

imagined, but *built*" (p. 11, original emphasis). While English-medium education is a noteworthy aspect accentuated in Lewis' book, she successfully avoids overstating the agency of 'Westernised' schooling by focusing on the role of Asians in shaping the educational system, for example as teachers, scholars, and literati educated in Asia as well as in the "West" (p. 182).

The use of terminology is one of the very few shortcomings of this book. The term "modern", for example, is not explicitly defined and employed rather inconsistently, e.g. referring to self-descriptions as "modern" (p. 247), "modern Asian cities" (p. 23), "colonial modernity" (p. 151) or a "modern, liberal society" (ibid.), in all of which cases the term modern bears different notions. Similarly, while a variety of examples are given for the concept of cosmopolitanism, the author's definition is not clearly applied in all cases. Nevertheless, this book is a solid contribution to the study of port cities and the history of Southeast Asia. Especially through what Lewis calls "acts of post-colonial forgetting" (p. 3), in which national narratives centre on ethnics, the study of ports provides alternative narratives of the past, which is demonstrated vividly in this book. Instead of a nation-based history, that even manifests in the way the index to the book is organized, her argument follows a comparative approach, focussing on "urban intellectual formation" (p. 21), connections, and networks. Additionally, the inclusion of Bangkok as a non-colonial example enables Lewis to expand her argument of the cosmopolitan port city beyond the colonial and post-colonial framework.

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EAST ASIA

YURI PINES:

Shang Yang, The Book of Lord Shang: Apologetics of State Power in Early China.

(Translations from the Asian Classics.) viii, 351 pp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017. \$60. ISBN 978 0 23117988 1. doi:10.1017/S0041977X18000915

Throughout the last two decades, Yuri Pines has enriched the early China field with a constant stream of important publications on the history of thought and politics. After a number of articles on the Qin, and on the Legalist classic *Book of Lord Shang*, he has now published a fine translation and study of this work, which sets out principles germane to the formation of the early imperial political system. Reflecting the fierce interstate competition leading up to the unification of the realm under the First Emperor, the statecraft of Shang Yang, the Lord of Shang, helped to set Qin on a path to ruthless efficiency, promoting a twin focus on food production and the strengthening of the military as well as the thorough mobilization and bureaucratic control of the population.

Compared to the later writings of the great systematizer of Legalist thought, Han Fei, the work attributed to Shang Yang has attracted less attention, possibly because its "blatant and provocative style" (p. vii), its "alienating rhetoric" (p. 90), and Shang Yang's "perceived immorality" (p. 100) were shunned as an embarrassment by those appealing to more refined sensibilities; perhaps because of the *Book's* limited

intellectual versatility; or because parts of it pose textual and interpretive problems so serious as to raise fundamental doubts about its authenticity. Many of the philological issues have been expertly addressed by scholars in Taiwan, China, and Japan since Duyvendak published the first English translation in 1928 (there are now French, Russian, German, and Japanese versions as well). Multiple discoveries of large caches of early imperial legal and administrative documents since the 1920s have vastly increased the number of first-hand sources recording the actual workings of bureaucratic institutions at the time, and these can be fruitfully compared to the recommendations of the *Book*. The expanded base of available source materials has, moreover, ushered in a mildly revisionist re-examination of Qin history among Western scholars, in which Pines himself has played a prominent role. In all, then, this is a propitious moment to publish a new translation of the *Book*. Pines is uniquely well placed to provide it, and he has lived up to the task.

The “Introduction” (pp. 1–114) offers information on the historical background, transmission, dating, and reception of the *Book*. Here as well as in the briefer chapter prefaces, Pines sums up the state of the field with regard to the likely dates of individual chapters as well as the internal structure and thought of the *Book* as a whole. The translation is accompanied by a meticulous annotation – somewhat impractically relegated to the back of the volume – which discusses points of doubt and refers, whenever necessary, to different editions and commentaries. Occasionally one might take issue with individual translation choices, and in this reviewer’s opinion, comparisons with Duyvendak’s rendering will not always be unfavourable to the latter. But minor quibbles are unavoidable in a work of this length and complexity, and Pines’s translation is, on the whole, clear and accurate; his interpretive decisions are well documented, cautiously argued, and rely on scholarship far superior to that available to Duyvendak in his day.

Readers only peripherally interested in philological niceties but eager to find out about the place of the *Book* within the broader sweep of ancient thought will have good reason to consider the “Introduction” as well as the chapter prefaces valuable contributions in their own right. Pines outlines the *Book*’s view of social evolution and state formation, and of human nature as invariably predisposed towards the unremitting pursuit of self-interest. This provides the Archimedean point enabling comprehensive control of the populace through rewards and punishments. In fact, it is this predisposition which turns the government of the people into a tractable problem in the first place.

Reading through the *Book*, one feels all too easily overwhelmed by the reductionist bleakness of the carrot-and-stick approach which is relentlessly promoted to enhance state power as an end in itself. But, as Pines shows, there is potential relief from the all-pervasive oppressiveness in the form of the idea, likewise found in *Han Fei zi*, that harsh laws will induce people to internalize the rules of acceptable conduct and eventually make punishment superfluous. On some level, this suggests an acknowledgement of ethical imperatives in politics, a recognition of the hope that states should achieve more than merely acting as mechanisms converting manpower and resources into military prowess, though sceptical readers might suspect, nodding their head in agreement with James C. Scott’s recent *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2017), that this is but another ideological ruse to sugar coat the domestication of human beings in the service of their thorough exploitation by extractive political organizations.

This is, ultimately, also suggested by the *Book*’s emphasis on total mobilization, insightfully discussed by Pines. From the registration of all subjects in military-style units liable to collective punishment, down to the enlisting of women and the elderly in the defence of cities, the *Book* persistently promotes the view that successful

government consists in the calculated and systematic utilization of the military and productive capacities of the population.

It is to be hoped that Yuri Pines's valuable translation, textual study, historical contextualization, and philosophical elucidation of this important but, somewhat inexplicably, neglected work of ancient Chinese political thought will rekindle scholarly interest in the intellectual architect of the Qin unification and in the impact of his thought during the early imperial era and beyond.

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CHRISTOPHER C. RAND:

Military Thought in Early China.

viii, 233 pp. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017.

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The important role of military writings in the origin and evolution of political and philosophical ideas in early China has not always been given due attention, yet a quick glance at the number of transmitted military texts, together with those that have been unearthed in recent decades by archaeologists, is sufficient to indicate that this is a key category in the intellectual scene of the period. This constant presence of military matters at the heart of early Chinese writing production arises not only from the fact that the authors of these pieces were working on them in a historical context marked by wars and hence it is logical that their works should testify to this dramatic reality but also, in many cases, the reflections on war in this substantial literature are concerned with specifically philosophical (moral, political and even cosmological) issues.

Although there are some exceptional contributions, for example, the seminal work by Mark E. Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (1990), hitherto, anyone wishing to acquire deeper knowledge about the impact of military literature in pre-imperial China's history of ideas has needed to consult a 1977 PhD thesis written by Christopher C. Rand and successfully defended at Harvard University. Now, forty years on, Rand has had the felicitous idea of publishing a study based in good part on the initial work, which is ground-breaking in many respects. Hence, the appearance of his book *Military Thought in Early China* is, by any reckoning, excellent news for all readers who are curious about ancient China, its intellectual history, and the evolution of its institutions and ways of thinking.

The book is organized into five chapters. In the first, headed "The emergence of the Wen/Wu problem", Rand sets himself the task of offering the reader a complete approximation to the different (and sometimes irreconcilable) ways of interpreting the scope and sense of these two fundamental concepts – the civil and the military— from their earliest meanings at the dawn of the Zhou Dynasty, through major changes in the understanding and application of these concepts as writings from the Spring and Autumn period testify, to other answers dating from the Warring States period as the result of an intense debate not exempt from tensions and different viewpoints. The second chapter, titled "The metaphysics of generalship", analyses what Rand understands as one of the philosophically most relevant solutions, which tends to highlight a syncretic integration of the notions