

The Department of Asian Studies

The Asian Sphere Program

# Eurasian Empires: A Comparative View

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MA Course 46814 (2015/2016); Tuesday 10:30-14:00, Room 2407

The course is supported by MOODLE2 system (<http://moodle2.cs.huji.ac.il/nu15/>)

(This syllabus is due to be updated for lessons 8 and later)

Throughout much of the recent two to three millennia the majority of human population lived under imperial control of one sort or another, and even those beyond the empires' immediate reaches were immensely influenced by the empires, be it through synchronic or diachronic interaction. Each regional imperial culture established highly distinct patterns of legitimation and rule over the subjugated population; each employed distinctive economic, military, and administrative means to ensure lasting rule over expansive territories. Yet the empires of different parts of Eurasian continent also interacted and influenced each other. Our course intends to analyze the various imperial formations that arose in Asia from the second millennium BCE and up to the 19th century in a comparative framework, highlighting the common features of the empires and their mutual diachronic and synchronic impact. We shall focus on three of the five major civilization centers of the Old World (The Near East, Inner Asia, and China), comparing these with the imperial formations in India and Europe (mostly the Roman Empire and its offspring). Aside from introducing various imperial formations (sometimes with the help of guest lecturers), we seek to identify the common problems faced by continental empires and the distinct ways these problems were dealt with in each of the civilizational centers we have decided to focus on.

**Course requirements:** Rereading the reading materials **BEFORE** the relevant lecture (**usually the reading assignments will be split among students**); active participation in the lectures (30 %) presentation on the topic of choice in the classroom (oral + 2-3 pp. written) (40 %); a critical book report on an "imperial" book of your choice or a short (10 pp) comparison of a certain aspect between two or more empires (topics/books to be confirmed by the teachers no later than December 29) (30 %).

Those who are interested in submitting a **seminar paper** are free of the book report (the seminar paper will influence 30 % of the course's grade; it will also be graded separately from the course, though). The paper should be submitted no later than March 1 2016 (extensions are possible only **with the teachers' approval before the end of the course**). Those who intend to write a seminar are requested to submit a proposal, including the topic/research question; a short (ca. 1 page) introduction presenting the topic; preliminary bibliography and table of contents no later than **December 29<sup>th</sup> 2015**. The proposal weights 10% of the seminar's grade. You are welcome to contact us at your earliest convenience with proposed topics

# Introduction

**1. October 20: The course, its participants, goals, and requirements. Definitions of “empire.” Views of the empire in 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries: “imperialism” and its negative emotive appeal. Imperial periodization: primary, secondary and tertiary empires. The course’s time framework and major actors. Empires and civilizations; world history vs. national history. Main topics of our comparison.**

## Reading:

- Yuval N. Harari: *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, New York: Harper Collins, 2015, 188-208. [or: 192-210 עמודים, 2011, דביר, תל-אביב: תל-אביב: קיצור תולדות האנושות. ]
- Jack A. Goldstone and John F. Haldon, “Ancient States, Empires and Exploitation: Problems and Perspectives,” in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, edited by Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, 3–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

## Recommended Reading:

- Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, “Imperial Trajectories,” in idem, eds., *Empires in World History*, 1-59. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- A.G. Hopkins, “Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History,” *Past and Present* 164 (1999): 198-243.
- Runciman, W. G. “Empire as a Topic in Comparative Sociology,” in: Peter F. Bang and C. A. Bayly, eds. *Tributary Empires in Global History*, 99-107. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

## Part A: Introducing Empires in Time and Space: Universality and Particularity in Imperial Trajectories

**2. October 27: Universality and its limits: Ideology versus praxis in early empires**

## Reading:

- Amélie Kuhrt, “The Persian Empire, c. 550-330 BC.” In: *Art et civilisations de l’Orient Hellénisé: D’Alexandre aux Sassanides*. ed. Pierre Leriche (Paris: Picard, 2014), 3-12.
- Greg Woolf, “Inventing Empire in Ancient Rome,” in Susan E. Alcock et al., eds., *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, 311-326. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yuri Pines, “Limits of All-under-Heaven: Ideology and Praxis of Great Unity in Early Chinese Empire” (forthcoming publication).
- Nicola Di Cosmo, “Ethnogenesis, Coevolution and Political Morphology of the Earliest Steppe Empire: the Xiongnu Question Revisited,” in: *Xiongnu Archaeology: Multidisciplinary Perspectives of the First Steppe Empire in Inner Asia*, ed. Ursula Brosseder, Bryan K. Miller, 35-48. Bonn: Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn.

## Recommended Reading:

Maria Brosius, "The Achaemenids," in idem, *The Persians*, 6-78. London : Routledge, 2006.  
Primary source: "Further Schemes of Dumnorix" from *Caesar's War Commentaries: De Bello Gallico and De Bello Civili*. John Warrington, ed. and trans., 8-11 (London: Dent, 1965).

Primary source: *Shiji*: "The Account of Dayuan" [mission of Zhang Qian to the steppe peoples], *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, by Sima Qian, trans. by Burton Watson, vol. 2: 231-240 (Hong Kong, 1993).

### **3. November 3: Universality and its limits: Ideology versus praxis in secondary empires**

#### **Reading:**

Sheldon Pollock, "Axialism and Empire," In: *Axial Civilization and World History*, ed. Johann P. Arnason, S. N. Eisenstadt, and Björn Wittrock, 387-450. Leiden: Brill 2005.

Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, "The Medieval Roman Empire of the East as spatial phenomenon: Selected aspects (300-1200 CE)," (forthcoming)

Michael Cook, "The Centrality of Islamic Civilization." In Benjamin Z. Kedar, Merry Wiesner-Hanks, eds. *The Cambridge World History, Vol. 5*, pp. 385-414. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Wang Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with Its Neighbors," in: *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi, 47-65. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

### **4. November 10: Universality and its limits: Ideology versus praxis in tertiary empires**

#### **Reading**

Michal Biran, "Mongol Imperial Space: Between Universalism and Particularism" (forthcoming)

Evelyn S. Rawski, "Sons of Heaven: the Qing appropriation of the Chinese model of universal empire," in *Universal Empire*, 233-249.

Stephen F. Dale, "The Territories and Boundaries of Empires: Ottoman Safavid and Mughal" (forthcoming)

Thomas Allsen, "Eurasia after the Mongols," in *The Cambridge History of the World: Vol. 6*, ed. Merry Wiesner-Hanks, 159-81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

#### **Recommended Reading:**

Bang, P. F and Kolodziejczuk D. "'Elephant of India': Universal Empire through Time and Across Cultures," in Bang and Kolodziejczuk, eds., *Universal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2012), 1-40.

David Ludden, "The Process of Empire: Frontiers and Borderlands" in *Tributary Empires in Global History*, 132-150

Jane Burbank, "Muscovy Imperial Space" (forthcoming).

Peter Perdue, "Comparisons, Connections and Convergences," in *Empires and Encounters 1350-1750*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard, 209-219. Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015.

## Part B: How the Empire Function?

### 5. November 17: The empire and its subjects: exploitation, cooptation, and control. Core and Periphery in the empires. Variations of Imperial Administration. Early Empires

#### Reading:

- R.J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles and Foreign Gods. A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations" in: *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper*, ed. W.F.M. Henkelman, C.E. Jones, M. Kozuh, C. Woods, 233-264. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014.
- Ian Morris, "The Great Athenian State," in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires*, 99-178 [focus on pp. 128-154, but try to read the entire article]
- Alexander Yakobson, "Us and Them: Empire, Memory and Identity in Claudius' speech on bringing Gauls to Roman Senate," in Doron Mendels, ed., *On Memory* (Bern: Lang, 2007), 19-36.
- Keith Hopkins, "The Political Economy of the Roman Empire," in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires*, 178-204.
- Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire: Traditional Chinese Political Culture and Its Enduring Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 104-113.

### 6. November 24: The empire and its subjects: exploitation, cooptation, and control. Core and Periphery in the empires. Variations of Imperial Administration. Later Empires

#### Reading:

- Patricia Crone, "The Functions of the Government," in idem, *God's Rule: Government and Islam*, 286-314. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Suraiya Faroqhi, "Administration of the Ottoman Empire," in: *Empires and Encounters 1350-1750*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (Cambridge MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015), 230-261
- Thimoty May, "Mongol Administration," in idem, *The Mongol Conquests in World History*, 158-171. London: Reaktion Books, 2012.
- Benjamin Elman, "Circulation of Ming-Qing Elites," in idem, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 2013): 95-125

#### Recommended Reading:

- Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: CUP, 2008), ch. 3: Becoming an Empire: Imperial Institutions and Control, pp. 67-93.

### 7. December 1: The Empire of God: Religions under the imperial control, and empires under religious control. Organized and diffused religions and the imperial power. East-West divide?

#### Reading:

- Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Disadvantages of Monotheism for a Universal State," *Classical Philology* 81. 4 (1986): 285-297.

- Deno J. Geanakoplos, "Church and State in the Byzantine Empire: A Reconsideration of the Problem of Caesaropapism," *Church History*, 34. 4 (1965): 381-403  
 (For Russian readers): A.S. Martynov, "Gosudarstvo i Religii na Dal'nem Vostoke," in: *Buddism i Gosudarstvo na Dal'nem Vostoke*, ed. L.P. Deliusin, 3-46, and T.G. Komissarova, "'Monakh ne dolzhen byt' pochtitelen k imperatoru': Iz Buddijskoj Polemiki v Kitae," *ibid.*, 47-70 (Moscow: Nauka, 1987).
- C.K. Yang, "State Control of Religion," in *idem*, *Religion in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 180-217.
- Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," in *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 145-90.
- Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: CUP, 2008, ch. 4: "Maintaining Empire: An Expression of Tolerance," 109-153 [esp. 109-128, 150-153].

**Recommended Reading:**

- Anatoly Khazanov, "The Spread of World Religions in the Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes," in *Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia*, 1 (1994), 11-33.
- Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
- Andre Wink, *Akbar* (Oxford: Oneworld publications, 2009), pp. 86-108.

**8. December 8: The Empire of the Sword. The Military under the Empire: conscription, mercenaries, tribal and professional armies. The army as a means of expansion and control versus the army as a threat to stability.**

**Reading:**

- Nathan Rosenstein, "War, State Formation, and the Evolution of Military Institutions in Ancient China and Rome," in: *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*, ed. Walter Scheidel, 24-51. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Reuven Amitai, "The Mamluk Institution, or: One Thousand Years of Military Slavery in the Islamic World," in *Arming Slaves*, ed. Ch. L. Brown and P. D. Morgan, 40-78 (at least 40-53, 66-68). New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Thimoty May, "New Forms of Warfare," in: *The Mongol Conquests in World History*, 130-157. London: Reaktion Books, 2012.

**9. December 15: Son of Heaven versus Imperator: The emperor's power in different empires. Power and weakness of "the Only Man"**

**Reading:**

- Pines, *The Everlasting Empire*, 44-75.
- Alexander Yakobson: "The First Emperors: Image and Memory." In: Pines et al., ed., *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin Revisited* (Berkeley: UCP, 2014), 280-300.

Denis Sinor, "The Making of a Great Khan", in *Altaica Berolinensia: The Concept of Sovereignty in the Altaic World*, ed. Barbara Kellner-Heinkele (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitch, 1993), 241-258.

Wadad Kadi and Aram A. Shahin, "Caliph, Caliphate," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* ed. G. Bowering et al (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 81-86

## Part C. Imperial Culture and Empires as Cultural Agents

### 10. December 22: The Imperial Propaganda.

#### Reading:

Martin Kern, "Announcements from the Mountains: The Stele Inscriptions of the Qin First Emperor," and Christian Witschel, "The Res Gestae Divi Augusti and the Roman Empire," in: *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared*. Edited by Fritz-Heiner Mutschler and Achim Mittag (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 217-240 and 241-266.

Olivelle, Patrick (ed.) *Reimagining Aśoka* (Oxford 2012), pp. 1-14, 157-183.

Behistun Inscription on <http://www.livius.org/be-bm/behistun/behistun03.html>

The Orkhon Inscriptions in T. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhan Turkish* (Bloomington, 1968), 261-273.

Mongol letters from: Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245-1255", *Byzantion XV* (1940-41), 378-413. Reprinted in revised form, with English translation for all texts, in: Eric Voegelin *Published Essays: 1940-1952*, ed. by Ellis Sandoz, Volume 10, 76-125. Columbia, London: University of Missouri Press, 2000.

#### Recommended Reading:

Peter B. Golden, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 35-49.[Turkic Empire+Etienne's article for a great presentation]

### 11. December 29: Representing the Empire: Arts, Literature, Historiography, and Pageantry of the Imperial Rule

#### Reading

Fritz-Heiner Mutschler, "The Problem of 'Imperial Historiography' in Rome," in *Conceiving the Empire*, 119-141.

Matthew P. Canepa, "The Transformation of Sacred Space, Topography, and Royal Ritual in Persia and the Ancient Iranian World," *Heaven on Earth*, (2013), p. 319-372. or: Matthew P. Canepa, "Dynastic Sanctuaries and the Transformation of Iranian Kingship between Alexander and Islam," in *Of Architecture and Kingship: Strategies of Power in Iran from the Achaemenids to the Pahlavis*, eds. S. Babaei and T. Grigor, 65-117 (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2015)

Ebba Koch on Moghuls [either in *Universal Empires 194-209* or other piece]

## Part D: Collapse, Regeneration, and the Afterlife of major empires

### 12. January 5: Why and how empires collapse?

**Reading** (To be added)

Barkey ch. 8: On the Road out of Empire: Ottomans Struggle from Empire to Nation State. ???

William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing*, chapter 10, "Revolution," 253-283. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

### 13. January 12: Lingering empires and *translatio imperii*

**Reading:**

John Moreland, "The Carolingian Empire: Rome Reborn?" in: Alcock et al., *Empires*, 392-418.

Valérie Huet, "Napoleon I: A New Augustus?" in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789–1945*, ed. Catherine Edwards, 53-69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire*, 162-184.

Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 137-162.

Josef Wiesehofer, "The Survival and Rediscovery of Ancient Iran," in idem, *Ancient Persia* (London and New York: Tauris, 2001), 223-242.

Laila al-Gailani Werr, "Archaeology and Politics in Iraq," in: *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art*, ed. Brian A. Brown and Marian H. Feldman, 15-30 (Boston and Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

### 14. January 19: Summary: Commonalities and differences among major empires. The lasting importance of imperial studies.