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from the mythic origins of the chinese dynasties to the eventual fall of the last imperial house chinese emperors have long fought to maintain control over one of the most enduring empires on earth the rise and fall of various imperial families oversaw waves of innovation and cultural advancement imperial china reached its greatest territorial extent of during the qing but china came into increasing conflict with european powers culminating in the opium wars and subsequent unequal treaties the 1911 xinhai revolution led by sun yat sen and others created the modern republic of china the chinese empire or the empire of china is a term referring to the domain ruled by the emperor of china the period when china was ruled by an emperor is known as imperial china it was also known as the celestial empire in reference to the status of the emperor of china as the son of heaven in the sinosphere imperial chinese history is marked by the rise and fall of many dynasties and occasional periods of disunity but overall the age was remarkably stable and marked by a sophisticated governing system that included the concept of a meritocracy historians typically consider the following dynasties to have unified china proper the qin dynasty the western han the xin dynasty the eastern han the western jin the sui dynasty the tang dynasty the wu zhou the northern song the yuan dynasty the ming dynasty and the qing dynasty imperial china an introduction by the british museum imperial chinese history is marked by the rise and fall of many dynasties and occasional periods of disunity but overall the age was remarkably stable and marked by a sophisticated governing system that included the concept of a meritocracy mark edward lewis this six volume series overseen by general editor timothy brook traces the history of imperial china from the beginnings of unification under the qin emperor in the third century bce to the end of the qing dynasty in the early twentieth century the qin dynasty 221 206 bce was the first dynasty of imperial china defined as the era of centralized dynastic government in china between 221 bce and 1912 ce which united the separate states following the warring states period c 481 221 bce the era of near constant warfare resulting from the decline of the zhou dynasty 1046 256 bce qing dynasty the last of the imperial dynasties of china spanning the years 1644 to 1911 12 key dates key themes state building different forms of governance have been constructed and maintained over time imperial china s government went from feudal and decentralized during the zhou dynasty to highly centralized under the han dynasty the qin dynasty contributed significantly to the creation of a centralized imperial state powers of the emperor chinese emperors had no constitution that set out their powers and those of their government the emperor was the supreme executive the highest legislative authority and last source of appeal and the supreme commander of the military dynasties of imperial china power struggles of warlords and the rise of communism britannica home geography travel countries of the world china article china summary learn about the republic of china the various dynasties that ruled the power struggles

of warlords and the rise of communism written and fact checked by the history of the qin and han defines the period of early imperial china but it also constitutes a crucial component of early china the long period from the very beginning of the chinese civilization to the end of the eastern han dynasty in early 3rd century ce the rise and fall of imperial china offers a systematic look at the chinese state from the seventh century through to the twentieth focusing on how short lived emperors often ruled a strong state while long lasting emperors governed a weak one yuhua wang shows why lessons from china s history can help us better understand state building the rise and fall of imperial china offers a systematic look at the chinese state from the seventh century through to the twentieth focusing on how short lived emperors often ruled a strong state while long lasting emperors governed a weak one yuhua wang shows why lessons from china s history can help us better understand state building imperial china is a period of chinese history it lasted over 2 000 years it began with qin shi huang s uniting of china under the qin dynasty in 221 bc it ended with the overthrow of the qing dynasty in 1911 throughout this period many features of chinese civilization spread throughout all of china 221 206 b c qin dynasty the qin dynasty from which china derives its name qin is pronounced chin was the first official empire in its history the qins standardized regional written this is a history of china for the 900 year time span of the late imperial period a senior scholar of this epoch f w mote highlights the personal characteristics of the rulers and dynasties and probes the cultural theme of chinese adaptations to recurrent alien rule the qin dynasty t j i n was the first dynasty of imperial china it is named for its progenitor state of qin which was a fief of the confederal zhou dynasty which had endured for over five centuries until 221 bc when it assumed an imperial prerogative following its complete conquest of its rival states a state of affairs that the civil service examinations of imperial china allowed the state to find the best candidates to staff the vast bureaucracy that governed china from the han dynasty onwards 206 bce 220 ce the exams were a means for a young male of any class to enter that bureaucracy and so become a part of the gentry class of scholar officials

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