

and script, more care could have been taken in discussing: a) the significance; and b) the regional distribution of these findings. If, for example, a Chu regional phenomenon finds antecedent in a number of Western Zhou bronzes, and finds structurally similar parallels in another regional script, both the relative weight in the distribution of this phenomenon and the regional distribution of the earlier evidence need to be clearly accounted for before one can make claims on regional specificity or the absence thereof. Part of this problem resides in the primary assumption that the *Shi Zhou Pian* 史籀篇, purportedly written by Scribe Zhou in the ninth century BCE as primer of graphic forms, “was transmitted largely in its original style down to the Warring States period” (p. 22) and that this is confirmed through excavated evidence. If the work (and its supposed influence on the script) existed at all, there is the very real possibility that it was compiled much later (say Warring States through Han) from the same material that is supposed to prove its early existence. A discussion engaging more with existing literature could have mitigated or nuanced some of these problems. Nonetheless, the criteria advanced in the book to judge the regional specificity of a given graph provide a helpful method, and when read alongside existing scholarship, the book provides a valuable companion to complement the discussion on variation and regionalism in early Chinese script and phonology.

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JUSTIN M. JACOBS:

Xinjiang and the Modern Chinese State.

(Studies on Ethnic Groups in China.) xvi, 297 pp. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016. \$50. ISBN 978 0 29599 565 6. doi:10.1017/S0041977X17000337

Focusing on Xinjiang, today one of the most notoriously restive regions of the People’s Republic of China, Justin Jacobs’ book contributes to the growing body of historical work on the region. Unlike most recent additions to the scholarship, which have been devoted to the Manchu era, Jacobs’ book takes a fresh look at the region’s history during the republican period, using published as well as archival sources. The result is a longitudinal study of the strategies employed by the power-holders of three consecutive Chinese political formations (late imperial, republican and early socialist) to deal with internal diversity on China’s western borderlands. Analyses of the manipulations of ethnic difference by various actors and interest groups inside and outside Xinjiang are framed by the author’s insistence on paying equal attention to what Han officials said and did, rather than focusing solely on their abstract political discourses. Building on the insights of recent scholarship on other Eurasian continental empires, and taking his cue from scholars of “the new Qing history”, Jacobs convincingly demonstrates the ways in which modern China resembled (but also differed from) its imperial predecessor. Painstakingly avoiding negatively connoted terms such as imperialist or colonialist, he coins the term “national empire” to characterize modern China. Through a well-constructed narrative privileging the perspective of Han officials serving in Xinjiang, readers are introduced to the perpetuation of well-tested imperial strategies employed and pragmatically adjusted to new realities in face of the threat emanating from both Han and non-Han nationalisms and from Soviet political designs. Characterized

by a heavy reliance on published Chinese materials, augmented by archival sources from both China and Russia, the unfolding regional history of Xinjiang simultaneously doubles as a narrative of the emergence of modern China.

Chapter 1 introduces the imperial tools of governance developed in the late Qing era, to which Han officials during the republican period could also resort in their efforts to manage diversity. These included territorial accommodation, the co-optation of dependent intermediaries between alien rulers and the subject population, the introduction of the idea of a supranational civic identity, strategies to deflect ethnic tension and, last but not least, narratives of legitimation.

Chapter 2 examines how Governor Yang Zengxin chose to deal with the nationalist threat emerging in Xinjiang in the wake of the collapse of the Chinese and the Russian Empires. Convinced that he alone could deal with the difficult situation, Yang familiarized himself with socialist ideology. He resorted to strategies of difference taken from the high Qing era, combining them creatively with new methods borrowed from the Russian imperial repertoire. Simultaneously he made every effort to keep Xinjiang free of nationalist currents. The chapter closes with a narrative of Yang's successor, Jin Shuren's rule. With his aggressive integrationist stance, reminiscent of late Qing attitudes, Jin not only changed the course of Yang's policies, but also prepared the ground for the inevitable ethnonationalist backlash from the region's non-Han populations.

Chapter 3 focuses on the rise of these ethnopopulist forces in Xinjiang under the governorship of Sheng Shicai. Like his immediate predecessors, Sheng was preoccupied with countering influences emanating from the Soviet Union rather than from Beijing. The co-optation of leading ethnonationalists from among the ranks of non-Han peoples and affirmative action policies inspired by the Soviet model were soon followed by the elimination of traditional local leaders, a strategy possibly borrowed from Stalin. Jacobs' observation that Sheng did not favour the Han over non-Han peoples but had no choice but to staff his administration with Chinese communists following the marginalization of the traditional non-Han elite is a novel representation of the situation from the Han governor's perspective. The almost apologetic tone is mitigated in the closing section of the chapter, which does some justice to the workings of indigenous agency.

Chapter 4 focuses on the struggle between the Soviets and Chinese nationalists, epitomized by the Ili rebellion. Evidence drawn from both Chinese and Soviet archives substantiates earlier claims that from beginning to end the rebellion was the result of Soviet scheming, intervention and manipulation. Throughout the 1930s and 40s the Soviets exploited the Han crisis of political legitimacy in Xinjiang, using affirmative action policies as an attractive alternative, to which the Chinese nationalists responded by "raising the stakes of ethnopolitical patronage".

Chapter 5 shows how the new powerholders, the Chinese communists, ostensibly continued to honour indigenous cultural autonomy, a hollow concept since power granted to non-Han ethnonationalists remained symbolic and free of any tangible substance. Jacobs argues that, in contrast to the nationalists, whose political legitimacy was considerably weakened due to their responsibility for the warlord period, the Chinese communists could argue from a position of strength. This enabled them to make fewer concessions to non-Han ethnonationalist demands, a fact masked by a more generous, progressive discourse. The nationalists' more chauvinistic discursive strategies were accompanied by more progressive policies, enabling the rise of some non-Han leaders to real political prominence. A tangible illustration of communist integrationist strategies was the institutionalization of the *bingtuan*, which the author evaluates as a fulfilment of Qing imperial economic and political

aspirations in Xinjiang. A rare example of what happened on the shopfloor of an Urumchi factory in the 1950s serves to demonstrate the Chinese adaptation of Soviet nationality policies on the ground, which privileged affirmative action on the discursive level but subordinated it to higher goals such as economic advancement in practice. The concluding chapter asks why Uyghur exiles failed to create a credible narrative of ethnopolitical legitimacy and looks for answers in the divided nature of the exile community and the nationalists' efforts in Taiwan to defend Chinese rule over Xinjiang.

Teasing out continuities and changes in Han ethnopolitical engineering in Xinjiang during the republican period, Justin Jacobs offers a well-researched and highly readable exploration of how Han governors managed to hold on to Xinjiang during the breakdown of central authority in China. Thanks to its factual richness and analytical power, this work makes an important contribution to Xinjiang's modern history and to the history of Chinese nation-building.

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MINJIE CHEN:

The Sino-Japanese War and Youth Literature: Friends and Foes on the Battlefield.

(Routledge Studies in Education and Society in Asia.) xiv, 226 pp.

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This book is a fascinating account of the ways in which literature aimed at young Chinese and Americans have presented (and re-presented) the events of the Sino-Japanese War (1937 to 1945) over a seven-decade span and, in turn, impacted on the formation of collective memory. It also offers an insight into the role of family narratives, thus taking us into a new, and much-needed, realm of the study of family oral history as a source of information about the war to which children have been exposed.

The book begins with an overview of the history of youth literature in China from the late Qing to the present day, before focussing on one particular genre – pictorial reading materials or *lian huan hua* – which were most popular from the early 1900s to the mid-1980s amongst young and teenage Chinese readers. The second chapter explains the methodology of the study, specifically textual and visual analysis of many hundreds of *lian huan hua* as well as the more text-heavy books pitched at juvenile readers, and then neatly sets out the key writers and core themes of the literature itself. The third chapter delves into a thematic analysis of the texts spanning a seventy-year period, which allows for an insightful account of the ways in which certain themes have ebbed and flowed over the years as the political environment has changed, and official narratives about the war have shifted. The analysis focuses on the portrayals of combat, violence, class and partisan membership and the author deftly demonstrates how the stories presented in children's books were often the result of a delicate balancing-act by the story-tellers between, on the one hand, the need to adhere to the “master narrative” as dictated by the Communist Party and, on the other, the desire to recount the experiences of forgotten victims of Japan's war crimes.