court intrigues, on the various military campaigns against the Later Liang, the Hebei garrisons, the Kitan state of the northeast, and the Shu kingdom in the southwest, and on the relationships between Li Cunxu and his family members, key subordinates, and other potentates. Davis is at his best adumbrating the character and personal foibles of his subject. The son of a Turkic chieftain and a Han mother, Li Cunxu was both a redoubtable warrior and a participant in Chinese literary culture—much like the great Tang Taizong, whom he appears to have regarded as a model. Yet he also had an unconventional side. He enjoyed the company of actors and musicians, pursued homosexual liaisons with some of them, and appointed others to office—including the same sorts of military supervisory positions that had usually been held by eunuchs during the ninth century. According to some sources, "this monarch of unruly passions" was cremated on a pyre of musical instruments (p. 194). Davis also does a fine job of tracing the influence of the women in Li Cunxu's life, including his birth mother Consort Cao, his father's primary wife Woman Liu (surprisingly, the two ladies had a very close friendship), and his own scheming Empress Liu.

What this book does not offer is a central, overarching argument, nor does it stray very far from the doings of the ruling elites to consider the social, economic, and institutional trends of the time. Nevertheless, there are a number of themes that keep resurfacing in the course of Davis's narrative. One is the tension between steppe and sedentary ways, with hints of modern academic debates over sinicization and ethnicity looming in the background. Another, a continuing pattern from the eighth and ninth centuries, is the unruly behavior of the professional (or mercenary) soldiery, keenly aware of their corporate interests and always capable of striking out violently in defense of pay and privileges. Even more intriguing is the Later Tang regime's stance of identifying itself as the legitimate continuation of the earlier Tang dynasty and its penchant for harking back to Tang precedents, despite a marked lack of enthusiasm for seeking out actual heirs of the original Li bloodline. Unfortunately, Davis does not call attention to these themes in the book's introduction and conclusion, leaving it to his readers to pick them out for themselves.

Despite this shortcoming, *Fire and Ice* still provides an intricate and fascinating picture of politics, war, and court intrigue during a pivotal phase of Chinese history. It is an important addition to the literature on the Five Dynasties, and it will surely enjoy a long reign as the definitive study of this monarch who rose through war ("fire") and then fell victim to rejection ("ice").

Women in Imperial China, by Bret Hinsch. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016. xxv + 255 pp. $94.11 (cloth), $37.70 (paper), $29.59 (eTextbook).

Reviewed by Paul S. Ropp, Clark University (propp@clarku.edu)
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Bret Hinsch has written a compact and lively survey of the history of women in China from earliest times to the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Hinsch draws on a wide

range of sources in Chinese and English as well as a few in Japanese and French, to produce an engaging narrative in 208 pages (with an impressive 30-page bibliography) that should be a welcome addition to courses on Chinese history and gender studies.

In chapter one, "Ancient Beginnings," Hinsch traces the early evolution of Chinese patriarchy, noting the clear divisions of labor and increased social stratification in general, and gender stratification in particular, by the late Neolithic. Elaborate elite (royal) burials in the Shang and the early written oracle bone records reveal some powerful women, such as the wife of Shang King Wu Ding, Fu Hao, who led troops into battle and had an elaborate tomb filled with bronzes, jades, ivory, and shell ornaments, as well as the remains of sixteen human sacrifices. From oracle bone inscriptions it is also clear that patriarchy was well established in Shang times. Kings were polygynous and multiple wives helped insure the birth of multiple sons.

In the Zhou period, women no longer participated in warfare, and a woman's status depended almost entirely on the status of her father and her husband. The Zhou elite practiced surname exogamy—people of the same surname could not marry. Marriage was the primary means of building alliances between powerful families, and elite women maintained close relations with their natal families after marriage. Zhou ritualists emphasized the subordination of women to their parents (father), to their husbands, and, in widowhood, to their adult sons. Yet women were also often praised for their moral guidance of their children and sometimes also their husbands. "Many early ethical ideals developed as ways to limit the potential harm that female sexuality posed. Ritualists promoted rules intended to separate women from men, restrain female sexuality, bolster male interests, and uphold the patrilineal family" (21).

In chapter two, "Womanhood under the Empire," Hinsch argues that women enjoyed more rights in the Han era than in many later periods. They could own property, and widows could become de facto heads of households. A growing emphasis on filial piety gave mothers considerable power and influence over their sons, notwithstanding the Confucian teachings on the "three bonds" (*san-cong* 三從). Empress Dowager Lü 呂 (241–180 BCE), effectively seized control of the throne after the death of her husband, the Han founder, Han Gaozu 漢高祖. Despite the effectiveness of her rule in helping stabilize the new empire, subsequent historians tended to demonize her as the negative example which proved the necessity to keep palace women out of politics and public policy.

Three Han authors had a major impact on gender relations in subsequent eras. Sima Qian 司馬遷, the Grand Historian, tended to blame power-hungry women for the fall of the Zhou dynasty. Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) compiled *Biographies of Women* (*Lienü zhuan* 列女傳), "the most influential Chinese book about women ever written" (44), with the didactic purpose of praising virtuous daughters, wives and mothers, and condemning seductive and power-hungry shrews who sowed chaos and destroyed dynasties. Subsequent dynastic histories emulated Liu Xiang's didactic biographies, and began to place a premium on chastity as the ultimate virtue for women, a trend that grew especially in the Ming and Qing eras.

The third Han author of importance was Ban Zhao 班昭 (45–ca. 116 CE), who finished her brother's monumental *Records of the Han* (*Han-shu* 漢書), and wrote *Admonitions for Women* (*Nüjie* 女誡), "the first surviving Chinese book aimed specifically at a female readership" (51). Though Ban Zhao is often condemned by modern Chinese historians for reinforcing female subordination, Hinsch rightly points out that she was effectively

proposing survival strategies for women in a male-dominated world, showing new brides how to win allies and thrive in their husbands' households. This too set a pattern followed by many subsequent writers of instructions for women.

In chapter three on "the early medieval era," Hinsch traces the impact of the north–south division on the lives of women. Nomadic domination and intermarriage in the north gave women more freedom to be active outside the home, as nomadic women rode horseback, mingled with non-family members, and even conducted government business. The nomadic practice of the levirate guaranteed widows the right to remarry. Confucian norms prevailed more in the south, but even in the south, literary writing featured more emotionally expressive and physically beautiful women, literary talent came to be more highly valued in women, and the rise of Buddhism and religious Daoism gave women spiritual outlets not previously available. Buddhist nuns could study with eminent teachers, travel on religious pilgrimages, and find safe refuge in times of war and banditry.

As in earlier times, elite families used marriage to build social and economic networks, and the value of dowries and betrothal gifts increased, sometimes "turning a wedding into a blatant financial transaction" (71). The nomadic Xianbei tribe that founded the Northern Wei Dynasty practiced monogamy, and that ideal inspired some Chinese women to become more vocal in complaining about their husbands taking concubines and visiting prostitutes. Some families began to place a premium on women's literacy as an asset in prospective brides. Literate mothers could provide a head-start education for their sons (and daughters).

In chapter four, "An Era of Effervescence," Hinsch highlights the relative freedom of women in the Tang era, when women were often active outside the home, and under the influence of nomadic cultures, "could even engage in athletic pastimes such as ball games, horseback riding, archery, and hunting" (87). In the early Tang, especially, women were relatively free of the Confucian ritual constraints imposed on women both before and after the Tang. Widow remarriage was common, and Buddhist convents and Daoist temples provided refuge for many widows. In urban entertainment centers, elite men patronized artistically talented courtesans which produced a great deal of love poetry, and produced a new model of male–female relations built on shared literary, intellectual and artistic interests.

Hinsch recounts the rise and eventual rule of Wu Zetian 武则天as Empress Wu, and notes the important Confucian backlash that resulted in strong Confucian warnings against the involvement of women in politics. Hinsch notes the An Lushan Rebellion as a turning point in the dynasty, but surprisingly does not mention a key factor leading to the rebellion, Emperor Xuanzong's 玄宗 infatuation with his consort Yang Guifei 楊貴妃. In subsequent eras, Confucian historians cited Yang Guifei and Empress Wu equally as negative examples, to reinforce the idea that women should be confined to the domestic sphere and kept entirely out of the political realm.

In chapter five, Hinsch calls the Song era "The Great Transition," in reference to the reaction against Tang cosmopolitanism, the reassertion of Confucian orthodoxy, and the return to more restrictive attitudes toward women's roles in society. However, women's literacy grew in importance in the Song, with the rise of competitive civil service examinations which made education central to the establishment or maintenance of elite status. The memory of Empress Wu, and the growing power of the Confucian bureaucracy

confined Song empresses to the political sidelines. With the demise of the Tang aristocracy, wealth trumped ancestry in arranged marriages, and families provided daughters with lavish dowries to make marriage alliances with prominent families.

Hinsch rightly cautions against our seeing the Song only in terms of a Neo-Confucian crackdown on the rights of women. There were many different strands of Song Confucianism, and no one strand dominated in Song times. Although Hinsch devotes only two pages to the Mongol conquest and its impact, he notes, appropriately, that the Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongol threats to the Song all helped shape Chinese attitudes toward gender roles, as Chinese writers saw the relative freedom of women in nomadic cultures as evidence of Chinese superiority.

In his last two chapters, on the Ming and Qing, respectively, Hinsch sees these dynasties as perhaps the most restrictive on women in all of Chinese history. In both the Ming and Qing, footbinding grew in popularity, seclusion of women became more widespread, and widow chastity and widow suicide grew into a veritable cult. Drawing on the scholarship of Dorothy Ko and Susan Mann, among others, Hinsch also notes the growing literacy of women in the late imperial era, and the growing importance of women's social networks among the literate elite. Increased female literacy helped facilitate the rise of companionate marriages, and helped spread the Neo-Confucian teachings that emphasized wifely obedience of women to fathers, husbands, and (eventually) sons, and that valorized widow chastity as the ultimate feminine ideal.

A flourishing courtesan culture in the late Ming gave way to a more puritanical outlook in the Qing, as Manchu rulers demonstrated their loyalty to Chinese culture by promoting the Song Neo-Confucian interpretations of Zhu Xi 朱熹. But late Ming courtesan culture also gave Ming loyalists a way to express their feelings in terms of nostalgia for Ming courtesans. (In this regard Hinsch might have mentioned the moral fortitude of the famous courtesan poet Liu Rushi 柳如是, who unsuccessfully urged her master, Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, to commit suicide rather than serve the Qing.)

In the Qing period, the government installed a system of honors for chaste widows, and as women's literacy expanded, Confucians produced more and more didactic works for women. By the late nineteenth century, local histories were filled with accounts of widow suicide. Many marginalized males came to identify with women, and to celebrate androgynous qualities, such as sensitive men with rich emotional lives and strong women with great moral courage.

The foreign invasions and domestic upheavals of the nineteenth century subjected Chinese women to the perils of war and famine. Western missionaries introduced schools for women only, led campaigns against footbinding, and criticized arranged marriages and concubinage. And as the Qing dynasty headed toward collapse, some in the Chinese elite turned against many traditional beliefs and practices, footbinding being a prime example, and called for the abandonment of Confucian ideals for more egalitarian Western ones. In this regard, Hinsch might have mentioned the late Qing revolutionary Qiu Jin 秋瑾 whose martyrdom in 1909 was to inspire more revolutionaries in the coming decades.

In a brief conclusion, Hinsch notes that recent scholarship on Chinese women has emphasized the agency of women in China, albeit an agency within the constraints of the traditional Chinese family system. It is a difficult task to satisfy every taste in this kind of survey. I might have liked a little more attention to novels and poetry, and to

men who criticized the treatment of women in the Ming and Qing eras. But Hinsch has successfully synthesized a great deal of Western and Chinese scholarship to produce a compact, readable and engaging survey of a vast topic. It is a welcome addition to the field and should have wide use in courses on Chinese history and society, and on Chinese and comparative women's history.

Building New China, Colonizing Kokonor: Resettlement to Qinghai in the 1950s. By Gregory Rohlf. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2016. 308 pp. $95.00, £65.00 (cloth), $48.99, £32.95 (paper), $46.50, £31.95 (ebook).

Reviewed by Justin M. Jacobs, American University (jjacobs@american.edu)
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Compared to Tibet and Xinjiang, its larger and more famous neighbors, Qinghai has been relatively neglected in the scholarly literature of modern China. With its mix of Tibetan, Hui, Mongol, Han, and other ethnic groups, lack of international borders or other distinctive geographical features, and comparatively recent administrative birth, Qinghai struggles to attract in-depth studies of its modern history. Gregory Rohlf's new monograph aims to change that. Combining oral interviews with a careful canvassing of early PRC-era bureaucratic documents, Rohlf presents a detailed study of efforts by the early Communist state to relocate migrants from the overcrowded inner provinces to the unforgiving plateaus of Qinghai.

The result is the first systematic attempt to provide a ground-level view of socialist construction policies in Qinghai during the first decade of the Mao years. In Rohlf's telling, these policies were largely a failure, born of overly optimistic and heavy-handed attempts to bend the fragile mixed-use ecosystems of Qinghai to intensive sedentary agriculture. Most migrants found life on such settlements hard and full of unexpected privations, a far cry from the endless bounty of virgin soil promised them in the inner provinces. And yet misguided attempts by the state to force productive agriculture onto nomadic pastures and other lands ill suited to its application resulted in both very real human suffering—documented in numerous interviews conducted by the author—and long-term damage to the ecosystem, which is today still struggling to recover from the Maoist assault on the fragile natural environment of Qinghai.

Rohlf's monograph is full of rich detail and reveals the texture of many individual lives that were transformed through the turbulent process of resettlement in the early Mao years. These rare and valuable portraits, however, too often fail to penetrate beyond the surface of official media reports, *neibu* Party documents, and the vagaries of historical memory. Unlike many of the most stimulating and illuminating scholarly treatments of the Mao years to be published over the past decade, *Building New China, Colonizing Kokonor* does not draw upon archival material—published or unpublished—to narrate its story. The source base for Rohlf's monograph is very much the same as that which was available to scholars in the 1980s and 90s, a fact that makes this otherwise interesting