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978-1-108-48577-7 — Rulers and Ruled in Ancient Greece, Rome, and China

Edited by Hans Beck, Griet Vankeerberghen

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GREECE, ROME, AND CHINA

Situated on opposite flanks of Eurasia, ancient Mediterranean and Han-Chinese societies had a hazy understanding of each other's existence. But they had no grounded knowledge about one another, nor was there any form of direct interaction. In other words, their historical trajectories were independent. In recent years, however, many similarities between both cultures have been detected, which has energized the field of comparative history. The present volume adds to the debate a creative method of juxtaposing historical societies. Each contribution covers both ancient China and the Mediterranean in an accessible manner. Embarking from the observation that Greek, Roman, and Han-Chinese societies were governed by comparable features, the contributors to this volume explain the dynamic interplay between political rulers and the ruled masses in their culture specific manifestation as *demos* (Greece), *populus* (Rome) and *min* (China).

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Preface

Globalization has changed the mental galleries behind the humanities. As learning communities have diversified, research portfolios and teaching curricula have followed suit. At most universities, for instance, Western Civilization courses have given way to offerings that apply a more multi-faceted approach to history, society, and culture. While these developments are well under way, it is acknowledged only gradually, and, at times, maybe with some hesitation, that the ongoing renegotiation of concepts and contents in the humanities also invites new approaches toward the study of cultural foundations as such.

The “Global Antiquities” Research Network is designed to offer such an approach. It addresses the histories of the ancient world from a distinctly comparative perspective. In doing so, “Global Antiquities” calls for a sustained study of some of the basic cultural foundations, those of the ancient Mediterranean world, the forerunner of “the West,” and those of Early China, often equated with “the East.” The field of comparative research on Greece, Rome, and China is swiftly expanding. Indeed, despite its relative novelty, this area of research has already produced fascinating results, especially in the fields of science and medicine, philosophy, and political theory. Additionally, the ancient empires of Rome and Han China, both engines and expressions of political advancement, have come under close scholarly scrutiny. These investigations shed light on the mechanics of imperial governance, the transfer of expert knowledge, and the cultural distinctions of ancient political thought and theory, and their lasting legacy today.

“Global Antiquities” adds its own voice to the conversation. Its primary focus is on issues of social meaning and political culture, which sets its agenda apart from related programs that are steered by, for instance, statistical approaches or the exploration of imperial bureaucracies. The network embarks from the observation that ancient Greek, Roman, and

Han-Chinese societies were driven by similar features that were also characteristic of other civilized premodern societies. Their distinct cultural encoding, however, was not only indicative of the trajectories, twists, and turns of the histories of the civilizations on either side of the Eurasian flank, it marked the very core of their societal sentiments, convictions, and beliefs. The comparative approach toward the differences and communalities of ancient Mediterranean and early Chinese civilizations is particularly well suited to make the cultural encoding of universal paradigms visible, and disclose the force it wielded over the historical development. To provide a first sample of comparative features, “Global Antiquities” has established three themes, each one serving as a point of comparison of our investigation: people, places, and performances. The present book on rulers and the ruled is the first installment in a series of volumes that are envisioned for the future.

“Global Antiquities” is a founding pillar of the Yan P. Lin Centre for the Study of Freedom and Global Orders in the Ancient and Modern Worlds. Based at McGill University in Montréal, the center’s mandate is to explore the history and development of fundamental ideas, systems, and institutions which govern our lives today. We are tremendously grateful to Yan P. Lin, McGill alumnus and long-time university supporter, whose generous gift to our community allows “Global Antiquities” to pursue its research agenda, foster transdisciplinary dialogues, and flourish in every possible way. As this volume developed from an initial workshop to press, we received plenty of assistance and advice. Huang Wen-Yi and Rebecca Robinson offered a helping hand in the early stages of the editorial process. Jordan Christopher and Alexis Lemonde Vachon were instrumental in preparing the final version of the manuscript. Special thanks are owed to Jordan Christopher for compiling the volume’s Glossary, to Fu Wentian for his work on a comparative bibliography, to Wen Ruoxuan for corresponding with Chinese presses and institutions regarding copyright, and to Esther Marie Snarr Guillen for her work on the Index. We also would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the book for their constructive criticisms.

We have learned from our experience in the classroom how intrigued students are by cultural legacies other than their own. “Global Antiquities” attempts to transform their – and our own – academic curiosity into new intellectual discoveries, aiming at the advancement of knowledge of past societies. But it doesn’t end there. Moreover, the network is deeply committed to making the academic conversation relevant to reflections

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that accompany the ongoing process of globalization. As we endeavor to explore what drove ancient Greek, Roman, and Han-Chinese societies, we hope that the comparative view fostered by “Global Antiquities” also contributes to a more integrated understanding of the historical foundations of our world today, across the boundaries of cultures and societies.

Chronology of the Ancient Mediterranean

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Minoan Civilization | 2700–1450 BCE |
| Mycenaean period | 1600–ca. 1200 BCE |
| Greek Dark Age (so-called) | ca. 1200–776 BCE (trad.) |
| Archaic period in Greece | 776–500 BCE |
| Foundation of Rome (trad.) | 753 BCE |
| Roman Republic established (trad.) | 509 BCE |
| Persian Wars in Greece and the Aegean | 499–478 BCE |
| Peloponnesian War | 432–404 BCE |
| Reign of Alexander III “The Great” | 336–323 BCE |
| Hellenistic dynasties | 323–31 BCE |
| Punic Wars | 264–146 BCE |
| Roman Civil Wars | 88–31 BCE |
| Reign of Augustus | 27 BCE–14 CE |
| Roman Principate | 27 BCE–284 CE |
| Roman Dominate, Late Antiquity | 284–476 CE |
| Fall of Western Roman Empire | 476 CE |

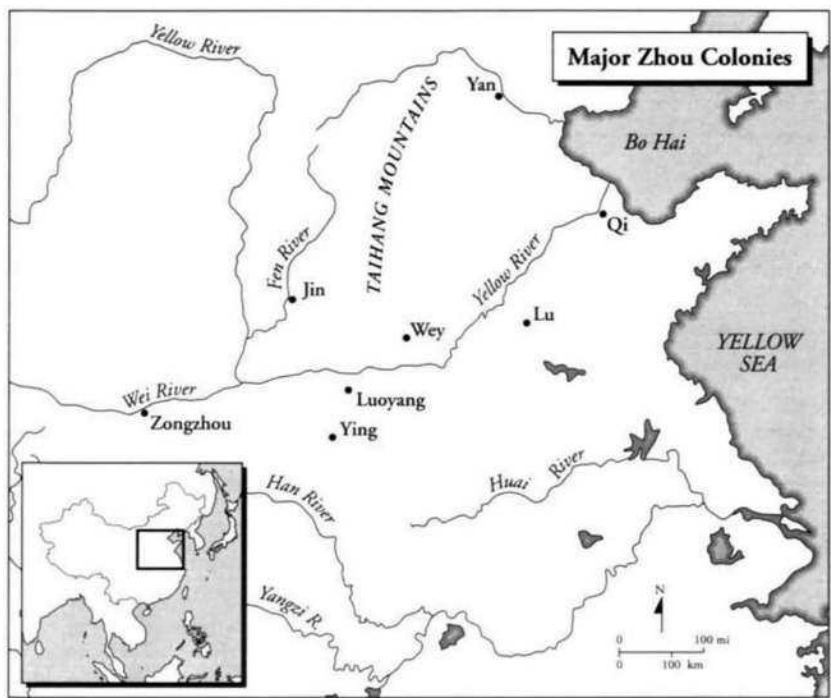
Traditional endpoint of Western Antiquity

Chronology of Ancient China

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| (Xia dynasty?) | |
| Shang dynasty | 1554–1046 BCE |
| Zhou dynasty | 1045–256 BCE |
| Western Zhou | 1045–771 BCE |
| Eastern Zhou | 770–256 BCE |
| Spring and Autumn period | 770–481 BCE |
| Warring States period | 480–221 BCE |
| Qin dynasty | 221–207 BCE |
| Western Han dynasty | 206 BCE–8 CE |
| Xin dynasty (Wang Mang) | 8 CE–23 CE |
| Eastern Han dynasty | 25–220 CE |

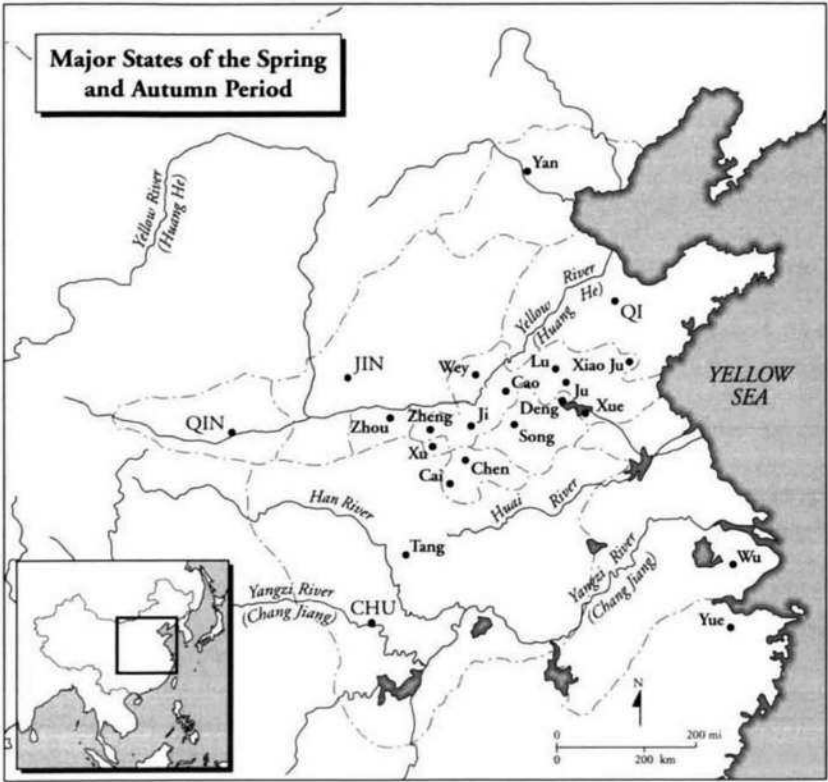
Maps of Ancient China, Greece, and Rome

1 China



Map 1.1 Western Zhou colonies.

Source: *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, Cambridge, 1999, p. 313.



Map 1.2 Spring and Autumn period.

Source: *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, Cambridge, 1999, p. 548.



Map 1.3 Warring States period.

Source: *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, Cambridge, 1999, p. 594.



Map 1.4 Western Han dynasty, 195 BCE.

Source: Adapted from *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 1: Ch'in and Han*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, Cambridge, 1986, p. 125.

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Map 1.5 Western Han dynasty, 108 BCE.
Source: Adapted from *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 1: Ch'in and Han*, ed. John Ki

2 Greece



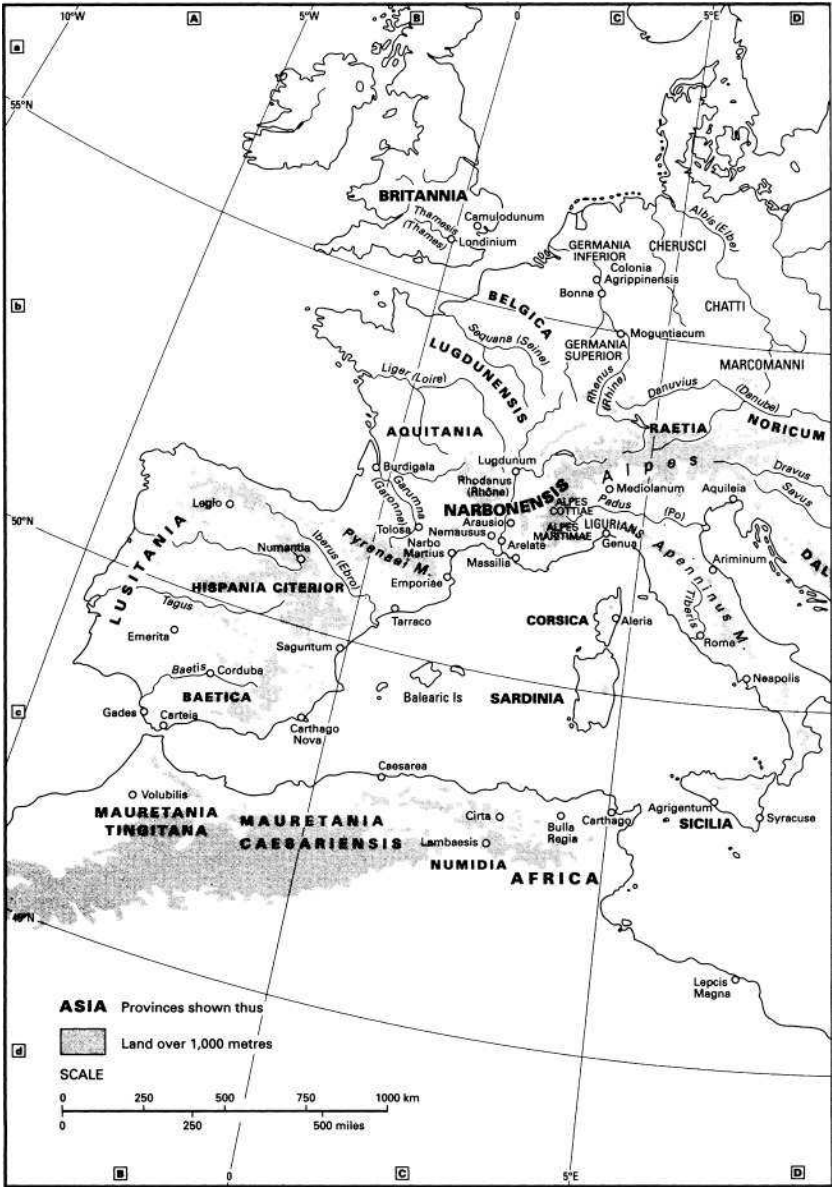
Map 2.1 Central Greece and the Peloponnese.
Source: *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 5: The Fifth Century BC*, ed. D. M. Lewis et al., 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1992, p. 98.

3 Rome



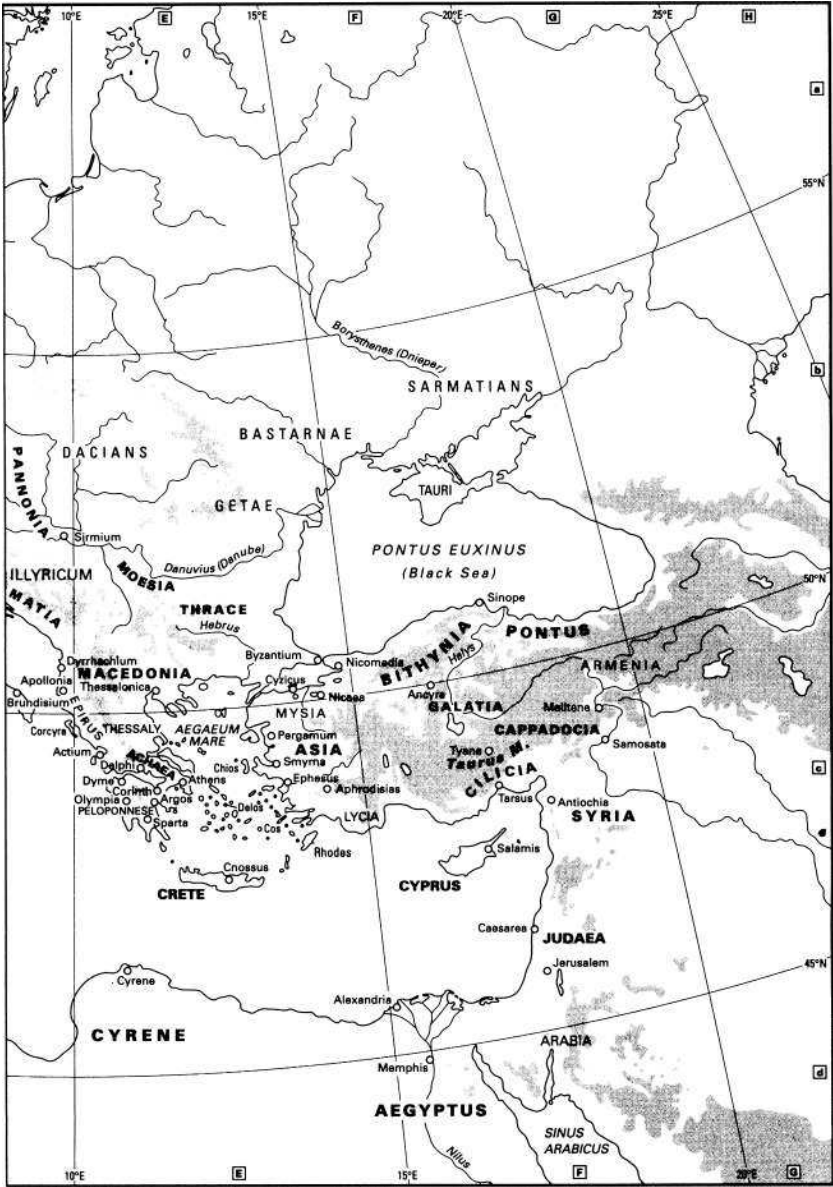
Map 3.1 Italy and Sicily.

Source: *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 8: Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 BC*, ed. A. E. Astin et al., 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1989, p. 478.



Map 3.2 Roman Empire in the Augustan Era.

Source: *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 10: The Augustan Empire, 43 BC–AD 69*, ed. A. K. Bowman, E. Champlin, and A. Lintott, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1996, p. xvi.



Map 3.2 (cont.)