

# THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

Volume 2  
The Six Dynasties, 220–589

Edited by

ALBERT E. DIEN

*Professor Emeritus, Stanford University*

KEITH N. KNAPP

*The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-02077-1 — The Cambridge History of China  
Edited by Albert E. Dien, Keith N. Knapp  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.  
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of  
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107020771](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107020771)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781139107334

© Cambridge University Press 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-107-02077-1 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of  
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication  
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,  
accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>List of Maps</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Six Dynasties Chronology</i>	xviii
Introduction	I
PART I HISTORY	25
1 Wei	27
by RAFF DE CRESPIGNY	
Prologue: The Fall of Han (189)	27
Civil War and the Rise of Cao Cao (190–200)	28
Development of a State (200–208)	32
The Limits of Expansion (208–217)	35
From Kingdom to Empire (216–220)	39
Cao Pi and Cao Rui (220–239)	42
Cao Shuang, Sima Yi, and the Fall of Wei (239–265)	46
2 Wu	50
by RAFF DE CRESPIGNY	
Sun Jian (c. 155–191) and Sun Ce (175–200)	50
Sun Quan and the Kingdom of Wu (200–222)	52
The Empire of Sun Quan (222–252)	57
The Succession to Sun Quan and the Fall of Wu (252–280)	61
3 Shu-Han	66
by J. MICHAEL FARMER	

	The Shu Region in the Late Han	66
	The Reign of Liu Yan and Liu Zhang	67
	Liu Bei's Conquest of Yi Province	68
	The Reign of Liu Bei (214–223)	70
	The Reign of Liu Shan (223–263)	73
4	Western Jin	79
	by DAMIEN CHAUSSENDE	
	The Prehistory of the Jin: The Rise of the Sima Clan under the Wei	79
	The Reign of Emperor Wu (266–290)	84
	The Disturbances of the Eight Princes and the Fall of the Western Jin	92
5	Eastern Jin	96
	by CHARLES HOLCOMBE	
	The Founding of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420)	96
	Émigrés and Natives	98
	Wang Dun's Rebellion	103
	Great-Family Politics	106
	Huan Wen	109
	The Battle of the Fei River	112
	The End of the Eastern Jin	114
	An Evaluation	117
6	The Sixteen Kingdoms	119
	by CHARLES HOLCOMBE	
	The Emerging Threat	119
	The Roads to the Fei River	125
	After the Fei River Encounter	137
7	Cheng-Han State	145
	by TERRY F. KLEEMAN	
8	Northern Wei	155
	by SCOTT PEARCE	
	The Making of a Dynasty	155
	The Making of a Nation	159

CONTENTS	v
Completion of the Conquests	164
Justifying the Realm	168
The Growth of Absolutism	171
The Dynasty's Fall	178
The Shadow of the Tabgāč	182
9 Eastern Wei–Northern Qi by ALBERT E. DIEN	184
Introduction	184
Geography	184
Final Years of the Northern Wei Dynasty	186
The Eastern Wei Dynasty	193
The Northern Qi Dynasty	197
Conclusions	208
10 Western Wei–Northern Zhou by ALBERT E. DIEN	210
11 The Southern Dynasties by ANDREW CHITTICK	237
The Founding Years, 420–453	241
Factional Strife and the End of the Song Dynasty, 453–478	248
Civilian Realignment and Renewed Factionalism under the Qi Dynasty, 478–501	254
The Reign of Liang Emperor Wu, 502–549	259
Collapse, Reconsolidation, and Conquest, 548–589	265
Conclusion	271
PART 2 SOCIETY AND REALIA	273
12 The Art of War by DAVID A. GRAFF	275
Patterns of Conflict	275
Tools and Techniques of War	283
Military Institutions	289
13 Foreign Relations by CHARLES HOLCOMBE	296
The Investiture System	297

vi	CONTENTS	
	The Northeastern Interaction Zone	299
	Southern Sea Lanes	303
	Northwest Passages	305
14	The Northern Economy	309
	by VICTOR CUNRUI XIONG	
	Land Tenure, Taxation, and Corvée Labor	309
	Money	317
	Manufacturing and Trade	319
	Population	323
	Urbanism	326
15	The Southern Economy	330
	by LIU SHUFEN	
	Foreword	330
	The New Émigrés Coming from the North	331
	The Southern Aborigines and the Six Dynasties Regimes	337
	Commerce	346
	Coinage	350
	Conclusion	353
16	Agriculture	355
	by FRANCESCA BRAY	
	The <i>Qimin Yaoshu</i> : The Author and His Art	357
	Best Farming Practice in North China	361
	A Book of Its Time	365
	Estate and Peasant in Northern China	368
	Agriculture in the South	371
17	The History of Sogdians in China	374
	by RONG XINJIANG	
18	Northern Material Culture	384
	by SHING MÜLLER	
	From Gray Pottery to Porcelaneous Stoneware	384
	Lacquer: An Inherited Fascination	390
	Jade, Glass, and Everything Colorful and Glittering	392
	Bronze, Iron, and Other Metals	396
	Paper and Stone: New Media for Writing and Artwork	404

CONTENTS	vii
New Weaves, Gold Weaves, and the “Xianbei” Garb	406
Tents, Roofed Dwellings, and Interiors	410
Particularities in Sepulchral Customs	413
Conclusion	416
19 Southern Material Culture by ANNETTE KIESER	418
Introduction	418
Southern Tombs before the Northern Influx: Wu and Western Jin	419
Southern Tombs after the Northern Influx: Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties	432
Conclusion	441
20 Women, Families, and Gendered Society by JEN-DER LEE	443
Introduction through the Life of a Nun	443
Women in Confucian Family Ethics	446
Aristocratic Wives Defying Marital Hierarchy	447
Maternal Bonds Challenging Patriarchy while Reinforcing Reproduction	449
The Widowed and the Unmarried: Religion as an Alternative	453
Women Rulers as Family Roles	456
Concluding Remarks	458
21 Local Society by HOU XUDONG	460
Introduction	460
Lower-Level Settlements	461
Base-Level Administration of Local Government	463
Composition of Resident Households	466
Activities and Organizations of Commoners	473
PART 3     CULTURE, RELIGION, AND ART	481
22 Confucian Learning and Influence by KEITH N. KNAPP	483
The Influence of Confucianism	484
Classical Learning	485

	Confucian Education	486
	Broad Learning	488
	Imperial Schools	490
	Examinations	493
	Ritual	495
	The Major Thinkers of Six Dynasties Confucianism	499
	Conclusion	509
23	<i>Qingtan</i> and <i>Xuanxue</i> by YUET KEUNG LO	511
	The Intellectual Scene	512
	<i>Qingtan</i>	514
	<i>Xuan</i> and <i>Xuanxue</i>	522
24	Buddhism by JOHN KIESCHNICK	531
	Buddhism at Court	533
	Monasticism	539
	Devotion	547
	Conclusion	551
25	Daoism by STEPHEN R. BOKENKAMP	553
26	Popular Religion by ROBERT FORD CAMPANY	579
	Local Gods, Their Temples, and Associated Practices: Domestic Deities	582
	Demons, Sprites, and Animals	587
	Spirits of the Human Dead	589
	Specialists	592
	Conclusion	595
27	The World of Prose Literature by ANTJE RICHTER	597
	The Literary Heritage of the Six Dynasties	597
	Literature in a Web of Interconnections: A Fourth-Century Example	599
	Literary Circles at Courts and Beyond	603



CONTENTS	ix
The Rise of Literary Criticism	609
Genres of Life Writing	614
City, Countryside, and Wilderness	617
Literary Imagination and Narrative Art	619
28 The World of Poetry	623
by CYNTHIA L. CHENNAULT	
Introduction	623
<i>Yuefu</i> and <i>Shi</i> of the Wei State and Dynasty	626
Thematic Diversification during the Western and Eastern Jin	633
Nature Poetry, <i>Yuefu</i> , and Other Lyrics of the Liu-Song	639
Poetry of the Southern Qi and Liang Salons	645
Poetry of North China and the Chen Dynasty	654
Conclusion	660
29 Art and Visual Culture	662
by WU HUNG	
Funerary Art	663
Religious Art	676
Painting and Calligraphy	687
30 Music	698
by BO LAWERGREN	
Introduction: The Background to Six Dynasties Music	698
Importation of Kuchean Music to Northern China	699
Buddhism and Music	701
Chinese Instruments	702
Instruments of the Six Dynasties Period	703
Music Theory	719
Conclusion	720
<i>Bibliography</i>	
Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Primary Sources	721
Journal Titles: Acronyms (single-word titles do not use acronyms)	722
List of Asian Journal Titles	725
Primary Texts	729
General Bibliography	733
<i>Glossary–Index</i>	839

## FIGURES AND TABLES

### FIGURES

14.1	Populations (in millions), 157–589	<i>page</i> 325
18.1	Typical grayware jars found in fifth-century Datong	385
18.2	Grave goods with gray pottery, lacquerware, and gold jewelry in a non-Han tomb	386
18.3	Lead-glazed wares	389
18.4	Lacquerware with exotic forms or motifs	391
18.5	Schematic depiction of the coiled-core technique applied to the lacquered vessel found in Tian Hong's tomb	392
18.6	Belt sets of the Northern Dynasties	398
18.7	Gold cap ornaments	401
18.8	Chin straps and jewel elements	403
18.9	Textile patterns and costumes of the North	408
18.10	Animal masks as coffin ornaments with the center motif of "master of animals" and its variations in palmette leaves	414
19.1	Tomb types of the Wu and Western Jin	420
19.2	Bronze vessel types of the Wu and Western Jin	421
19.3	Vessel types and typical decoration of the Wu and Western Jin	421
19.4	<i>Guan</i> jars with brownish under-glaze painting	425
19.5	Bear-shaped <i>zun</i> vessel	426
19.6	Figured <i>hunping</i> or <i>duisuguan</i> jar	426
19.7	Models of estates	428
19.8	Earthenware models of (a) toilet, (b) grinding stone, (c) winnowing basket, (d) mortar, (e) chicken coop, (f) treadmill, (g) stove, (h) lamp, (i) greenware candle holder, (j) ink stone, (k) water vessel	429
19.9	Group of figures from Shangfang, Jiangsu	430
19.10	Items for personal hygiene	431
19.11	Small-scale single chamber (Nanjing, Jiangsu), and new	

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

xi

	variety with tiers along back and side walls (Meixian, Guangdong)	433
19.12	Development of vessel shapes ( <i>pankouhu</i> , <i>jishoubu</i> , <i>tuobu</i> )	436
19.13	Lotos <i>zun</i> vessel	437
19.14	Male and female figurines of the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties	438
19.15	Jewelry	440
29.1	Tomb of Prince Xiao Ji	664
29.2	Facade of Tomb 133 at Foyemiaowan, Dunhuang, Gansu	667
29.3	Plans of the Wanzhang tomb, Cixian, Hebei	668
29.4	The east wall of the passageway of the Wanzhang tomb, Cixian, Hebei	668
29.5	The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi	669
29.6	House-shaped stone sarcophagus from the tomb of Song Shaozu, Datong, Shanxi, Northern Wei, 477	672
29.7	Soul jar reportedly from Shaoxing, Zhejiang. Western Jin, 260	674
29.8	Cave 20 at Yungang, Shanxi Province	678
29.9	Central Buddha statue, limestone, central Binyang cave	680
29.10	Ceiling of Cave 249 at Dunhuang, Gansu	681
29.11	Stone stele. Western Wei, dated 551	684
29.12	Rubbings of Wei Wenlang Stele	685
29.13	Aśoka-type Buddha	686
29.14	Altarpiece dedicated to Maitreya	688
29.15	Wang Xizhi, "Letter on the Disturbances"	690
29.16	Attributed to Gu Kaizhi, <i>Wise and Benevolent Women</i>	692
29.17	Attributed to Gu Kaizhi, "Adoring Oneself"	694
29.18	Anonymous, "Lady Ban Rejecting the Emperor's Invitation"	695
29.19	Attributed to Gu Kaizhi, "Lady Ban Rejecting the Emperor's Invitation"	695
29.20	Attributed to Gu Kaizhi, section of <i>The Nymph of the Luo River</i>	696
30.1	Part of an ensemble inscribed on a tomb wall at Yi'nan, Shandong, c. 170 CE	702
30.2	Musical instruments shown on walls of a tomb of the Nanjing area, c. 400	705
30.3	Lutes moving from the Near East to China via Central Asia	709
30.4	A Northern Qi ensemble shown on parts of a stele	712
30.5	Foreign orchestras at Chang'an, 605–616	715
30.6	The Zoroastrian paradise shown in the tomb of Shi Jun (c. 580)	716

TABLES

Table 0.1	Sixteen States by area	xix
Table 4.1	The six military fronts of the conquest of the Wu Kingdom	89
Table 4.2	The Eight Princes	92
Table 14.1	Registered populations, 157–280	324
Table 14.2	Household numbers in the North, 280–318	325
Table 16.1	Table of contents of the <i>Qimin yaoshu</i>	358
Table 16.2	Crop rotations in the <i>Qimin yaoshu</i>	364

MAPS

0.1	The Three Kingdoms	<i>page</i> xx
0.2	Western Jin and the Northern Dynasties	xxi
0.3	The Southern Dynasties	xxii
4.1	The conquest of Wu by the Jin	95
17.1	Sogdian trade routes	376
30.1	How music traveled from Kucha to northern China	700
30.2	Asia showing the paths of lutes	710

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-02077-1 — The Cambridge History of China  
Edited by Albert E. Dien , Keith N. Knapp  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

## PREFACE

We both knew that assembling the second volume of the *Cambridge history of China* would be a formidable task. Denis Twitchett had already endeavored to do so in the mid-1980s, but was unable to for a variety of reasons. The lack of a *Cambridge history of China* volume for the Six Dynasties period meant that there was no way that a reader could acquire by reading just one book a sound feeling for the period and all of its political and social complexities, as well as an appreciation for its wide range of cultural achievements. Over the years, we have both heard many fellow scholars lamenting the fact of the non-existence of a Six Dynasties volume. Since there are now many excellent specialists writing about the history and culture of early medieval China, we decided to take on the challenge, but the project was far more complicated and time-consuming than either of us anticipated.

Completing this volume would not have been possible without the help of numerous institutions and individuals. To start off the process of writing the chapters, we had hoped to invite all of the contributors to a conference. Unfortunately, the costs of doing so were prohibitive. Due to the generosity of two universities, we were instead able to hold two smaller meetings. The first was the “Six Dynasties Material Culture, Arts, Literature, and Ritual Workshop,” which took place at the University of Chicago on May 26–27, 2012. The workshop was generously sponsored by the China Committee of the Center for East Asian Studies and the Adelyn Russell Bogert Fund of the Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago, and was organized by the University of Chicago’s Center for the Art of East Asia, Department of Art History. The workshop included all of the contributors who were working on topics related to material culture and the arts. We owe much to Professors Wu Hung and Katherine Tsiang, who played a large role in organizing and making this meeting possible. The second workshop took place at the exquisite Stanford Center at Peking University. This meeting with some of our East Asian contributors was made possible through the arrangements provided by the executive director of the center, Dr. Andrew J. Andreasen. We also wish to

thank Professor Tu Wei-ming for his active and informative participation at the workshop. Many thanks too to Peking University for assisting with the logistics of this meeting.

The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, generously provided the support for much of this work. For the duration of this project, the college supplied us with a graduate assistantship. Through this funding, Victoria Musheff served as a superb internal editor who polished the chapters' prose and made sure that the information within was intelligible to nonspecialists. Isabelle Bailey Knight, another graduate assistant, helped us put our bibliography in good order. The History Department's Henry and Jenny Johnson Endowment Fund and the Citadel's School of Humanities and Social Sciences funded honorariums for the translators of the "Western Jin" and "Local Society" chapters.

Many thanks to Professors Joelle Neulander for translating the "Western Jin" chapter from French and Jon Felt for translating the "Local Society" chapter from Chinese. Albert Dien translated from Chinese both the chapters on the Sogdians and on the southern economy.

Many thanks to our contributors as well. They not only contributed their expertise through the writing of their chapters; they also patiently endured the editors' requests to adjust their chapter's contents for readability and clarity. Charles Holcombe and Albert Dien are especially to be commended for taking on the burden of writing more than one chapter.

Working with the dedicated and talented staff of Cambridge University Press has been a joy. Marigold Acland, our first editor, recruited us to do the volume. After Marigold's retirement, our new editor, Lucy Rhymer, turned out to be every bit as helpful and encouraging. Heather Lings took on the difficult role of preparing the Glossary–Index, and John Gaunt performed the Herculean task of making the text readable. Natasha Whelan and Lisa Carter greatly helped us get the final manuscript in order.

Finally, we need to acknowledge each of our family's patience and assistance. With no say in the matter, Dora and Joseph Dien and Jade and Melissa Knapp were swept into the project in ways big and small. Their help ranged from technical assistance to listening to endless worries and complaints. Their support, although usually indirect, was essential to the project's completion.

#### GUIDELINES FOR READERS

Following the precedent set by *The Cambridge history of ancient China: From the origins of civilization to 221 B.C.*, for the romanization of Chinese words, we have decided to use the Pinyin system rather than the Wade–Giles system, which has been employed in previous volumes of the *Cambridge history of*



*China*. We do this in recognition that the Pinyin system is now the most popular romanization system of Chinese—it is used by nearly all English-language newspapers and academic journals and books. By now, only specialists are still acquainted with the Wade–Giles system.

Unlike prior volumes of the *Cambridge history of China*, this work will employ the BCE (before common era) and CE (common era) dating system, rather than BC (before Christ) and AD (anno domini) one. This has been done to be more in line with current academic conventions and to regard time in a more secular manner.

Chinese characters have been used sparingly in the text of the chapters. For the most part, characters are inserted after the few sentence-length passages that occur in some chapters. This has been done to facilitate specialists' understanding of the quoted romanized sentence. These Chinese sentences are not indexed. The Chinese characters for any term, person, or place will be found in the index.

SIX DYNASTIES CHRONOLOGY

Three Kingdoms

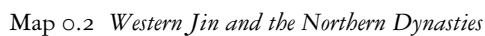
Wei (220–265)	Shu (221–263)	Wu (220–280)
Western Jin (265–317)		
Sixteen States 304–439		Eastern Jin (318–420)
Northern Wei (386–534)		Liu-Song (420–479)
Western Wei (535–557)	Eastern Wei (534–550)	Southern Qi (479–502)
Northern Zhou (557–581)	Northern Qi (550–577)	Liang (502–557)
		Chen (557–589)
Sui (581–618)		

Table 0.1 Sixteen States by area

Name	Dates	Founder	Ethnicity	Capital	Conqueror
Former Zhao 前趙	304–329	Liu Yuan 劉淵	Xiongnu	Pingyang 平陽	Later Zhao 後趙
Later Zhao 後趙	319–351	Shi Le 石勒	Jie	Linzhang 臨漳	Former Yan 前燕
Former Qin 前秦	351–384	Fu Jian 苻健	Di	Chang'an 長安	Western Qin 西秦
Later Qin 後秦	384–417	Yao Chang 姚萇	Qiang	Chang'an 長安	Eastern Jin 東晉
Western Qin 西秦	385–431	Qifu Guoren 乞伏國仁	Xianbei	Jincheng 金城	Xia 夏
Xia 夏	407–431	Helian Bobo 赫連勃勃	Xiongnu	Tongwan 統萬	Northern Wei 北魏
Cheng Han 成漢	304–347	Li Xiong 李雄	Di	Chengdu 成都	Eastern Jin 東晉
Former Yan 前燕	349–370	Murong Jun 慕容俊	Xianbei	Yedu 鄴都	Former Qin 前秦
Later Yan 後燕	384–409	Murong Chui 慕容垂	Xianbei	Zhongshan 中山	Northern Yan 北燕
Southern Yan 南燕	400–410	Murong De 慕容德	Xianbei	Guangu 廣固	Eastern Jin 東晉
Northern Yan 北燕	409–436	Feng Ba 馮跋	Han	Changli 昌黎	Northern Wei 北魏
Former Liang 前涼	314–376	Zhang Mao 張茂	Han	Guzang 姑臧	Former Qin 前秦
Later Liang 後涼	386–403	Lü Guang 呂光	Di	Guzang 姑臧	Later Qin 後秦
Southern Liang 南涼	397–414	Tufa Wugu 秃髮烏孤	Xianbei	Ledu 樂都	Western Qin 西秦
Northern Liang 北涼	401–439	Juqu Mengsun 沮渠蒙遜	Xiongnu	Zhangyi 張掖	Northern Wei 北魏
Western Liang 西涼	400–422	Li Hao 李暠	Han	Jiuquan 酒泉	Northern Liang 北涼



Map 0.1 *The Three Kingdoms*



Map 0.3 *The Southern Dynasties*