with the escalation of the anti-Confucian campaigns in Chinese society, a number of liberal intellectuals, such as Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1869-1936), Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) and Hu Shi (1891-1962) 胡適, challenged the stereotypical views of Qin Shi Huang which had long dominated the Chinese ideological realm. They arrived at a re-evaluation of the role played by Qin Shi Huang in Chinese history, promoting the Legalism of Qin as an alternative system to Confucianism (*ru* 儒). Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) publicly expressed his admiration of Qin Shi Huang's accomplishments, leading Chinese historians to present a far more positive image of the first emperor in Chinese history. Nevertheless, this is not the place for an in-depth examination of the ways in which views about the First Emperor have evolved during the past two millennia. Recent discussions of this topic include Kern (2001), 155-163; Pines (2013) 227-238; and van Ess (2013), 239-257.

existence of this hostile tradition, it is by no means easy to establish how the First Emperor of China perceived his roles and duties, but it is important at least try to achieve a better understanding of these perceptions, if only because they are highly relevant to any attempt to elucidate the nature of the Chinese empire in its early stages.

One of the key terms which still remains to be examined is the appellation "emperor" (*huang-di* 皇帝), a new title coined by Qin Shi Huang himself to broadcast his achievements after heeding the proposals of Chancellor Wang Wan 王綰, Imperial Secretary Feng Jie 馮劫 and Li Si. The passage from Sima Qian's *Annals of Qin Shi Huang* referring to the creation of this new title runs as follows:

> *In days of old, the territory of the Five Emperors was 1,000 square* li, *and beyond this was the territory of the feudal princes and of the barbarians. Some of the feudal princes came to court and some did not, for the Son of Heaven was unable to exercise control [over them]. Now Your Majesty has raised a righteous army to punish the oppressors and bring peace and order to all under Heaven, so that everywhere within the seas has become our provinces and districts and, as a result, the laws and ordinances have been unified. This is something which has never ever existed, which the Five Emperors did not attain in remote antiquity or thereafter. Your servants have carefully discussed this with the scholars of broad learning and, as in antiquity there was the Heavenly August, the Earthly August, and the Supreme August, and the Supreme August was the most highly honored, so your servants, risking death, submit a venerable title, and propose that the King should become "the Supreme August". His commands should be "edicts", his orders should be "decrees", and the Son of Heaven should refer to himself as "the mysterious one".' The King said: 'Omit the word "supreme" and write "august" and pick out the title of "thearch" used from remote antiquity, so that the title will be "August Thearch".*[62] "昔者五帝地方 千里，其外侯服夷服諸侯或朝或否，天子不能製。今陛下興義兵， 誅殘賊，平定天下，海內為郡縣，法令由一統，自上古以來未嘗 有，五帝所不及。臣等謹與博士議曰：古有天皇，有地皇，有泰 皇，泰皇最貴。臣等昧死上尊號，王為 '泰皇'。命為 '制'， 令為 '詔'，天子自稱曰 '朕' "。 王曰："去 '泰'，著 '皇'，採上古 '帝' 位號，號曰 '皇帝' "。

Sima Qian asserts that the victorious king of Qin was fully aware of the fact that his achievements surpassed those of the three most honourable Augusts

[62] This passage is translated by Dawson. See Dawson (2007) 62.

and the Five Thearchs of remote antiquity. He adopted the character *huang* 皇 (August) to advertise that his grand enterprise was on a par with that of the sages of the past.[63] The title *di* 帝 (Thearch) had been used to address monarchs for many centuries. The king of Qin combined these two characters to form a title which broadcast the fact that his feats surpassed those of all earlier rulers. Shrewdly he established an ideological connection with remote antiquity to increase the legitimacy of his position as emperor.

Writers of the Western Han period attributed the rapid collapse of the Qin to the introduction of cruel laws, abuse of manpower, the heavy burden of public works and high levels of taxation. Ultimately, the Qin rulers themselves were held responsible for the demise of their dynasty. Qin Shi Huang and Ershi were accused of having neglected moral cultivation and of having relied too much on coercion through punishment.

From the mid-Warring States period to the late Western Han period, Legalism 法 and Confucianism 儒 offered two radically different approaches to administration and politics. After the triumph of Confucianism in the first century AD, the moral and civilizing transformation of the *tianxia* became a central theme in treatises dealing with imperial rule. The Qin rulers were heavily influenced by Legalism, but also incorporated moralizing conceptions of imperial power in the ethos of their reigns. In the stele inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang, for example, the term *de* 德, "morality", appears nine times.[64] This has led Martin Kern to call attention to the links between Qin culture and the rituals of the Zhou period.[65] By comparing the texts of the Qin bamboo strips excavated at Shui-hu-di 睡虎地 (in present-day Yunmeng 雲夢, Hubei Province) to the stele inscriptions, scholars like Kanaya Osamu 金谷治, Bodde and Kern have demonstrated that, as far as social and moral concepts are concerned, no clear-cut dividing line existed between Confucianism and

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[63] According to *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (Explanation of Characters), *huang* 皇 means "greatness 大". The Shuowen explains that the character was used to refer to the earliest kings who ruled the *tianxia*. See Xu Shen, Shuowen jiezi zhu 2,185, com. Duan Yucai 段玉裁.

[64] See Chapter 2. In interpreting the sources referring to the Qin emperors, it should be borne in mind that all the writings of classical literature were only collected and compiled many centuries after they were written. The Stele Inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang and some other contemporary sources offer a contemporary window on the self-presentation of the First Emperor.

[65] Kern (1999) 19, note 26.

Legalism. Instead, the same social and cultural values "seem to have succeeded remarkably well in coexisting with Legalism during the First Emperor's reign."[66]

The upshot has to be that the existence of what was known as the *Hundred Schools of Thoughts* in the mid-late Warring States period does not imply the existence of radically different and contesting views about the duties of rulers.[67] In the stele inscriptions of Shi Huangdi, restoring peace, order and harmonious social standards are presented as essential prerequisites for the creation of a stable and prosperous society governed by laws and regulations. In short, the emphasis on legal principles does not necessarily mean that moral ethics played no part in the Qin conception of imperial administration and that, consequently, the emphasis on the ruler's moral cultivation cannot be regarded as an exclusively Confucian theme.[68]

5.2. The emperor as a source of moral transformation in the Western Han period

Confucian officials of the early Han period such as Lu Jia paid ample attention to the ruler's moral self-cultivation. Lu Jia's main contribution was the formulation of a moral-cosmic philosophical doctrine which combined Confucian moral doctrine with cosmological theories.[69] Lu Jia claimed that the legendary kings of remote antiquity had been sages who possessed superb moral and intellectual qualities. Later Chinese rulers were believed to have applied the classical writings which had been transmitted from this legendary period in their government of the state and the people. Confucius was assigned a key role because he had classified and collated various kinds of classical writings, among them the Book of Poetry 詩, the Book of Documents 書, the Book of Music 樂 and the Book of Rituals 禮.[70] Lu Jia believed that any ruler

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[66] Bodde (1990) 75-76; Kern (2000) 165. The compilation of the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, the encyclopaedic compendium compiled under the patronage of Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (291-235 BC), Chancellor of the Qin state, might be seen as a sign that various prominent philosophical ideas which had developed since the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States period were beginning to converge.

[67] Kern (2000) 165-166.

[68] Lu Xiufen (2006).

[69] On Lu Jia's politico-philosophical principles, see Wang Aihe (2000) 145-47.

[70] Confucius presented himself as a transmitter rather than as an original thinker. For example, see Lunyu 7,1: *The Master said, A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old Peng.*

who did not adhere to the ethical values laid down by Confucius and his disciples displayed an insufficient knowledge of Heaven. As did Jia Yi, whose ideas have already been discussed, Lu Jia attributed the failure of Qin to the moral deficiencies of its rulers. As already noted, Lu warned Emperor Gao that, if he wanted to avoid the fate of Qin, he should follow the path of morality in order to maintain the sovereignty.[71] Given the fact that the early Han court was heavily influenced by the Huang-Lao school of thought, particularly under the patronage of Empress Dowager Dou 竇太后, the influence of Lu Jia's theory on the practical politics in this period can hardly be overestimated.[72]

The influence of Lu Jia's theory can also be seen in the writings of such later thinkers, as Dong Zhongshu's 董仲舒, who developed the innovative theory of "the Resonance between Human and Heaven" (*tianren ganying* 天人感應).[73] Influenced by Lu Jia's moral-cosmic theory, Dong Zhongshu stressed the importance of the emperor's moral duty in connecting Heaven and mankind. Dong believed that all portents which can be observed in the temporal world are to be interpreted as revelations made to mankind by Heaven. Auspicious portents signified that Heaven was content with the way the temporal monarch ruled by exercising his superb moral qualities, whereas bad omens were meant to alert the emperor to the fact that his rule was not entirely based on the principle of moral transformation. According to this theory, the principal duty of the ruler was to act as an intermediary between men and Heaven rather than as a lawgiver, a bureaucratic administrator or an effective general.[74] This aim

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[71] In the first part of this chapter, I have mentioned the dialogue between Emperor Gao and Lu about the best way to rule the *tianxia*. In the Xinyu, the author not only emphasizes the importance to monarchs of the self-cultivation of morality, but also advocates that crown princes should receive a moral education from childhood. This required the employment of sagacious teachers capable of assisting the young masters to govern their behaviour and cultivate their virtues.

[72] For the Huang Lao school of thought and its relation to the early Han politics, see the PhD dissertation of Csikszentmihalyi (1994) esp. 7-58. M. Loewe has pointed out that, in the early years of the Western Han, 'the references in official writings to the character, thoughts and actions of Confucius, or to the values of his sayings, are rare, one might almost say extremely rare.' See Loewe (2012) 7-8.

[73] Dong's philosophical thoughts and political beliefs have been treated in many monographs and essays. See Loewe's latest monograph: *Dong Zhongshu: The Confucian Heritage and the Chunqiu Fanlu*, 2011.

[74] Di Cosmo claims that one of the roles of the Chinese emperor was that of supreme lawgiver. See Di Cosmo (2004) 218. It has been said of the Chinese emperor that "his will —or whim —could override any existing regulations or immunities", see Hulsewé (1986) 529. Pertinently the emperor's role as a lawmaker or lawgiver is not highlighted

was achievable if the emperor ruled the world by observing Confucian moral values. In short, the emperor should emulate the behaviour of the wise kings of the past and set his people a moral example. Only in this way could Heavenly favour be procured and the legitimacy of imperial authority be put on a firm footing.[75]

The promotion of Confucian moral principles by Dong Zhongshu and other Confucian scholars was supported by Emperor Wu. In 136 BC the latter ordered the creation of the position of the Erudite (*Boshi* 博士) to supervise the teaching of the Five Classics (*Wujing Boshi* 五經博士) and in 124 BC he opened the Academy (*Taixue*, 太學) in the capital Chang'an.[76] However, Jia Yi's exile from the imperial court and Dong Zhongshu's failure to gain admittance to the emperor's inner circle of advisors are evidence that the Confucian scholar-officials had not yet completely prevailed over other schools of thought. In the *Shiji* Sima Qian obliquely criticizes the emperor's obsession with witchcraft and magical powers.[77] As far as Confucians were concerned, the pursuit of such things was incompatible with traditional values.

During the final years of Emperor Wu's reign, his flamboyant personality and his huge ambitions in both domestic and foreign policy began to draw critical comments from Confucian officials. As was the First Emperor, he was criticized for being obsessed with visiting localities associated with various divine beings and spirits, for being unable to control his appetite for foreign exotics and for trying to obtain elixirs which would make him immortal.[78] On a more pragmatic level, in order to finance the costly wars against the Xiongnu and other barbarian peoples, the emperor carried out a series of unpopular economic reforms, which included the creation of a state monopoly on the

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in classical literature. In my view, the main roles of the Chinese emperor were that of upholder of order and rituals in the everyday world, and that of being a living moral example, setting the standard for the rest of society. Cf. Gan Huaizhen (2008) 381-391.
[75] For the relationship between the emperor and Heaven, see the discussion below.
[76] For discussions of the establishment of the positions of erudites to teach the Five Classics and of the Academy, see Fukui Shigemasa 福井重雅 (1976); Yang Hongnian 楊鴻年 (1985) 191-222.
[77] Sima Qian credited Ji An 汲黯, an administrator and Huang-Lao adherent in the reign of Emperor Wu, with criticizing the emperor's "extravagance behind the façade of benevolence and righteousness". See *Shiji* 120, 3105; *Hanshu* 60, 2317.
[78] Puett (2011), 175; Nylan (2008), 49-50. Both Shi Huangdi and Wu were also criticized for their self-absorption and self-aggrandizement.

production of iron and salt.[79] The task of implementing these reforms was entrusted to a group of cruel officials (*kuli* 酷吏).[80] These policies and concomitant measures explain why the regime of Emperor Wu has been summed up as "Confucianism outside but Legalism inside". (*wai Ru nei Fa*外儒內法).[81]

Between Emperor Wu's death and the mid-first century BC, Han rulers began to place even more emphasis on Confucian values. Towards the end of Emperor Xuan's reign, a conference was organized in order to establish the value which should be attached to certain exegetical texts, particularly to those of the two commentaries on Confucius' *Chunqiu* 春秋 (The Spring and Autumn Annals), namely *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 (Gongyang's Commentary) and *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳 (Guliang's Commentary).[82] As Loewe has pointed out, this event can be seen "as the first step towards the formation of a uniformly acceptable set of Confucian ideas."[83] Emperor Yuan 元帝 (r. 49-33 BC) seems to have been the first emperor since Emperor Gao to have received a thorough classical education. He systemically studied such Confucian canons as the Book of Poetry 詩, the Book of Documents 書 and the Analects 論語, and in doing so contributed to the growing status of Confucianism. As already established, Confucian thought highlighted the virtues and merits of the wise rulers of the early Zhou period and saw self-cultivation and the fulfilment of moral obligations in accordance with the Confucian tenets as the ruler's primary duties.

A key figure in promoting the image of the Western Zhou period as a "Golden Age" was the usurper Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BC-AD 23), who launched a series of reforms under the mantle of Zhou traditions during his short reign (AD 9-23).[84] His self-presentation as ruler was based on the idea that a worthy ruler should display the same superb virtues as the ancient sages,

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[79] Nylan (2008), 49-50.

[80] In the works of both Sima Qian and Ban Gu, the stories about a number of cruel officials can be found.

[81] Loewe (1986) 154.

[82] Loewe (2012) 25.

[83] Loewe (2012) 26.

[84] There has been plenty of research on Wang Mang's reforms behind the façade of ancient Zhou institutions and his short-lived reign, and hence it does not require further discussion here. For example, see Goodrich (1957) 114-118. About Wang Mang and the pseudo text of the *Rituals of Zhou*, see Puett (2010).

an aim which could be achieved by adhering to the moral guidelines outlined in the classical canons.[85] Wang Mang's dream of a renaissance of the Zhou age was clearly inspired by Confucius' over-idealized depiction of the Western Zhou system. Wang associated himself with the Duke of Zhou who was thought to have instituted the Zhou ritual system and afterwards reinforced the legitimacy of his rule by linking the present to the past. Unlike Qin Shi Huang, Wang refused to identify himself as the creator of a new era. Wang's attempt to return to the institutions and rituals of Zhou failed, but his policies did stimulate the development of Confucianism during the early Eastern Han dynasty.

After Wang Mang's political experiment had failed, his nostalgia for ritual and institutions of the Western Zhou meant that they were tainted, but this did not result in a dismissal of Confucian values. On the contrary, in the early Eastern Han period Confucian officials continued to occupy key positions at the imperial court and in local administration, exerting a profound influence on emperors.[86] Precisely because Confucianism remained important, an attempt was made to end the disputes which had arisen between different branches of Confucian thought and to establish a unitary version of the most important classical texts. In 79, during the reign of Emperor Zhang 章帝 (r. 75-88), a court conference was convened in the White Tiger Hall (Baihu Tang 白虎堂) for this purpose. In accordance with a proposal made by the senior official Chunyu Gong 淳于恭, the historian Ban Gu compiled a book entitled *Baihu Tong* 白虎通, based on the discussions which had been held during the conference.

One of the conclusions which emerges from the foregoing discussion is that the time span between the mid-Western and early Eastern Han periods was a key period in the standardization of the Confucian classics.[87] Simultaneously, Confucianism became the mainstream school of thought, a position which it would keep for almost 2,000 years. According to the standardized Confucian tenets, in their late-Western Han shape, the most important obligation that the

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[85] Nylan (2008) 39-64.
[86] Loewe (2012) 27-30.
[87] The course of the canonization of the Confucian Classics since the first century AD has been marked by very complicated debates among Chinese scholars, focusing on the Old Text and the New Text of the classical scriptures, which lasted for over two thousand years till the early twentieth century; see Kramers (1986) 760-764; van Ess (1994).

emperor had to fulfill was to study and emulate the acts of the sages of remote antiquity. Despite the spectacular failure of Wang Mang's reforms, the idea that the ruler should govern his behaviour by studying the lessons of the superb moral sages, which could be consulted in a set of authorized texts, had found general acceptance by the end of the first century AD. As a result of this development, such Confucian virtues as *li* 禮 (ritual behaviour) and *xiao* 孝 (filial piety) increasingly gained ground as the principles of behaviour to which any gentleman (*junzi* 君子) was supposed to adhere.

However, if moral excellence was the most important defining characteristic of rulers, how could the principle of dynastic succession be justified? The principle of hereditary succession to power had been followed since the first three Chinese dynasties, Xia, Shang and Zhou. When Qin Shi Huang established the unified empire, he did not abolish this system but strengthened it by proclaiming that the empire would be ruled by his descendants for 10,000 generations.[88] Likewise, succession to power during the Western Han period was based on the principle that control over the *tianxia* was to be transmitted through Liu Bang's lineage.[89] It stands to reason that under this system, not all occupants of the imperial throne would be on a par with the legendary wise kings of remote antiquity.

The next section reveals how this thorny issue stimulated some educated men to look for other ways of legitimizing imperial rule. One of their solutions was to develop the theory that the legitimacy of the emperor's rule derived not only from his superior moral qualities, but also from the fact that he ruled by virtue of a Mandate given by Heaven.

6. The image of emperor as Son of Heaven

It should be noted that the term *tianzi* 天子 (Son of Heaven) was not an innovation when the Qin empire was founded in 221 BC. However, to explore

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[88] *Shiji* 6, 254.

[89] The *Hansu* reports that, after he founded the Han dynasty, Emperor Gao sacrificed a white horse and swore an oath that, with the exception of Liu's lineage, whomsoever made himself king would incur the hostility of the whole empire. See *Hanshu* 40, 2047. After the death of Liu Bang, the Empress Dowager Lü seized power. Her elevation as a consort from outside the clan of Liu ultimately provoked conflicts between the ruling clan and Lü's family. With the assistance of honorary senior officials in Liu Bang's time, the influence of Lü's family in the end was removed and the position of the ruling clan was solidified with the accession of Emperor Wen.

the origins of *tianzi* in Chinese political terminology is not an easy undertaking, given the many uncertainties surrounding the transmission of the literary sources between the early Western Zhou and late Warring States periods. [90] Nevertheless, since it is known that Heaven was thought of as the highest deity as early as the Western Zhou period, it is not surprising to find that the ruler of Zhou was called *tianzi*, a term which appears widely in inscriptions of the Western Zhou period after *ca* 1000 BC. [91] In the Spring and Autumn and early Warring States periods, as the power of the Zhou kings declined and the elaborate system of Zhou rituals and sacrifices gradually disintegrated, Heaven fell out of favour as the supreme deity in the religious and political landscape. [92] However, after the Qin had annihilated the six major states and transformed the *tianxia* into a single unified community, the king of Qin, Ying Zheng, adopted a series of brand new names to advertise his accomplishments. As mentioned earlier, Qin Shi Huang dispensed with the title of "king" and chose a new title, August Thearch. Nevertheless the title *tianzi* was maintained. This could be an indication that, as the legitimate successor of the Western Zhou rulers, Qin Shi Huang claimed divine support for his rule and aspired to rule the new empire on the basis of the Mandate of Heaven. [93]

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[90] About the title *tianzi*, see Yuri Pines (2008) note 7, 69. From the very beginning of their dynasty, the Zhou kings claimed that they acted in the name of Heaven, see e.g., the *He zun*, cast in 1036 BC, at the very beginning of Zhou rule (discussed by Shaughnessy 1997, 77-78). The title "Son of Heaven" was coined later but, by the middle of the Western Zhou period, it was already firmly associated with the kings (Takeuchi 1999). Throughout Zhou history this title remained restricted to the Zhou monarchs. Cf. Eno (2009) 101.

[91] See Takeuchi Yasuhiro 竹内康浩 (2009) 101. As time went by, after around the reigns of King Zhao 昭 (d. 977 BC) and King Mu 穆 (?d. 922 BC), *Tianzi* appears frequently in bronze inscriptions. As Kern notes, "in the corpus of the Jinwen yinde, the royal appellation 'Son of Heaven' appears 13 times (in a total of just eight inscriptions) in the early period, 61 times in the middle period, and 84 times in the late period." See Kern (2009) 148.

[92] Zhu Weizheng 朱維錚 (2008) 331.

[93] Here I do not agree with Pines who argues that "the First Emperor's position vis-à-vis the divine powers was not of subservience but at the very least of equality, if not superiority." See Pines (2013) 269. Pines thinks that Qin Shi Huang, unlike "all known rulers of China", saw himself as a Messianic monarch. But, as I shall argue below, the rites of the *feng* and *shan* conducted on Mount Tai were a ritual to seek to cosmic sanction from the highest divinity, though as to details, the First Emperor could not be quite sure whether or not Heaven was the supreme deity. I agree with Pines' argument when he takes pains to stress the unique and distinct character of the new empire and the idiosyncratic personality of the First Emperor. But the inscriptions and transmitted

It is notable that the tours of inspection on which Qin Shi Huang's embarked between 219 and 210 BC were invariably associated with a series of religious practices, of which the most famous and significant one was the sacrificial performance of *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 on Mount Tai.[94] These sacrifices suggest that, while the new ruler was trying to promulgate his image as the supreme monarch of the *tianxia*, he was also intent on affirming the existence of a relationship with Heaven by performing sacrifices on sacred mountains. This would also explain why Sima Qian pays so much attention to the Emperor's cultic activities.

Qin Shi Huang was not the first Chinese monarch to ascend sacred mountains to perform such sacrifices. Chinese historiography relates that the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝), who reigned in the mythical age of remote antiquity, was the first sage-ruler who managed to perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices on a sacred mountain, after which he was empowered to ascend to Heaven and became an immortal.[95] The *feng-shan* ceremonies practised by Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu were most likely intended to emulate the model of the Yellow Emperor in efforts to obtain eternal life. Perhaps this is why magicians, who were called Technical Masters (*fangshi* 方士) in ancient sources, constantly tried to persuade the First Emperor (and Emperor Wu) to conduct these *feng-shan* ceremonies on sacred Mount Tai. According to the *Shiji*, the stories told by these masters prompted Qin Shi Huang to send a magician named Xu Shi 徐市 accompanied by twenty youths and maidens to the three divine islands, Yingzhou 瀛洲, Penglai 蓬萊 and Fangzhang 方丈 in the Eastern Sea to establish contact with the immortals and to obtain the elixir of immortality.[96] The *feng* and *shan* rites performed on Mount Tai might have served the same purpose.[97]

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sources do not offer any solid evidence from which to draw the conclusion that Qin Shi Huang identified himself as the equal counterpart to the highest deity. For Pines' article, see Pines (2013) 258-279.

[94] The *feng* and *shan* cult is said to have been recorded in an essay in the *Guanzi*, an encyclopaedic treatise named after Guan Zhong composed in the seventh century BC. Unfortunately the essay has been lost. Sima Qian attributed one book in his *magnum opus* to the rites of *feng* and *shan*. See *Shiji* 28, 1355-1404.

[95] *Shiji* 12, 468.

[96] *Shiji* 28, 1369-1370

[97] Lewis (1999) 55-56. Lewis outlines various certain features in relation to the aspects of the *feng* and *shan* rites. One of them is that the mountain sacrifices in ancient China were linked to immortality. See *ibid.* 58-59.

Whereas this does remain a possibility, a closer look at Sima Qian's record reveals that the search for immortality might not have been the only motive which led Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu of Han to perform these ceremonies. Sima Qian recounts that seventy Confucian scholars from the old states of Qi and Lu were summoned to meet the emperor at the foot of Mount Tai to discuss the way in which the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices had been performed in ancient times. When they failed to reach a consensus, the First Emperor became angry and dismissed them.[98] Interestingly enough, a similar incident took place during the reign of Emperor Wu, when the latter ascended Mount Tai to perform the *feng* ceremony in 110 BC.[99] Emperor Wu, like the First Emperor, was displeased by the inability of the scholars he had consulted to offer adequate explanations about the time-honoured rituals on the basis of the ancient texts, and dismissed them.[100]

The fact that both these emperors asked Confucian scholars to offer interpretations of the ancient rituals demonstrates that the early Chinese emperors, from the time of Qin to mid-Western Han, oscillated between two cultic traditions. Importantly, the Masters of Techniques were able to persuade emperors to ascend Mount Tai to perform sacrifices to Heaven and to send men to the islands of the Eastern Sea to search for the elixir of immortality. The Confucian scholars likewise stressed the significance of the *feng* and *shan* rites, but they saw these in a very different light. In their view, the purpose of the *feng-shan* practices was to strengthen the nexus between the emperor and Heaven, the supreme deity in the imperial pantheon. The ascension of Mount Tai and the performance of the sacrifices to Heaven would reaffirm the Mandate of Heaven and the bestowal of Heaven's favour.[101]

The status of Confucianism was raised after the accession of Emperor Wu in 141 BC, especially after the death of Empress Dowager Dou (d. 135 BC), who was a passionate adherent of the Huang-Lao doctrines. Unquestionably, the sources are explicit that Emperor Wu, as had the First Emperor, also devoted abundant energy to trying to establish contact with various gods, ghosts and immortal spirits in an attempt to attain personal immortality. Besides Heaven, Earth and the Five Emperors, the Great One (Taiyi 太一)

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[98] *Shiji* 28, 1367.
[99] For Emperor Wu's *feng* and *shan* ceremonies, see the article of by Lewis (1999).
[100] *Shiji* 28, 1399.
[101] Influenced by Confucian thought, Sima Qian expresses his antipathy to the Magicians' propaganda for their cults of immortality. See Lewis (1999) 70-71.

became a very popular deity at the time and was venerated highly by the Han Technical Masters.[102] For example, Miu Ji 謬姬, a famous technical master, advised Emperor Wu to build altars for sacrificing to the Great One on the outskirts of Chang'an. When another altar was built at Ganquan 甘泉, a religious centre situated some seventy kilometres to the northeast of Chang'an, upon the suggestion by Minister Gongsun Qing 公孫卿 in 130 BC, this centre became the principal site for the cult of the Great One.[103]

During the time of Emperor Wu, the link between the temporal monarch and Heaven was strengthened as a result of the efforts of a number of Confucian literati who were interested in promoting Heaven. As mentioned above, one of them was Dong Zhongshu, who developed the theory of the Resonance between Heaven and Men. He and other Han literati said that the emperor played an intermediary role in linking the heavenly and temporal worlds.[104] He also thought that Heaven communicated with mankind by providing auspicious or inauspicious omens.[105]

Yet it was not until the last decades of the first century BC, particularly the pivotal period of the reign of Wang Mang, that the sacrifice to Heaven became the most important cult act performed by the Chinese emperor.[106] In AD 56, the founding Emperor of the Eastern Han dynasty, Guang-wu 光武 (Liu Xiu 劉秀 r. 25-57) visited Mount Tai to perform the *feng* and *shan*

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[102] On the origins of the Great One from the perspective of archaeological studies, see Li Ling (2000) 207-239. For the cult of the Great One in the Western Han, see Bujard (2009) 791-792.

[103] Originally Ganquan was a place at which sacrifices were made to the Five Emperors. When the Great One emerged as a popular deity in the mid-Western Han period, it became the main site for the cult of the Five Emperors and the Great One. The altar used to make sacrifices to the Great One also began to be also used to sacrifice to the Five Emperors. See Bujard (2009) 789; Tseng (2011) 83.

[104] Only the emperor was deemed to be qualified to receive the signs directly from Heaven. This belief might be the reason the emperor carried out the sacrifice on the summit of the Mount Tai alone when he performed the *feng* ceremony for the second time.

[105] For omens and their significance and symbolic meanings during the Han period, see Tseng (2011) 92-132.

[106] In fact, the (failed) attempt made by Kuang Heng 匡衡 and Zhang Tan 張譚 to reform the Jiao (suburban altar) sacrifice 郊祀禮 in the reign of Emperor Zhang (AD 75-88) also shows that the educated elite of the Han empire had begun to regard Heaven as the highest deity who bestowed the Mandate upon the ruler of mankind. For the tentative reform of Jiao advocated by Kuang Heng and Zhang Tan, see Gan Huaizhen (2005).

ceremonies. [107] A crucial difference between these sacrifices and those performed by Qin Shi Huang and Emperor Wu is that Emperor Guang-wu explicitly promulgated the idea of the Mandate of Heaven promoted by the Confucian literati. Following the ceremony on Mount Tai, he ordered a stele on which the texts received from Heaven were engraved to be set up.[108] In the same year he sacrificed to Heaven on the outskirts of the Eastern Han capital of Luoyang 洛陽. Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 57-75) began to sacrifice to Heaven in a new Bright Hall in 59.[109] This innovation did not impede the use of the Bright Hall for also sacrificing to the Five Emperors of remote antiquity and to a number of deceased Han emperors. [110] This Hall played an increasingly important role in linking the emperor to Heaven. When he performed the sacrifices to Heaven in this building, the emperor accepted the sacred authority, bestowed on him by Heaven, to rule the empire and its people. The fact that the deceased ancestors and the immortal spirits were venerated in the same building signified that the dynastic rule of the imperial house was also sanctioned by Heaven.

As Heaven became the supreme deity in the imperial pantheon, the worship of other immortal spirits, like the Great One, either faded away or was integrated into the Heaven sacrifices. Cogently, from the early first century AD, emperors only rarely travelled eastwards to Mount Tai to perform *feng* and *shan* ceremonies. Instead, Luoyang and its suburbs became the places in which emperors conducted ceremonies to sacrifice to Heaven, Earth and the ancestors. After Emperor Wu, the Han emperors no longer showed strong interest in climbing sacred mountains in remote areas in pursuit of immortality. Instead, the continuity of dynastic rule and the political power of individual emperors were both increasingly associated with the *tianming* 天命, the Mandate or Destiny of Heaven.

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[107] For the details of the ceremony, see the article by Xing Yitian (2011b) 177-201.
[108] Bujard (2009) 799.
[109] The First Bright Hall in Luoyang was built by Wang Mang in 4 BC, see *Hanshu* 25b. The origin of the Bright Hall, which is said to have been in existence from the early Zhou period, remains unclear. See Csikszenmihalyi (1994) 2.
[110] Prior to the last decades of the Western Han period, plenty of funerary temples in which sacrifices were made to the deceased emperors and empresses, had been built throughout the empire. By the reign of Emperor Yuan (r. 49-33 BC), however, many of these temples were being closed on the advice of some literati. Only the temples of a few emperors, like Emperor Gao, the founding emperor, Emperor Wen, Wu, Zhao and Xuan were allowed to stand. See Bujard (2009) 797; Loewe (1992), 302–340.

During the early and middle Western Han periods there had been "no implication that the term *tianming* refers to the appointment of a particular dynasty or person to rule over the mankind."[111] It was not until the late first century BC and early first century AD that such Confucian scholars as Liu Xin 劉歆 (46-23 BC) and Ban Biao 班彪 (3-54), the father of the historian Ban Gu, began to explore and develop the concept of Mandate of Heaven and the idea that the emperor occupied a pivotal position between Heaven and Earth. They developed the doctrine of the Triple Concordance 三統 which taught that Heaven, Man and Earth could only attain harmony if the emperor, under the Mandate of Heaven, were able to govern himself and to rule the people in accordance with the principles laid down by the Classics. In his famous essay *On the Mandate of Kings* (Wangming Lun 王命論), Ban Biao highlights the idea that the sovereignty of the Han dynasty, empowered by Heaven, could be traced back to the great sages of remote antiquity, among them Yao and Shun.[112] The rapid downfall of the short-lived Xin dynasty founded by Wang Mang was interpreted as a sign that the legitimate power of Han, which had been granted by Heaven, could not successfully be broken by usurpers. From the early Eastern Han period, the *ming* 命 (Mandate or destiny) of the ruler and the dynasty and the distinction between the emperor and ordinary mortals were both increasingly emphasized. In this same period, a body of writings known as the apocryphal texts 讖緯, a rich collection of omens and esoteric stories which had either been transmitted from the distant past or recently composed under the cloak of antiquity, assumed an important role.[113] In short, from the late Western Han period, the transmission of the throne within the ruling house of Liu was cemented by the development of the theory of the Mandate of Heaven.

By emphasizing the principle of legitimate succession within the Liu clan and by tracing the beginning of Liu's line back all the way to the mythical age of Yao, the ideological problems created by the fact that some emperors failed to

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[111] Loewe (1994) 109. As seen above, the idea that the emperor ruled the state under the Mandate of Heaven had been a political principle as long ago as the Western Zhou period. Emperor Gao's achievement in reunifying the empire and Emperor Wen's defeat of the powerful relatives of the Empress Dowager Lü was seen as owing much to the blessing of Heaven.

[112] *Wenxuan* 52. On Ban Biao's essay, see Loewe (1986) 735-737.

[113] For the study of the apocryphal texts, see the seminal annotation of the Japanese scholars Yasui Kōsan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八 (1994); see also Xu Xingwu (2003); Gentz (2009) 833.

possess the superb moral qualities stressed by Dong Zhongshu and some other literati were neatly circumvented. It seems reasonable to suppose that this was one of the reasons the Han rulers eventually took the step of abandoning the shamanistic ideology represented by the Technical Masters and recognizing the cosmological and moral political theory advocated by the Confucians. Viewed in this light, it not surprising that, even during the Eastern Han period, when most emperors were weak, sovereignty continued to rest with members of the House of Liu.[114] Although the authority of some emperors was challenged, the fundamental principle that the supreme power could only be transmitted within that House survived intact until the founding of the Jin 晉 dynasty in the late third century.

7. Rome and China compared

One of the conclusions which emerges from the foregoing discussion is that, during the Qin and Han periods at least, Chinese attitudes to warfare differed profoundly from those prevailing in Early-Imperial Rome. During the Republic, warfare played a major part in the daily lives of a very high proportion of Romans and Italians. By the late second century BC, a succession of very ambitious military campaigns had ensured Rome of hegemonic power throughout the Mediterranean world. During the reign of Augustus, the Roman legions were transferred to the periphery of the Mediterranean world and war was reduced to a distant reality for the majority of the Roman people. Nevertheless, nearly almost all of the Roman emperors of the first and second centuries continued to present themselves as possessing the Roman martial ethos and advertised their military virtues and accomplishments on coins, in inscriptions and by means of statues.[115]

In the *Res Gestae*, Augustus takes pride in the fact that he had re-established peace and order for the Roman population.[116] Nevertheless, the idea that peace had been won by military victories on land and sea is also highlighted.[117] Quite unlike their Chinese counterparts, neither Augustus nor

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[114] Loewe (2004) 578-579; (2011a) 274. In Eastern Han, for example, only the first three emperors had attained adulthood when they ascended the throne.

[115] For Roman rulers highlighting their martial prowess through various media see, for instance, Ando (2000) 278 ff.; Campbell (1984) 142-148; (2002) 135-146; Hekster (2007) 342-351.

[116] *RG* 6,2; 13.

[117] *RG* 13.

his successors ceased to see war as the ultimate guarantor of military and social stability. Importantly, military victories continued to be seen as an excellent way to obtain wealth and glory, not only by the emperors themselves but by the vast majority of the ruling class of the empire.

Augustus' military accomplishments throughout the *orbis terrarum* are one of the most important themes of the *Res Gestae*. It was only during the final years of his reign that the elderly emperor began to reconsider the desirability of further territorial expansion. During the two centuries following Augustus' death, the pace of expansion slowed down. Despite the marked reduction in warlike exploits, however, the aspirations for glory and military prestige nurtured by Roman emperors still played an important part in driving forward territorial expansion. Although from the second century some Greek intellectuals, among them Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom and Dio Cassius, did make some negative comments on Roman mainstream propaganda on warfare, the decision makers of the Roman empire, that is, the emperor and most senators, rarely expressed any qualms about engaging in aggressive military expansionism as long as victory was achieved and the emperor's desire for military prestige was satisfied.[118]

Attitudes to violence and warfare in ancient China were, by and large, very different. Mark Lewis has rightly argued that, prior to the seventh and sixth centuries BC, China had possessed an extremely militaristic and bellicose culture.[119] As far as can be ascertained, warfare, hunting and sacrifice played an important part in the lives of the nobility of Western Zhou society.[120] Although rites, music and moral cultivation were given a great deal of emphasis in the dictums of Confucius, whether actual or apocryphal, training in such military skills as archery and chariot-driving, two of the "six arts" (*liu yi* 六藝), is also advocated by the Master.[121] Since Confucius was a product of Western Zhou culture, his positive attitude to military arts should not come as a surprise but,

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[118] On negative attitudes to warfare of the Roman philosophers, see Sidebottom (1993) 241-264.

[119] See Lewis (1990) 15-50.

[120] The aristocratic society in the Western Zhou was based on a strict lineage structure. Success in battle was as an important means to win honour for the lineage. See Lewis (1990) 51. But Lewis restricts his argument to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, making no attempt to trace the role of heroism and martial prowess in aristocratic circles to the Western Zhou and Shang periods.

[121] The "six arts" were the six skills which the Western Zhou nobles were expected to master during their education. They were rites, music, archery, chariot-driving, calligraphy and mathematics.

despite the fact that they were undeniably present, these arts occupied a far less prominent position in Confucian thinking than such ritual and non-militaristic values as benevolence and righteousness.[122]

Furthermore, as said in the first part of this chapter, the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States periods witnessed the emergence of increasingly negative sentiments towards war among the educated classes of the Chinese states, though this negativity by no means implies that China was being transformed into a non-militarized society in either of these periods.[123] On the contrary, warfare played a crucial role in the creation of the Qin empire and, during the 300 years of chaos and violence which preceded this event, war penetrated deep into daily life. Nevertheless, compared to Rome, cultural and social stimuli for going to war were much weaker.[124]

In one of the Chinese classical military treatises composed in the Warring States period, the author Master Wu (Wuzi 吳子) distinguishes five motives for raising troops. As Paul van Els has shown, of these types of warfare only the *yibing* 義兵, the "righteous war" which was fought for the purpose of ending chaos and oppression, was regarded as a fully justified military activity.[125] Mobilizing large numbers of people for the purpose of a "strong war", that is, a war launched for the pursuit of fame, is disapproved of by the author. Similarly, in the fictional conversation between Master Wen and the Old Master, recorded in the bamboo manuscript *Master Wen* (Wenzi 文子), presumably created in the early Han period, the author distinguishes between five types of warfare, namely: "righteous" 义兵 (punitive war), "reactive" 應兵 (defensive war), "furious/indignant" 忿兵, "greedy/covetous" 貪兵 and

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[122] Xing Yitian (2011b) 227.

[123] A point stressed by Di Cosmo (2009) 2.

[124] In his discussion of the theory of grand strategy in Chinese history, Alastair Johnston sees violence, in both western and eastern societies, as a "highly efficacious and preferable to all nonviolent approaches, and offensive strategies are favored over static defense." See David Graaf's review article (1997) 450. He dismisses the "stereotypical" view of attitudes to warfare in ancient China represented by John Keegan, claiming that the pervasive sense of antipathy to warfare in the writings of ancient Chinese philosophers, like Confucius and Mencius, is "almost perfunctory or symbolic". See Johnston (1995) 153. In my view, it remains highly significant that Chinese and Roman attitudes to warfare were completely different.

[125] The other four types for war were: "strong/aggressive war" 強兵, "hard/unyielding war" 剛兵, "oppressive war" 暴兵 and "rebellious war" 逆兵. For the translation of this passage, see Van Els (2013) 18. For an English translation of *Wuzi*, see Sawyer (1993) 206-224.

"arrogant" 驕兵. Only the first two kinds of warfare were supposed to bring positive results.[126]

During the Republic, the Romans developed the theory of the "just war" (*bellum iustum*).[127] At first sight, this concept resembles the "righteous" and "reactive" wars of the *Master Wen* manuscript. However, if the scope of the analysis is broadened to include general attitudes to warfare, it is highly significant that, in China, aggressive warfare was rarely promoted by members of the educated elite, whereas in Roman society it was highly valued and admired, both during the Republic and during the Principate. As long as warfare could be presented as ending a perceived threat to the *salus* of Rome, the Romans would not be guilty of waging offensive wars and therefore would have the backing of the gods.[128] In contrast to ancient Chinese attitudes to warfare, the Roman approach was to a certain degree amoral.[129] As J. C. Mann has rightly pointed out, the Romans "had no need to apologize for the growth of Roman power, or try to excuse Roman rule over other peoples."[130]

The highest magistrates of the Roman Republic were all military generals, and had been hailed as *imperatores* after gaining military victories. This tradition survived until the early years of the Principate, when the title *imperator* was monopolized by the Roman emperor and became part of imperial titulature. As argued in Chapter 5, the actual form of the relationship between the emperor and the army varied from one reign to the next. Some emperors, among them Galba, Vespasian, Trajan and Septimius Severus, owed their ascension largely to the army and maintained a close relationship with the soldiers. Other emperors, such as Nero, Antoninus Pius and Commodus, did not attempt to build close ties with the military. Tiberius, who had been intimately associated with the army and had acquired a considerable amount of military prestige under Augustus, displayed a more detached attitude to military affairs after his ascension to the throne. In contrast to this, Caracalla, who had a problematic

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[126] See van Els (2013) 26-33. For the study of *Wenzi*, see van Els' PhD dissertation (Leiden University, 2006).

[127] On Roman the Roman notion of "just war", see Sidebottom (2007) 25-8. For the "just war" in the Roman imperial context, see Mantovani (1991).

[128] In this regard, the Third Punic War is a good example. See the speech by Cato the Elder in the Senate *ORF*² fr. 195. For the role that religion played in Roman warfare, see Rüpke (1990). Rüpke, particularly in Parts Two and Three, argues that, in the Roman context, offensive war could be legitimized on religious grounds.

[129] Brunt (1990) 177. About religion and Roman war, see Birley (1978); Helgland (1978); Rüpke (1990); Stoll (2007) 451-476.

[130] Mann (1979) 176.

relationship with the Senate, was very concerned about his image as a "fellow soldier" of those serving in the legions, especially after his brother Geta had been murdered.[131] Even the most unwarlike emperors had to take the interests of the soldiers into account, restricting this concern not just to the members of the Praetorian Guard in the capital, but extending it to those in the legions stationed in the frontier zone. Throughout the entire period of the Principate, emperors had to find a balance between their own ambitions and the interests of the Senate and the army.

In China relationships between rulers and the army were very different. From the early Warring States period in the fifth century BC, indeed even earlier, the rulers of the multiple states of the Central Plain had gradually distanced themselves from personal involvement in battles. The emperors of the Qin and Western Han empires were not expected to act as commanders-in-chief.

In recent years scholars in the field of Qin and Han history have begun to use visual materials to supplement or correct the deficiency in the literary sources. As a result of this trend more attention is beginning to be paid to tomb frescos and reliefs.[132] In a recent article Xing Yitian draws attention to the fact that many tombstones of the Han period show hunting scenes, arguing that local Han local officials also received a military training. Some other tomb frescoes show Han officials fighting under their leaders against the Xiongnu enemy. Xing Xitian argues that this demonstrates that, in the bureaucratic system of the Han empire, no clear distinction was made between civil and military duties.[133]

It should be noted that almost all of the visual evidence used by Xing comes from the tombs of the local elites and dates to the Eastern Han period. More importantly, frescoes or reliefs of this period never show the emperor or high-ranking members of the Han bureaucracy as military commanders leading campaigns against the Xiongnu or other enemies.[134] To this extent the visual

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[131] Campbell (1984) 52.

[132] The pioneering work is Wu Hong's study on the Wu Liang Shrine: Wu Hong 巫鴻 (2006) trans. Liu Yang 柳揚 and Yin He 岑河. The Taiwanese scholar Xing Yitian has made a brilliant study of the arts of early ancient China, focusing particularly on Han frescoes and stone and brick reliefs. See Xing Yitian (2011a).

[133] For a case study interpreting a battle between a local Han army and the Xiongnu represented on a Han tomb stone, see Xing Yitian (2011a) 315-397.

[134] Xing Yitian (2011a) 9-46.

evidence chimes in perfectly with the literary record which does not contain any reference to emperors taking part in battles.

In 51 BC, when Huhanye Chanyu paid a visit to Chang'an to declare his submission to the Han emperor, Xuan, a large force of cavalry was sent to escort him on his journey, and other troops lined the route. In Chang'an, Huhanye was entertained with luxurious banquets and various games.[135] In complete contrast to this, when King Tiridates I of Armenia and the brother of the Parthian king, Vologaeses, visited Rome in AD 66, "armed cohorts stood around the temples in the Forum and [Nero] himself was seated in a curule chair on the *rostra*, dressed in the robes of a triumphant general and surrounded by military standards and flags." Subsequently, after Tiridates had made two supplications, one in the forum and another in the theatre, and has been rewarded with diadem, "Nero placed him in a seat at his own right hand. Acclaimed 'Imperator' for this, Nero offered laurels on the Capitol and closed the gates of the temple of two-headed Janus, to show there were no longer any wars being waged."[136]

As did Vologaeses' visit to Rome, Huhanye Chanyu's visit to Chang'an signalled his submission to the emperor. Unlike Nero, however, the Han emperor appears to have been totally uninterested in using Huhanye Chanyu's visit as an occasion either for a display of Han military strength or as an opportunity to broadcast his personal martial qualities or his close relationship with the army. While late Western Han superiority over the Xiongnu undoubtedly rested on the military strengths of the Han empire, this never resulted in a greater ideological emphasis on the emperor's military role.

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[135] *Hanshu* 96 b, 3798. Loewe (2009) 86.
[136] Suet. *Ner.* 63,1-6. My translation is a slightly adapted version of that of Catharine Edwards (2000) in the Oxford World Classics series. Between 64 and 65 a new series of *aurei* was issued to commemorate this event. The reverse of these coins shows the closed doors of the temple of Janus, encircled by the legend PACE P R TERRA MARIQUE PARTA IANUM CLUSIT, "Having established peace for the Roman people on land and at sea, he closed the temple of Janus." See *RIC* I Nero, 50.

Conclusions

In the introductory chapter of a recent volume containing a series of comparative papers on the Roman and Han empires, Walter Scheidel draws attention to the many similarities which existed between these two imperial states. As he puts it:

> *Two thousand years ago, perhaps half of the entire human species had come under the control of just two powers, the Roman and Han empires, at opposite ends of Eurasia. Both entities were broadly similar in terms of size. Both of them were run by god-like emperors residing in the largest cities the world had seen so far, were made up of some 1,500 to 2,000 administrative districts, and, at least at times, employed hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Both states laid claim to ruling the whole world,* orbis terrarum *and* tianxia*, while both encountered similar competition for surplus between central government and local elites and similar pressures generated by secondary state formation beyond their frontiers and subsequent "barbarian" infiltration. Both of them even ended in similar ways: one half, the original political core—the west in Europe, the north in China—was first weakened by warlordism and then taken over by "barbarian" successor states, whereas the other half was preserved by a traditionalist regime.*[1]

Scheidel states that an empire "usually involves the unequal relationship between a ruling center (core) and a ruled (peripheries)." As he points out, historical empires were often multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, with diverse communities linked to a central power via varied local elites.[2] In the particular cases of the Roman and Han empires, these consisted of vast territorial states containing various peoples which were ruled by monarchs. These similarities are the background to the comparative investigations which have been undertaken in this dissertation.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I have examined the formation of the idea of world domination in Pre-Imperial Rome and China. During the first centuries of the Republic, the political horizons of the Roman elite initially remained limited to Central-Western Italy and then to Peninsular and North Italy, Sicily and Sardinia. However, in the Greek-speaking East, Alexander's unprecedented conquests had stimulated the formulation of an ideology of world domination. As Rome conquered large parts of the Hellenistic world, Roman generals and

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[1] Scheidel (2009) 11.
[2] Scheidel (2009b) 17-19.

intellectuals appropriated this ideology, which neatly summed up the logical outcome of the seemingly unstoppable process of centrifugal expansion which had taken place during the last two centuries BC. However, although the all-embracing worldview associated with this ideology is referred to in various sources dealing with Pompey's eastern campaigns, it did not become a dominant theme in Roman imperial ideology until the age of Augustus.

At the other end of the Eurasian continent, worldviews developed in a strikingly different way. In Pre-Imperial China the idea that the world consisted of a centre and four quarters existed but it shared the stage with another concept in which the world consisted of five concentric zones, of which the innermost represented the highest level of civilization. Interestingly, the latter theory reinforced the nascent construction of "Chinese-ness" during the late Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. At approximately the same time, the rise of pastoralist societies in the huge strip of land on the northern periphery of the Central Chinese Plains deepened the divide between the Chinese and non-Chinese worlds. In the long run, these processes would contribute to the emergence of a relatively closed and exclusive worldview.

A comparison between the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* and the Stele Inscriptions of Qin Shi Huang supports this analysis. While Augustus claimed to have established Roman domination throughout the *orbis terrarum*, the first Chinese emperor claimed to control the *tianxia*, "all under Heaven". Although superficially these two terms might seem to convey broadly the same meaning, a closer inspection reveals that the concept of *orbis terrarum* was closely linked to the imperial ideology of *imperium sine fine* ("power/empire without limits"), whereas in various passages of the Stele Inscriptions (though not in all of them) the Chinese term *tianxia* clearly refers to the Chinese world to the exclusion of the lands of the non-Chinese barbarians.

The central problem examined in Chapters 3 and 4 has to do with the extent to which the very different ideological conceptions of "world domination" in Early-Imperial Rome and in Qin and Han China corresponded to differences in actual military policies. During the early Principate, the military situation and military policies differed from region to region. None the less, indications provided in various literary sources as well as extensive archaeological evidence both support the idea that, before the third century AD, there was no fixed and clear-cut boundary which demarcated Roman from non-Roman territories. In this sense the Roman empire remained an *imperium sine fine*. On the other hand, the annexation of various neighbouring states as well as the

construction of increasingly complex military defence-works along major rivers and other natural boundaries, which commenced in the later years of the Flavian dynasty, gradually made the imperial frontier more cohesive and visible. This situation stimulated the formulation of a more closed worldview which made a sharper distinction between the civilized Roman world protected by the frontier defences and the barbarian world beyond. Importantly, it should be stressed that this alternative worldview never eliminated the all-encompassing worldview of the Augustan age and that, up to the final years of the reign of Septimius Severus, many emperors launched aggressive military campaigns beyond the Rhine, the Danube and the Euphrates.

During the first seventy years of the Han empire, Chinese military policies could have scarcely appeared more different to those encountered in the Early Roman empire. Compared to their Roman counterparts, the early Han rulers showed little interest in territorial expansion. It can be argued that the adoption of this non-expansionist policy was largely determined by the military weakness of the Han underlined by the threat posed by the Xiongnu empire of the northern steppes.

The situation did change in the early 120s BC when Emperor Wu's aggressive military campaigns resulted in an unprecedented territorial expansion of the Han empire, ultimately extending Han control as far as the Western Regions. Nevertheless, there are strong reasons to think that the primary goal of these military campaigns was to secure the heartland of the Han empire by expelling the Xiongnu. Likewise, the establishment of an elaborate system of fortification works along the Yellow River and in various other areas mainly served the purpose of improving security.

During the first and second centuries AD, the Roman empire also acquired an elaborate system of legionary camps and other military structures, such as walls, palisades, ramparts and ditches, which formed a more or less linear frontier along the major rivers and other strategic topographical boundaries. Indubitably, although these natural and artificial barriers played a role in defending the empire against hostile barbarian attacks, it is also certain that, throughout the period of the Principate, many of these military installations were used as bases for further conquest. During this period the uncontested military superiority of the Roman armies allowed Roman rulers to adopt an elastic policy. This elasticity explains why some emperors launched major campaigns of conquest, whereas others merely reacted to challenges posed by various barbarian peoples.

The final two chapters of this dissertation focus on the relationship between the Roman and Chinese emperors and their respective armies. More than thirty-five years ago, Fergus Millar wrote that "the emperor was what the emperor did."[3] Up to a point this observation remains valid. In both China and Rome, the emperor had to play multiple roles if he were to display his power and authority. The power of these rulers was not merely symbolic, although symbolic power can be very real.[4] For many decades Roman historians have disputed whether the emperor played an active role in administrative and military affairs or mainly confined his duties to responding to petitions submitted by his subjects.[5] Millar correctly pointed out that on account of the limitations of the geographical and ethnographical knowledge available to the emperor and his advisors, it was difficult for the former to obtain reliable information about any developments which might have been taking place on the periphery of the empire and subsequently to made a quick response. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to infer from this that emperors never developed any plans of their own. Max Weber's observation that the roles rulers had to play were shaped to a significant degree by the expectations of their subjects must be borne in mind.[6] During the Principate, all Roman emperors had to play the role of military *imperator*, whether they liked it or not. In other words, because of social and cultural expectations Roman emperors were under pressure to seek military honours, preferably by leading the army in person.

In stark contrast to their Roman counterparts, the emperors of the Qin and Han dynasties were not expected to play any military role after the decision to start a particular war had been taken. As early as the Warring States period, Chinese rulers had distanced themselves from military affairs. Although the Stele Inscriptions erected by the first Qin emperor, Shi Huangdi, do extol his successes in unifying the *tianxia* by his martial virtues (*wude* 武德), neither in the literary sources nor in any other works of art does he ever appear as a military general. In this respect Qin Shi Huang's self-representation was very different from that used by Augustus. Another pair of emperors who invite comparison are Trajan and Emperor Wu. These two emperors have been described as the most warlike emperors of the Roman and Han empires. Both took pride in the

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[3] Millar (1977) xi.
[4] Noreña (2011) 318; Sumi (2013) 533.
[5] See Millar's work (1977).
[6] Weber (1980) 140-48; Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 298.

massive territorial gains which were the fruits of their aggressive military policies. However, although Trajan was keen to present himself as an active and effective military commander, Emperor Wu never commanded any army on the battlefield.

Both the Roman and Han empires were created by military successes won against competing rulers. Nevertheless, the authority of the Chinese emperor and the concomitant legitimacy of the Han dynasty were not primarily based on the military qualities of the emperor and his family. The legitimacy of the Han rulers rested largely on the superior moral qualities which were attributed to them and on the idea that their rule was sanctioned by Heaven. These concepts were elaborated on when Confucian principles achieved a dominant influence at the imperial court after the death of Emperor Wu. The Han literati asserted that the emperor could achieve the same moral qualities and superior intelligence as the wise kings of remote antiquity by studying the Classics. Should he achieve this goal, his virtues would be broadcast not only among the inhabitants of the civilized *tianxia* within the Seas *(hainei)*, but also throughout the barbarian realms; indeed even among the birds and animals inhabiting the sky and earth. Consequently universal rule in all areas under Heaven, the broader sense of *tianxia*, could be achieved. In terms of actual policies this doctrine entailed that, as soon as hegemonic power had been achieved by military intervention, the ruler should end all military campaigns and concentrate on moral self-cultivation within the *tianxia* and the "Four Seas".

The findings of this dissertation strongly support the conclusion that, in most texts which were produced during the Qin and Western Han dynasties, the idea of universal rule signified something completely different to the Roman concept of *imperium sine fine*. This contrast is paralleled by a striking difference in conceptions of imperial roles and virtues. While Roman emperors, as their Chinese counterparts were also expected to do, were supposed to display a wide range of virtues, such as *aequitas* and *liberalitas*, in Rome military *virtus* continued to be regarded as an important component in the package and military success was a crucial requirement for the legitimacy of the emperor's rule.[7]

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[7] Of course there was some room for manoeuvre, with different virtues being highlighted during the reigns of particular emperors. See, for instance, Charlesworth (1937); Wallace-Hadrill (1981); Noreña (2001) and (2011).

Nederlandse samenvatting

Rond het begin van de jaartelling leefde ongeveer de helft van de wereldbevolking in gebieden die ofwel tot het Romeinse rijk ofwel tot het Chinese keizerrijk behoorden. Beide rijken beschikten over enorme legers en over een uitbreide militaire infrastructuur. Een andere overkomst was dat zowel de keizers van het Principaat als de Han-keizers van de tweede en eerste eeuw v. Chr. claimden dat hun macht zich uitstrekte over 'de gehele wereld'. Hoewel er frappante overeenkomsten tussen beide rijken bestaan, laat een gedetailleerd onderzoek zoek zien dat de Romeinse conceptie van 'wereldheerschappij' in belangrijke opzichten verschilde van het Chinese concept van keizerlijke heerschappij over 'alles wat zich onder de hemel bevindt'. Ook blijkt de militaire politiek van de Romeinse keizers gericht te zijn geweest op andere doelstellingen dan die van de keizers van de Qin-dynastie en Westelijke Han-dynastie en blijkt de verhouding tussen keizer en leger in deze rijken fundamenteel anders te zijn geweest. Het belangrijkste doel van deze dissertatie is deze verschillen aan het licht te brengen en te verklaren.

In de eerste twee hoofdstukken wordt het ontstaan van de Romeinse en Chinese ideologieën van 'wereldbeheersing' onderzocht. Gedurende de eerste 250 jaar van de Romeinse Republiek was de politieke horizon van de Romeinse elite aanvankelijk beperkt tot het westelijk deel van Midden-Italië en later tot geheel Italië plus Sicilië en Sardinië. Intussen hadden de spectaculaire van Alexander de Grote in de oostelijke helft van het Middellandse Zeegebied voeding gegeven aan een ideologie van 'wereldheerschappij', die vrijwel zeker voortbouwde op vergelijkbare concepten uit de Mesopotamische traditie. Nadat de Romeinse legers in de loop van de tweede en eerste eeuw v. Chr. grote delen van de Hellenistische wereld hadden veroverd, werd deze ideologie, die een perfecte beschrijving bood van een onafgebroken proces van centrifugale expansie, door Romeinse generaals en intellectuelen overgenomen. Het alomvattende politieke wereldbeeld dat met deze ideologie verbonden was, is terug te vinden in een aantal bronteksten die handelen over de campagnes die door de troepen van Pompeius in het oosten werden uitgevochten. Vanaf de Augusteïsche periode werd 'wereldheerschappij' een prominent thema in de politieke ideologie van het Principaat.

Aan de andere kant van Eurazië ontwikkelden zich andersoortige wereldbeelden. In de bronnen betreffende de periode voorafgaande aan de vestiging van het eerste keizerrijk door Qin Shi Huang (221 v. Chr.) vinden wij

niet alleen de gedachte dat de wereld uit een centrum en vier daaromheen gelegen gebieden bestaat, maar ook een conceptie volgens welke de wereld is opgebouwd uit vijf concentrische zones waarvan de middelste zone het hoogste niveau van beschaving vertegenwoordigt. Laatstgenoemde visie kon goed worden gecombineerd met de primair culturele notie van Chinese identiteit die zich tijdens de late Periode van Lente en Herfst en de periode van de Strijdende Staten tot ontwikkeling kwam. Ongeveer in dezelfde periode accentueerde de opkomst van pastorale samenlevingen in de uitgestrekte grasvlakten ten noorden van de centrale vlakten van China de scheidslijn tussen de Chinese en niet-Chinese wereld. Deze ontwikkelingen droegen in belangrijke mate bij aan het ontstaan van een relatief gesloten en exclusief wereldbeeld.

Deze analyse wordt ondersteund door een vergelijking tussen de *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* en de Stele Inscripties van *Qin Shi Huang*. In de *Res Gestae* claimt Augustus dat dankzij zijn inspanningen de Romeinse opperheerschappij zich uitstrekt over de gehele *orbis terrarum*. In de Stele Inscripties van Qin Shi Huang claimt de eerste Chinese keizer de heerschappij over de *tianxia*, d.w.z. over 'alles wat zich onder de Hemel bevindt'. De gelijkenis tussen deze formuleringen is echter misleidend. Een nauwkeurige bestudering laat zien dat de Romeinse conceptie van heerschappij over de *orbis terrarum* nauw verbonden was met de ideologie van het *imperium sine fine* ('onbegrensde heerschappij'), terwijl de Chinese term *tianxia* in bijna alle gevallen verwijst naar de Chinese wereld met uitsluiting van de woongebieden van de niet-Chinese barbaren.

In de hoofdstukken 3 en 4 wordt nagegaan in hoeverre de verschillende concepties van 'wereldheerschappij' die wij in het vroege Romeinse Keizerrijk en in Qin en Han China aantreffen, corresponderen met verschillen in de feitelijke militaire politiek van beide rijken. In het geval van het Romeinse rijk verschilden de militaire situatie en de militaire politiek van gebied tot gebied. Niettemin biedt een veelheid van literair en archeologisch bronnenmateriaal steun aan de conclusie dat er gedurende de eerste en tweede eeuw n. Chr. niet zoiets bestond als een duidelijke scheidslijn die de grens tussen Romeinse en niet-Romeinse gebieden markeerde. Zo bezien kan het Romeinse rijk inderdaad als een *imperium sine fine* worden gekarakteriseerd. Aan de andere kant leidden de geleidelijke annexatie van steeds meer omliggende cliënt-staten en de aanleg van steeds meer militaire installaties langs een aantal grote rivieren en langs andere natuurlijke grenzen er toe dat de grenzen van het rijk langzamerhand steeds zichtbaarder werden en een grotere samenhang gingen vertonen. Dit gebeurde vooral vanaf het einde van de Flavische periode. Deze ontwikkeling lijkt een

stimulans te hebben gevormd voor de formulering van een meer gesloten wereldbeeld waarin een scherper onderscheid werd gemaakt tussen de beschaafde Romeinse wereld die beschermd werd door de militaire installaties aan de grenzen, en de barbaarse wereld daarbuiten. Wel moet worden benadrukt dat dit nieuwe wereldbeeld de alomvattende conceptie van de Augusteïsche periode nooit heeft verdrongen. Veeleer bestonden het oude en nieuwe wereldbeeld naast elkaar. Een zelfde soort van continuïteit zien wij waar het gaat om de militaire politiek. Tot het einde van de regeringsperiode van Septimius Severus bleven Romeinse legers met agressieve bedoelingen de Rijn, de Donau en de Eufraat oversteken.

Gedurende de eerste 70 jaar van de Westelijke Han-dynastie volgden de Chinese keizers een totaal militaire politiek dan het merendeel van hun Romeinse tegenhangers. Vergeleken met de meeste Romeinse keizers van het Principaat deden de keizers van de vroege Han-dynastie vrijwel geen pogingen om hun gebied uit te breiden. Een belangrijk deel van de verklaring hiervoor is gelegen in het feit dat het rijk van de Westelijke Han-keizers gedurende de eerste decennia van de tweede eeuw v. Chr. in militair opzicht niet opgewassen was tegen het rijk van de Xiongnu dat op de noordelijke steppen was ontstaan.

Vanaf 129 v. Chr. resulteerden de agressieve militaire campagnes van keizer Wu in een spectaculaire uitbreiding van het Han-rijk. Hierbij werden uiteindelijk zelfs de op grote afstand gelegen Westelijke Gebieden onder controle van de Han-keizer gebracht. Hoewel de militaire politiek van de Han-keizers vanaf dit moment duidelijk van karakter veranderde, zijn er sterke aanwijzingen dat de talrijke veldtochten die op bevel van keizer Wu werden ondernomen, primair ten doel hadden om het kerngebied van het Han-imperium door de onderwerping of verdrijving van de Xiongnu duurzaam te beveiligen. Ook de aanleg van nieuwe versterkingen langs de Gele Rivier en in andere gebieden was hoofdzakelijk bedoeld om de veiligheid van het Han-rijk te vergroten.

In de loop van de eerste twee eeuwen n. Chr. ontstond ook in het Romeinse rijk een uitgebreid systeem van legerkampen, muren, palissaden, greppels en andere militaire installaties. Het staat buiten kijf dat dergelijke installaties een rol speelden bij de verdediging van het rijk tegen barbaarse invallen. In veel gevallen werden zij echter ook gebruikt als springplanken voor verdere veroveringen. Gedurende de gehele eerste en tweede eeuw n. Chr. behielden de Romeinen in alle grensgebieden een militair overwicht op hun tegenstanders. Dit stelde de Romeinse keizers en hun generaals in staat om een

flexibele militaire politiek te voeren waarbij uit een reeks van opties kon worden gekozen. Dit verklaart waarom sommige keizers grootschalige veroveringscampagnes lanceerden, terwijl andere keizers ervoor kozen om slechts te reageren op reële of vermeende dreigingen van de kant van barbaarse stammen.

De laatste twee hoofdstukken handelen over de relatie tussen Romeinse en Chinese keizers en het leger. Bijna vijftig jaar geleden schreef Fergus Millar over de keizers van het Principaat: "the emperor was what the emperor did". Tot op zekere hoogte blijft deze uitspraak juist. Zowel de heersers van het Han-imperium als de keizers van het Principaat moesten een reeks van rollen spelen om hun macht en gezag effectief te etaleren en te affirmeren. Met andere woorden, de macht van de Chinese en Romeinse keizers was zeker niet louter 'symbolisch'. Decennia lang hebben oudhistorici gedebatteerd over de vraag of de Romeinse keizer op bestuurlijk en militair gebied een actieve rol speelden of voornamelijk reageerden op verzoekschriften die door hun onderdanen werden ingediend. Millar heeft er terecht op gewezen dat de keizers van het Principaat en hun adviseurs niet de beschikking hadden over betrouwbare geografische en etnografische kennis over de randgebieden van het Romeinse rijk. Dit maakte het vrijwel ondoenlijk om snel en adequaat te reageren op ontwikkelingen aan de periferie van het rijk. Aan de andere kant zou het verkeerd zijn om hieruit de conclusie te trekken dat Romeinse keizers nooit een goed doordachte en consistente militaire politiek ontwikkelden. In dit verband blijft Max Webers observatie dat de rollen die machthebbers moeten spelen, voor een groot deel door de verwachtingen van hun onderdanen worden bepaald, van belang. Tijdens het Principaat werd van alle keizers verwacht dat zij de rol van *imperator* speelden, of zij het nu wilden of niet. Kortom, het was vrijwel onmogelijk voor deze keizers om zich te onttrekken aan de maatschappelijke en culturele verwachting dat zij militaire roem zouden vergaren, bij voorkeur als bevelhebbers die hun legers persoonlijk aanvoerden.

De maatschappelijke en culturele verwachting ten aanzien van de keizers van de Westelijke Han-dynastie waren totaal anders. Van deze keizers werd niet verwacht dat zij enige militaire rol zouden spelen, althans nadat de beslissing om een bepaalde oorlog te beginnen genomen was. Al vanaf de vroege Periode van de Strijdende Staten hadden Chinese heersers zich van het krijgsbedrijf gedistantieerd. In de Stele Inscripties refereert Qin Shi Huang uitvoerig aan de succesvolle wijze waarop hij de *tianxia* met behulp van zijn martiale deugden (*wude* 武德) had weten te verenigen, maar in geen enkel literair traktaat en in

geen enkele uiting van beeldende kunst verschijnt hij als militair bevelhebber. In dit opzicht verschilt de zelfpresentatie van de eerste Chinese keizer opvallend van die van Augustus. Ook een vergelijking tussen keizer Trajanus en keizer Wu is instructief. Beide keizers zijn meer dan eens gekarakteriseerd als de meest oorlogszuchtige keizers van het Principaat en de Westelijke Han-periode. Beide keizers beroemden zich op de enorme gebiedsuitbreidingen die door hun agressieve militaire politiek tot stand kwamen. Maar waar Trajanus er een eer in stelde om zich als een actieve en effectieve militaire bevelhebber te presenteren, bestaat er geen enkele aanwijzing dat keizer Wu ooit het bevel over een leger te velde op zich nam.

Zowel het Romeinse als het Chinese keizerrijk werden gecreëerd doordat de eerste keizer zijn tegenstanders met militaire middelen wist uit te schakelen. Toch berustten het gezag van de Chinese keizer en de legitimiteit van de Han-dynastie nooit in belangrijke mate op de militaire kwaliteiten van de keizer of andere leden van het keizerlijk huis. In plaats daarvan stoelde de legitimiteit van de Han-keizers primair op de superieure morele kwaliteiten die hem werden toegedicht alsmede op de claim dat zijn heerschappij berustte op een Hemels Mandaat. Deze ideologische concepties werden verder ontwikkeld toen, na de dood van keizer Wu, Confuciaanse ideeën over het keizerschap een steeds grotere rol in hofkringen begonnen te spelen. Volgens de aanhangers van dit gedachtegoed kon de keizer door het bestuderen van de klassieke geschriften dezelfde morele kwaliteiten en hetzelfde superieure intellect ontwikkelen als de wijze koningen uit vroegere tijden. Vervolgens zouden zijn deugden niet alleen bekend worden in de gehele *tianxia* in het gebied binnen de vier zeeën (*hainei*), maar ook in de woongebieden van de barbaren en zelfs onder de vogels en de landdieren. Op deze manier zou uiteindelijke de universele heerschappij over de *tianxia* (alles wat zich onder de hemel bevindt) in letterlijke zin worden bereikt. In de praktijk betekende dit dat de heerser, zodra zijn hegemonie met militaire middelen was veiliggesteld, alle militaire expedities diende te staken om zich volledige op de morele perfectionering van de bewoners van de *tianxia* binnen de vier zeeën te kunnen toeleggen.

De uitkomsten van het in dit proefschrift uitgevoerde onderzoek laten zien dat het ideaal van 'wereldheerschappij' dat in de bronnen betreffende de Westelijke Han-dynastie wordt aangetroffen, in de meeste gevallen een geheel andere betekenis had dan het Romeinse concept van het *imperium sine fine*. Het verschil tussen deze concepties correspondeert met een verschil in opvatting over keizerlijke rollen en deugden. Hoewel ook van Romeinse keizers werd

verwacht dat zij door feitelijk gedrag aantoonden over een reeks van niet-militaire deugden, waaronder *aequitas* en *liberalitas*, te beschikken, bleef gedurende het gehele Principaat de militaire *virtus* een belangrijke onderdeel van het keizerlijke deugdenpakket. Tegelijkertijd bleef militair succes een cruciaal vereiste voor de legitimiteit van de Romeinse heersers.

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