



BRILL

JOURNAL OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY 13 (2020) 227–270

JOURNAL of  
EGYPTIAN  
HISTORY

brill.com/jeh

## *Theoretical and Archaeological Case Studies*



# ***Maat and Tianxia: Building World Orders in Ancient Egypt and China***

*Juan Carlos Moreno García*

CNRS (France), UMR 8167 (Sorbonne University)

*jmorenogarcia@hotmail.com*

*Yuri Pines*

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

*yuri.pines@mail.huji.ac.il*

### **Abstract**

Ancient China and pharaonic Egypt were two of the most long-lived polities of the ancient world. Both of them succeeded in integrating a diversity of regions and peoples under a single monarch and in creating unique self-referential cultures, which survived periods of political fragmentation and of conquest by foreign peoples. Under these conditions, key concepts emerged that served to express order, justice, harmony, and good government. They provided an indispensable ideological tool to legitimize royal authority as well as a world view that helped define Egyptian and Chinese values when compared to neighboring areas and peoples, usually regarded as the “Other.” Two of these concepts, Egyptian *maat* and Chinese *tianxia*, may prove particularly useful for comparing the very particular ways in which Egyptian and Chinese leaders thought about their role in the world, both as builders of cosmic order and as efficient rulers that held together the peoples they governed.

### **Keywords**

ancient China – ancient Egypt – *maat* – order – *tianxia*

## 1 Why Compare?

Recent decades have witnessed an explosive expansion of comparative studies of pre-modern history. One of the major factors that spurs this phenomenon is the increasing awareness of many historians that adding a comparative angle may enrich their research and offer new perspectives on the civilization on which they normally focus. F. Max Müller (1823–1900), the German professor of religion at Oxford, famously stated that “He who knows one [religion], knows none.”<sup>1</sup> Many scholars feel that this statement can be expanded to the humanities in general, including studies of intellectual, institutional, economic, and social history. Broad comparisons allow us to highlight particular trajectories of major civilizations in ways that would not be possible should we remain secluded within the linguistic and geographic framework of a single—even if extraordinarily rich—civilization.

Ancient Egypt and pre-modern China offer a very attractive pair for a comparative endeavor. Although the two civilizations never interacted and certainly could not have influenced each other, there are surprising similarities between the two. The most notable is their remarkable longevity. Despite numerous cataclysms, such as periods of domestic turmoil and foreign conquest, both civilizations preserved millennia-long continuity insofar as some of their basic features—from the monarchic form of rule to the peculiar sociopolitical structure, to the written language, to the perception of their marked cultural distinctiveness and superiority *vis-à-vis* the outlying “barbarians”—are concerned. These similarities aside, there are also marked differences between the two. One of the most notable is that of space. Whereas ancient Egypt “consisted mostly of a narrow strip of fertile land over 870km long ... surrounded by one of the harshest desert environments on earth,”<sup>2</sup> China’s spatial dimensions were incomparably larger, comprising—ever since the imperial unification of 221 BCE—most of the agriculturally productive territories of the East Asian sub-continent. Differences in size determined differences in the modes of interaction with other civilizational centers. Whereas Egypt had frequently to adapt itself to other political entities which were equally powerful and assertive, in the case of pre-modern China such interactions among equals were less common (even if more frequent than the imperial ideologues would like to admit). These similarities and differences are duly reflected in the dominant view of the world order in both civilizations—the focus of our comparison.

1 Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, 16.

2 Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, 15.

For our study we have opted to focus on a uniquely important term of political discourse in each civilization: Egyptian *maat* and Chinese *tianxia*. The two are not semantically identical: as we shall demonstrate below, *maat* was broader, referring both to domestic political order and to spatial perceptions, whereas *tianxia* was primarily a spatial concept rather than the “regime of value.” Yet differences aside, there is sufficient overlap between the two terms to merit an engaging comparative enterprise. We hope that our study will become another step toward exploring parallels and differences between Egypt and China.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Introducing the Terms

An iconic image at the mining site of Wadi Maghara, in the Sinai Peninsula, represents king Sneferu (c. 2613–2589 BCE) smiting with a mace an enemy (characterized as a foreigner) who kneels down in front of him. A short inscription describes the event: *d3 h3swt* “subduing foreign lands.”<sup>4</sup> Over the king, a short hieroglyphic inscription lists some of his names and royal titles, including a new one, *Nb-m3t* “Lord of *maat*.” Personal names formed with *maat* were not unknown in previous centuries,<sup>5</sup> nor were monumental representations of pharaohs smiting their enemies, of which there are earlier examples in the Sinai peninsula itself (e.g., Wadi Maghara, Wadi el-Humur).<sup>6</sup> In fact, the idea of fighting foreigners, characterized ideologically as enemies and a menace to Egypt, was featured as one of the main duties of kings, to the point that the earliest royal annals refer frequently to campaigns led against peoples living at the borders of the country.<sup>7</sup> Yet it was Sneferu who for the first time clearly associated *maat* with certain principles that were to define what proper kingship meant for the millennia to come, and that he followed closely during his own reign: fighting foreign peoples, promoting good order, erecting temples and statues for the gods, and increasing prosperity through selected

3 Among the few comparative studies published so far, Poo, *Enemies of Civilization*, may be the most significant. See also Baines, *Civilizations and Empires*; Wang, *Writing and the Ancient State*; Langer, “The Concept of ‘Frontier’ in New Kingdom Egypt,” 58–63.

4 Gardiner and Peet, *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, 56 and pl. 11.

5 Mathieu, “Du conflit archaïque au mythe osirien”; Bárta and Dulíková, “Politics of religious symbols: Maat,” 27–28.

6 Gardiner and Peet, *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, pl. 1; Ibrahim and Tallet, “Trois bas-reliefs de l’époque thinite”; Tallet, “Le roi Den et les Iountiou.”

7 Wilkinson, *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt*; Tallet, “Le roi Den et les Iountiou.”

administrative measures that improved the territorial and economic organization of the country.<sup>8</sup>

About a century later, the organization of power experienced deep changes in Egypt, mainly the expansion of bureaucracy (especially in the provinces), the incorporation of dignitaries who were not necessarily members of the (extended) royal family into the upper levels of administration, the implementation of an increasingly specialized bureaucratic structure, and a deeper involvement of the royal administration in the management and economic activities of the provinces.<sup>9</sup> These changes were accompanied by the emergence of innovative ideological tools aiming to tie together the expanding administrative elite of the kingdom through a new ethos and a shared set of values, including religious ones. This may explain why dignitaries and high officials began displaying a new title in their inscriptions, *ḥm-nṯr mꜣꜣt* “priest of *maat*” while at the same time they claimed in their inscriptions that they were “doing *maat*.” Furthermore a “popular” new cult, centered on Osiris (closely associated with the ancestral burial place of the monarch, at Abydos, as well as with the royal ideals of order and regeneration) and on the idea of resurrection in the afterworld, inspired an exuberant iconography in private tombs and the development of “secret” (*sšꜣtꜣ*) funerary texts, probably the antecedents of the so-called Coffin Texts.<sup>10</sup> Both service to *maat* and the cult of Osiris revolved around a crucial concept: judgment of one’s acts, either to encourage right behavior in this world or to ensure salvation in the afterlife. *Maat* thus formally became the expression of new ethical values in the context of a somewhat more impersonal exercise of power,<sup>11</sup> detached partly from the blood links and the autocratic model prevailing before 2500 BCE (when high officials and members of the Court were ideally regarded as members of the royal family, as sons or daughters of the pharaoh, *šꜣ nšwt/šꜣt nšwt*). In short, it helped instill a fresh *esprit de corps* among the ruling elite of the kingdom.

So, what or who was *maat*? Firstly it was a goddess who, secondly, embodied a complex set of values (religious, cultural, social, and political) ranging from truth, justice, right, order, and moral behavior to a universal dimension that

8 Baines, “Kingship, Definition of Culture, and Legitimation,” 9–19, 45–46 and “Origins of Egyptian Kingship”; Moreno García, “The territorial administration of the kingdom in the 3rd millennium,” 95–99; Borrego Gallardo, “Señor de Maat.”

9 Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, 31–33.

10 Frandsen, “Aspects of Kingship in Ancient Egypt”; Mathieu, “Mais qui est donc Osiris?”; Bárta and Dulíková, “Divine and Terrestrial” and “Politics of religious symbols: Maat”; Smith, *Following Osiris*, 107–65; Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, 31–33.

11 Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit*; Lichtheim, *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies*.

included cosmic order and the “normal,” balanced harmony that prevails both in society and in the world, a force indispensable to maintain the smooth functioning of the world and the preservation of the universe, the ideal of legitimate rule.<sup>12</sup> However, from an ideological and religious point of view, *maat* was threatened by chaos (*isfet*), embodied in part by foreign forces that lived beyond the borders of Egypt, always ready to descend on the Nile Valley and destroy the order and prosperity built by Pharaohs with the blessing of gods.<sup>13</sup> But chaos could also arise within Egypt itself, when social forces and ambitious leaders eventually challenged the legitimate rule of Pharaohs and lead the country into anarchy, division, and generalized misery, as described in many literary compositions.<sup>14</sup> Even Egyptians who shared lifestyles with nomads and who lived at the margins of the Nile Valley (like herders), or who were simply affected by disability, were considered in some way to be outside *maat* as they were not quite “normal” according to Egyptian ideals.<sup>15</sup> It is for this reason that the concept of *maat* is also inseparable from the notions of hierarchy and reciprocity, when kings ensured prosperity for their subjects (in exchange for taxes and obedience), built temples, performed rituals and presented offerings to gods (in exchange for their support), and led military campaigns against their neighbors with the aim of destroying the threat they constituted for Egypt and to expand the borders of Egypt (and, in doing so, to widen the domain of *maat*; in return, tribute and wealth flowed into the kingdom).<sup>16</sup> In this view, the king was central to ensuring that *maat* should prevail while Egypt was seen, in turn, as the center of the world.<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, the scene in which Sneferu smote a foreign enemy, carved in a remote border area, expressed the main duty of pharaohs, to destroy chaos so as to preserve order and the integrity (territorial,

12 Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit*; Bickel, *La cosmogonie égyptienne*, 175–76; Baines and Yoffee, “Order, Legitimacy and Wealth,” 212–14, 252–54; Davies, *Peace in Ancient Egypt*, 82–102; Bárta and Dulíková, “Politics of religious symbols: Maat.”

13 Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*; O'Connor, “Egypt's views of ‘Others’”; cf. also, from a literary perspective, Di Biase-Dyson, *Foreigners and Egyptians in the Late Egyptian Stories*, and from a more “sociological” one, Mynářová, Kilani, and Alivernini, *A Stranger in the House—the Crossroads III*.

14 Cf., for instance, *The Words of Khakheperreseneb*: “The land is in uproar, has become what destroys me, has been made into what rests in peace. **Maat** is put outside, chaos within the council. The counsels of the gods are thrown into tumult, and their directives are neglected. The land is <in> calamity, mourning in every place, towns and districts in woe, and everyone alike is wronged” (Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe*, 147).

15 Fischer-Elfert, *Abseits von Maat*; Diego Espinel, “Unusual herders.”

16 Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*; Teeter, *The Presentation of Maat*.

17 Cf. Egyptian ideal “maps” and representations of the world: Cornelius, “Ancient Egypt and the Other,” 323–24.

but also moral) of Egypt. In the end, the concept of *maat* marked a sharp difference between Egypt and the outside world and provided a template that justified a hostile approach to non-Egyptians.

*Tianxia* 天下 is an important, albeit less overarching concept than *maat*. Literally it means “under the sky,” but a more appropriate translation is “All-under-Heaven.” Heaven had been the supreme deity of Chinese pantheon ever since the beginning of the Zhou dynasty (c. 1046–255 BCE), so the term *tianxia* could initially have had religious connotations, but these are much less pronounced than with *maat*. In any case, during the heyday of belief in Heaven as the guiding force in human affairs, namely during the Western Zhou Period (c. 1046–771 BCE), the term *tianxia* itself was next to non-existent. When it did appear—c. 600 BCE during the so-called Spring-and-Autumn Period (Chunqiu, 770–453 BCE)—the term *tianxia* had no observable religious meaning.

The Spring-and-Autumn Period was the age of political disintegration. The loosely unified Western Zhou realm under the overall control of the Zhou “Sons of Heaven” (*tianzi* 天子) was replaced with a multi-state world inhabited by several dozen rival polities. Yet despite persistent political conflicts, the aristocratic elites across the Zhou world retained a relatively high degree of cultural cohesiveness. The earliest appearances of the term *tianxia* refer precisely to this culturally unified *oikumene*, the realm of shared values, shared public opinion of the elites, shared cultural orientations. By the beginning of the next period, ominously known as the age of the Warring States (Zhanguo, 453–221 BCE), *tianxia* acquires a new meaning. The referent is the supra-territorial realm which encompasses regional states (*guo* 國 or *bang* 邦) and is incomparably superior to them. Unification of this realm under the aegis of a single monarch becomes the avowed goal of political thinkers of that age and in due time will turn into the core value of Chinese political culture in general (see in the next section, the subsection 3.3, *Parallels in China*).<sup>18</sup>

Unlike many other terms of China’s political and philosophical discourse, *tianxia* was never systematically defined. Its usage remained loose, reminding one of such terms as “the world,” “humanity,” or “nation” in current political debates. Overall, the primary meaning of *tianxia* was geographical—it referred to the world that was supposed to be ruled (even if just symbolically) by the Son of Heaven. Second, the term retained its narrower meaning as a realm of shared cultural values, the area which was more readily coterminous with “China” rather than with the whole world. Third, in certain contexts *tianxia* could stand as equivalent of “society” versus the “state,” an entity of

18 The discussion here is based on Pines, “Changing Views of *tianxia*.”

shared economic and human resources that should be prudently utilized by the rulers. Finally, in certain texts, most notably in the highly influential philosophical treatise *Laozi* (c. fourth century BCE), *tianxia* attains cosmic dimensions, becoming coterminous with the universe itself.<sup>19</sup> In what follows, we shall focus primarily on spatial and cultural meanings of *tianxia*, because these two remained most prominent throughout the twenty-five odd centuries during which the term *tianxia* retained its position at the center of China's political discourse.<sup>20</sup>

### 3 *Maat* as “Order” and Its Chinese Parallels

*Maat* and *tianxia* embodied a geographical dimension (the domain where order, harmony, and justice prevailed under the authority of a rightful and legitimate ruler of semi-divine nature) but also a cultural, social, and political one. The balance between the two semantic fields in each of the terms is different, though. It can be surmised that in *maat* the culture-political meaning predominates, whereas in *tianxia* the spatial aspect is more prominent. In this section we shall focus primarily on *maat*, adding a brief summary of parallel aspects of *tianxia*.

From 2500 BCE onward the biographies carved on the monuments of many Egyptian officials claimed not only the managerial skills of their protagonists but also their moral values and honest behavior, as their acts pursued the implementation of *maat* in this world.<sup>21</sup> Of course, the main duty of Pharaohs, as deputies of gods on earth, was to ensure that their measures guaranteed that order, prosperity, justice, and peace prevailed in Egypt (KRI I 68, 6–7: “A king’s [strength] is *maat*”). In return, people should obey, carry out the decisions taken by kings and officials, and accept their position in a social hierarchy that classified people according to their rank, trade, and social connections (for instance, as members of patronage networks), as compositions such as the *onomastica* (“encyclopedic” lists of all kinds of beings and things classified by categories) or the *Coffin Texts* show. Keeping Egypt safe from the threat of foreigners was thus of primal importance, as expressed for instance in the

19 See details in Pines, “Changing Views of *tianxia*.”

20 Limitations of space prevent us from discussing the relevance of the term *tianxia* in modern and current China. For very different perspectives, compare Levinson, “Tien-hsia,” and the articles collected in Wang, *Chinese Visions of World Order*.

21 Assmann, *Ma'at*; Lichtheim, *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Moral Values in Ancient Egypt*.



*Prophecy of Neferty*, when only the restoration of the monarchy after a period of chaos would bring order to the country again:

The Walls-of-the-Ruler will be built. There will be no letting Asiatics come down to Egypt, so they will ask for water as suppliants do, to let their flocks drink. Maat will return to its proper place, with Chaos (*isfet*) driven outside.<sup>22</sup>

However, from an ideological point of view, restoration of order often accompanied the arrival of a new Pharaoh on the throne, so previous periods were characterized in some cases as prone to disorder (even if this had not actually happened). That is why ceremonies led by kings and usually represented in temples of the New Kingdom and later (such as the offering of *maat*) constituted a potent expression of the legitimacy of the king *in the present*. This aspect is further emphasized because the offering of *maat* frequently involved the presentation of the king's name (commonly the prenomen, the name assumed by the king at his accession to the throne), a ceremony that involved his accepting the principles of *maat*, being associated with the goddess, and being imbued with *maat*.<sup>23</sup> As for the topos of "dissolution and restoration," when kings claimed to have reestablished order after an episode of political distress relatively close *in the past*, its aim was to justify the legitimacy of a newcomer to the throne of Egypt.<sup>24</sup> Improving what predecessors had accomplished (in terms of wealth, building programs, expansion abroad, *etc.*) was another way of demonstrating divine support, legitimate rule, and compliance with the principles of *maat*.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.1 *The Question of Public Virtue*

Ancient societies praised and promoted personal qualities as well as models of behavior that were, on the one hand, functional for the ideal exercise and preservation of authority and, on the other hand, accorded with the dominant moral values. Pharaonic Egypt was no exception.<sup>26</sup> Officials usually claimed to be *jqr* "excellent" and to "do *maat*" or to "speak *maat*." Conversely, on their monuments they recited long lists of evil or reprehensible actions that they had avoided during their lifetimes (the so-called negative confessions: "I have

22 Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe*, 139.

23 Teeter, *The Presentation of Maat*, 82–83.

24 Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists*, 259–75.

25 Vernus, *Essai sur la conscience de l'Histoire*.

26 Lichtheim, *Moral Values in Ancient Egypt*.



not committed sin," "I have not stolen," "I have not uttered lies," *etc.*). Finally, they also illustrated their solid moral principles when they evoked praiseworthy actions towards vulnerable people, like protecting widows and orphans, providing grain and cattle to the poor, and defending the humble against the abuses of the powerful. Do these claims constitute enough evidence about the existence of *public* virtues embodied by *maat*? This appears doubtful because of the mandatory and religious basis laying behind these declarations. *Maat* certainly imposed a general framework as well as templates for moral behavior, reinforced by the perspective of punishment in this world and in the afterlife in case of crime and misbehavior. Yet in an otherwise hierarchical and bureaucratically organized society, to be a good official it sufficed simply to respect such frameworks and templates (and the values they encoded) when implementing orders *that came from above*.<sup>27</sup> Kings, their entourage, the provincial nobility, and patrons structured society in a strongly vertical manner. They exercised authority and monopolized *public* decision-taking too. So any possibility of building authority from the bottom up, to create a civic order and to promote the feeling of being part of a political community through deliberation, autonomous political decision-taking, and individual responsibility in matters that affected all fellow *citizens*, that could crystallize in norms and laws negotiated over time, was at best very limited and left practically no space for individual political agency.<sup>28</sup>

There was perhaps a brief, exceptional period in Egyptian history during which new values appeared and were partially related to the existence of apparently more autonomous communities such as towns and villages. Following the end of the unified monarchy that had ruled Egypt for a millennium, the period *c.* 2160–2050 BCE was marked by political fragmentation. It was then that towns thrived and emerged for the first time as nodes of territorial organization, social identity, and legitimization. Approval of the actions of an official by his city became a popular laudatory epithet ("one beloved by his city"), as did the topoi of protecting one's town or enriching it. City audiences seem also to have become significant for purposes of ideology and legitimacy, according to an exceptional passage in the Teaching for Merykara that refers to demagogues and agitators who disturbed the peace of cities through their speeches and may have swept urban dwellers into rebellion.<sup>29</sup> New terms like "man-of-the-city" (citizen?) and the "living-one-of-the-city" (officer of the city troops) and mentions to their "city god" further confirm the role of towns as

27 Vernus, "The Royal Command (*wꜥ-nsw*)."

28 Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*.

29 Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe*, 217–18.

sources of identity.<sup>30</sup> However, what is missing from this picture is any trace of collective forms of town government and, consequently, of references to public virtues born from political deliberation among equals. It is perhaps significant that when deliberation was referred to in private inscriptions of this period, it referred exclusively to the rhetorical abilities of officials in the presence of their superiors in the Chamber of Dignitaries (*sh n srw*). But even in this very specific setting, deliberation appears more or less irrelevant somehow, as it was presented through the lens of a literary *topos* in which the king asked his dignitaries for advice, upon which their disappointing, pusillanimous responses prompted him to take sharply contrasting, audacious measures.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.2 *Social Order: Keeping Society Together*

The so-called “Great Hymn to Osiris”, inscribed on the stela of Amenmose, an “overseer of the cattle of Amun” (probably fifteenth century BCE), provides an idealizing view of a harmonious society living according to the principles of *maat*:

Majesty has taken its seat, abundance is established by his [the king’s] laws. Roads are open, ways are free, how the two shores prosper! Evil is fled, crime is gone, the land has peace under its lord. *Maat* is established for her lord, one turns the back on falsehood.<sup>32</sup>

But the actual implementation of *maat* was only possible by the work of a specific group of officials headed by the vizier, as kings proclaimed in their homily when a vizier took up office:

A dignitary who lies comes out as he deserves. Lo, you succeed in doing this office by doing justice [*maat*]. Lo, doing justice [*maat*] is what is wanted in the actions of the vizier. Lo, the vizier is its true guardian since the time of god. Lo, what one says of the vizier’s chief scribe: ‘scribe of Justice [*maat*]’ one says of him. As to the hall in which you judge, it has a room full of [written] decisions. He who does justice [*maat*] before all people, he is the vizier. Lo, a man remains in his office, if he acts as he is charged ...<sup>33</sup>

30 Moreno García, *Études sur l’Administration*, 31–52 and “Social Inequality.”

31 Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, 65.

32 Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* 11, 85.

33 Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* 11, 23.

In doing so, viziers implemented royal decisions and enforced laws. However, these should not be understood as a codified body of norms and regulations, but as a mixture of former officials' decisions, royal decrees, proper procedures, and moral principles that guided officials in their day-to-day resolutions.<sup>34</sup>

Education sought to instruct future scribes and officials in values that privileged respect for hierarchy, fulfillment of orders, honest behavior towards subordinates and common people (including avoiding abuses or arbitrary collection of taxes), and acting according to *maat*. A rich literary corpus, quite often preserved in the form of school exercises, developed these topics as "teachings" attributed to famous officials of the past.<sup>35</sup> As for private monuments, the biographies inscribed in them as well as religious compositions praised these same values and the social order derived from them, sanctioned by the gods.<sup>36</sup> According to this view, good order was based on the obedience and on the taxes paid by subjects, while officials and royal agents should take care of them and prevent abuses, as it is plainly expressed (including recognition of the importance of commoners for the well-being of superiors) in the following passages from *The Loyalist Teaching*, addressed to commoners and elite alike:

Care for men, organize people, that you may secure servants who are active! It is mankind who create all that exists; one lives on what comes from their hands. They are lacking, and then poverty prevails. The professions are what provide provisions.

Do not make a field-worker wretched with taxes—let him be well off, and he will still be there for you the next year. If he lives, you have his hands; you ruin him, and then he plans to turn vagabond. The man who fixes the taxes in proportion to the barley is [a just] man in God's eyes. The riches of the unjust man cannot stay.

Fight for men in every respect! They are a flock, good for their lord. Evidently by them alone one lives.<sup>37</sup>

However, far from these ideal expressions of social harmony, internal conflict arose occasionally, particularly because of intrigues promoted by factions at court or when traditional rules and authorities were no longer respected and

34 Van den Boorn, *The Duties of the Vizier*, 166–70; Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, 113–16.

35 Vernus, *Sagesses de l'Égypte pharaonique*; Ragazzoli, *Scribes and "La Littérature de Scribe."*

36 Stauder-Porchet, *Les Autobiographies de l'Ancien Empire and Ancient Egyptian Biographies*.

37 Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe*, 240–41.

the country fell into chaos. Some examples include the dismissal of several high dignitaries and the trial of a queen in the time of Pepi I, the killing of Amenemhat I, the conspiracy and attempt to assassinate Ramesses III,<sup>38</sup> as well as factional fighting in Thebes during the early first millennium BCE that resulted in the execution or the forced exile of the losers. In the last example, the victor, prince Osorkon, claimed to have acted in accordance with the wishes of common people who begged for the restoration of order (“*they said with one accord*”):

Behold, he has brought you [to us] in order to dispel our misery by putting an end to the cloudburst confronting us; since this land has fallen into a state of drowning, its laws having perished at the hands of [those who rebell]ed against their lord, even those who had been his officials, while every palette-bearing scribe in his temples would harm his ordinances, which the Lord of the Calamus (=god Thoth) had set down on the scroll, and would destroy the customary rituals of the temples that had fallen into a state of plunder. Yet it was not in the knowledge of the king. [You shall establish (?)] the temples as before, in the gr[eatness (?)] of the first primeval time of Thebes.<sup>39</sup>

As for the subversion of normal order, it is frequently evoked in the so-called “negative” literature, when the collapse of the monarchy and its administration are described in the most negative terms, as a prelude to chaos, misery and murder only to be stopped by the arrival on the throne of a determined and legitimate king who will restore order, prosperity, and peace. However, hard evidence about such troubled episodes is difficult to find. It appears instead that corruption, abuses against commoners, and a fierce defense of privileges and *status quo* against outsiders (even when these were appointed by the king) were much more frequent and that, occasionally, such episodes disrupted regular social life and prompted violence, at least at a local level. Common people had few options but to flee or to find the protection of a powerful patron if they were to get some security in their ordinary life,<sup>40</sup> a situation far removed from ideal literary compositions in which people of very low status addressed their pleas directly to high officials in order to get justice, as it happened for instance

38 Vernus, *Affaires et Scandales sous les Ramsès*.

39 Caminos, *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon*, 42; Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy*, 355.

40 Some examples: Vernus, *Affaires et Scandales sous les Ramsès*; Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands* 9; Gabolde, “Des travailleurs en vadrouille”; Moreno García, “The ‘other’ administration.”

in the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* (c. 1850 BCE).<sup>41</sup> Another body of evidence can be found in the so-called “*execration texts*,” that is to say the inscriptions that covered figurines representing foreigners and that mention potential enemies and rebels felt as a threat to Egypt. Whereas Nubians, Asiatics, and Libyans figure conspicuously in these texts, there are also abundant references to Egyptians identified by their names.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, a certain social harmony was indispensable for the continuity of the monarchy. That is why literary compositions intended for officials (especially didactic/education ones) repeatedly underlined the importance of respecting *maat* both as a moral guide in their relations towards superiors and subordinates and as an inspiring force for their everyday acts in order to help preserve social order and, more generally, the harmony of the cosmos.

### 3.3 *Parallels in China*

Perhaps nothing can testify better to the semantic richness of the term *maat* than juxtaposing it with a broad number of Chinese terms that have some overlapping meanings. When we speak of *maat* as a combination of social order and public virtue, there is no single Chinese equivalent but rather several related terms, of which three merit brief mention here. These terms are *de* 德 (virtue), *yi* 義 (righteousness, dutifulness, propriety, justice), and *zhi* 治 (orderly rule). Since a detailed discussion of each of these terms is impossible within this article, we shall confine ourselves to pointing out briefly their parallels with *maat*.

The term *de* is one of the oldest keywords in China’s political and ethical lexicon. It gained prominence during the Western Zhou Period when it was conceptualized as the ruler’s charismatic power or *mana*, the sacred substance which allowed the ruler to attain Heaven’s support without which the dynastic enterprise would be doomed. The political manifestation of the ruler’s *de* was his caring for the people, displaying kindness, and ensuring the subjects’ livelihood. *De* could be bequeathed to the ruler’s descendants and even to his ministers. In due course, *de* became associated primarily with non-coercive governing methods and with the concept of the moral virtue which generates the subject’s compliance and even entices foreigners to submit to one’s rule. Whereas the ruler’s charismatic *de* remained a singularly important prerequisite of successful rule, *de* in the meaning of moral virtue became a desired

41 Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe*, 54–88.

42 Sethe, *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten*, 62–69; Abu Bakr and Osing, “Ächtungstexte”; Osing, “Ächtungstexte”; Posener, *Cinq Figurines d’Envoûtement*, 55–56; Posener and Osing, “Tablettes-figurines de prisonniers.”

attribute of any “noble man” (*junzi*), *i.e.*, any official or aspiring official. The “virtuous behavior” (*de xing* 德行) required of officials and rulers closely resembles “doing *maat*” in the Egyptian context.<sup>43</sup>

The second Chinese term which has interesting parallels with *maat* is *yi* 義. This is a somewhat tricky term because it can depict both individual qualities and more general normalized behavior. It was originally closely related to the idea of ceremonial decorum (transcribed currently as *yi* 儀), and as such it has certain overlapping meanings with the term *li* 禮 (ritual), which was the *terminus technicus* for depicting hierarchic social order during the Spring-and-Autumn Period and beyond.<sup>44</sup> In distinction from the relatively specific *li*, however, *yi* gained a much broader meaning as “a set of human obligations and ethical standards which fit one’s role and status, and ... the conventional norms of right conduct concerning the relationship between an individual and his group.”<sup>45</sup> Much like *maat*, the term *yi* could depict the normative hierarchic order but also could relate to an individual’s behavior, sense of dutifulness, making appropriate choices, and the like.

The last of the relevant terms to consider here is *zhi* 治, which is usually used as a verb (“to order,” “to rule,” or, most appropriately “to rule in an orderly fashion,” “to rule well”). As a noun this term depicts orderly rule as an opposite to chaos or calamity (*luan* 亂). As such it is closely comparable with the pair *maat-isfet* discussed above.<sup>46</sup>

So what about *tianxia*? Did the term contain any aspects of “political order”? In certain circumstances it surely did. By the very fact that *tianxia* represented the largest imaginable spatial unit, the entirety of the subcelestial realm, it was superior to an individual state in moral terms, just as the whole was always superior to its parts.<sup>47</sup> Implicitly, *tianxia* represented a “regime of value” and not just a spatial concept. However, given the fact that many other terms were much more specific in depicting political and moral order, *tianxia* was rarely used in this context. One notable exception is a brilliant essay written by the late imperial man of letters, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682 CE). Gu explained

43 For the earliest usages of *de*, see Kominami, “Tenmei to toku” and Kryukov, “Symbols of Power.” Two forthcoming issues of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* are due to discuss various semantic meanings of *de* (virtue) in early Chinese texts.

44 For *li* (ritual) and its multiple meanings, see Pines, “Disputers of the *Li*.”

45 Jia and Kwok, “From Clan Manners,” 39.

46 For the *zhi-luan* pair, see Sato, *The Confucian Quest for Order*, 120–25.

47 For the primacy of the “whole” over its parts in Chinese culture, see Lewis, *The Construction of Space*.

the differences between the collapse of *tianxia* and the collapse of a *guo* (normally, an individual state, but in this context referring to a dynasty) as follows:

There is a loss of a state/dynasty and there is a loss of All-under-Heaven. How do they differ? I would say: when a different clan changes the [dynasty's] name, this is called "to lose a state/dynasty." When benevolence and righteousness are blocked leading to the situation that "beasts devour humans"<sup>48</sup> and the humans are to devour each other—this is called "to lose All-under-Heaven." ... Thus, one should be able to protect All-under-Heaven, and only then be able to protect one's state/dynasty. Protecting the state/dynasty is the task for its ruler, its ministers, and "meat-eaters" (*i.e.* the elites) to contemplate. Protecting All-under-Heaven—even the basest among the commoners should take part in this!<sup>49</sup>

Limitations of space prevent us from analyzing in-depth this extraordinarily interesting essay in its immediate political and intellectual context, nor shall we address the very democratic-sounding insistence that the task of protecting "All-under-Heaven" should be shared by all, even "the basest among the commoners." What is important here is that All-under-Heaven is explicitly identified as the "regime of value," the epitome of benevolence and righteousness. This usage of *tianxia* is where it is closest to the idea of *maat*. And yet it must be re-emphasized that such a usage remained relatively rare. In political discourse of both pre-imperial (pre-221 BCE) and imperial China (221 BCE–1911 CE), *tianxia* was first and foremost a spatial concept. It is to these dimensions of *maat* and *tianxia* that we now turn.

## 4 The Geographical Dimension of *Maat* and *Tianxia*

### 4.1 *Maat*

The geographical ideal of *maat* was centered on Egypt itself, the territory ruled by the gods through the mediation of the Pharaoh, who was himself the son of the god Horus and the embodiment of legitimate rule. So Egypt was the realm of prosperity, justice, and social harmony, and that is why the concept of border was so important in pharaonic ideology, as it served as a clear demarcation

48 Reference to *Mengzi* 1.4.

49 A section "Zheng shi" 正始 from Gu Yanwu, *Rizhilu* 13: 470–72.



not only between different political entities and territories, but also between different lifestyles, beliefs, and possibilities of human existence.<sup>50</sup> The predictable annual rhythm of the Nile, when the flood made agricultural abundance in its valley possible, marked a sharp contrast with neighboring areas, dominated by unpredictable rain, poor soils, and wandering populations of herders in a harsh desert environment. From an ideological point of view, foreigners were forced to beg permission to settle into the Nile Valley in order to escape famine and nourish themselves and their flocks. Representations of emaciated foreigners decorated Egyptian temples and tombs, whereas some didactic texts recall the Biblical story of Joseph, whose protagonists were herders in search of water and pasture. Thus, a Ramesside scribe informed his superior that a Bedouin tribe from Edom was authorized to cross an Egyptian fortress and reach lakes in the Wadi Tumilat to sustain themselves as well as their flocks.<sup>51</sup> More generally, letting foreign peoples and rulers breathe and live while they requested peace from Pharaoh was a popular theme in Egyptian ideology and contributed to the main purpose of proclaiming the superiority of Egypt face-to-face with foreign territories.<sup>52</sup> The same idea was also expressed in an alternate, negative way, in descriptions of the fate reserved to Egypt in case the monarchy (and the social order it embodied) collapsed. Vivid depictions of chaos imagined Egypt as invaded by foreigners who took over the resources of the country for themselves, while famine and distress afflicted Egyptians:

O, yet the desert is throughout the land, provinces are hacked up; the outside bow-people have come into Egypt.

O, yet Elephantine, Thinis, the Upper Egyptian (provinces?) have not paid tax because of strife. Destroyed are chufa, charcoal, blue plant dye, *maaw*-wood, *nwt*-wood, brushwood, the work of craftsmen ... the due deliveries of the palace. What is the treasury for, without its revenues—for the heart of the king is happy (only) when *maat* comes to him, and then every foreign land (says) 'He is our water, he is our fodder!' What may we do about it, since it has come to perishing?

O, yet barley has perished everywhere, (people) are stripped of clothes and unanointed with oil; everyone says 'There is nothing!'—the storehouse is razed, its guard stretched out on the ground.<sup>53</sup>

50 Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*; Galán, *Victory and Border*; Allen, "The Egyptian concept of the world"; Richards, "Conceptual Landscapes"; Langer, "The Concept of 'Frontier' in New Kingdom Egypt."

51 Papyrus Anastasi VI: Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 293.

52 Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 234–39.

53 Enmarch, *A World Upturned*, 81, 90–91, 114.

In this perspective, the concept of border was critical to any representation of cosmic order. Well-delimited borders, surveyed by the agents of the king (occasionally by military posts) and defended by the Pharaoh preserved the oasis of peace, prosperity, and justice that Egypt was.<sup>54</sup> The rich epigraphic and iconographic program present in rock inscriptions placed in border areas celebrated kings as protectors of the kingdom and marked the limits of royal authority, that is to say, the zones in which contact and conflict with foreigners may inevitably arise, so the presence of the king was most needed.<sup>55</sup> This means that the concept of *maat* itself came under stress in periods of intense conflict with foreign powers, when borders (more precisely, spheres of influence) fluctuated dependent on the outcome of military campaigns, on diplomatic agreements, or on the capacity to control distant strategic points.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, expansion into Nubia from the end of the First Intermediate Period onward, and towards Asia in the New Kingdom, transformed the role of kings with respect to *maat*. Expanding the boundaries of Egypt and, consequently, the domain of *maat* at the expense of chaos through warfare and conquest became a cosmic mission of kings and introduced an enhanced ideology that was frequently at odds with *Realpolitik* concerns. An example can be found in the ironic letter addressed by Khattushili III to Ramesses II, when he was informed that the Pharaoh was carrying on his celebration program of the Qadesh battle. There the Hittites were depicted as cowards, defeated and humiliated, while the two countries, Egypt and Khatti, were already at peace. His question “*Was no army present?*” is patently ironical and refers to Ramses’ assertion that he had won alone (abandoned by his own army) against the entire Hittite coalition.<sup>57</sup> In fact, diplomatic agreements and treaties that regulated relations between powers and that delimited their respective spheres of influence (like the famous Egyptian-Hittite treaty between Khattushili III and Ramesses II) challenged ideologically the universal claim of Egypt to extend *maat* wherever and whenever it wished. The only acceptable way to integrate compromise was to present partners as “brothers,” members in some way of the same family.<sup>58</sup>

Things were different with respect to nomadic peoples.<sup>59</sup> Usually represented as miserable wanderers and raiders, eager to invade Egypt at the slightest opportunity, their mobile lifestyle, their cultural values, and the “marginal”

54 Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 33–112; Galán, *Victory and Border*; Vogel, “This far and not a step further!”; Langer, “The Concept of ‘Frontier’ in New Kingdom Egypt.”

55 Thum, “When Pharaoh turned the landscape.”

56 An example: Somaglino and Tallet, “A Road to the Arabian Peninsula.”

57 Liverani, “Hattushili alle Prese con la Propaganda Ramesside.”

58 *KRI* II 225–232; *KRITA* II 79–85. Precedents discussed by Mynařova, “Lost in translation.”

59 Moreno García, “*Hwt ih(w)t*,” “Ethnicity in Ancient Egypt,” and “Elusive ‘Libyans’”

natural environment in which they lived only aroused suspicion and antagonism in Egyptians—at least on an ideological level. Unfavorably regarded as not reliable, as people who neither respected conventions nor waged war properly, as barbarians with no consideration for rules nor for civilized life, diplomatic agreements with them were utterly impossible, so in order to maintain *maat* warfare was the only way to deal with them, followed by deportation and enslavement. However, increased contact with nomadic peoples (especially in Nubia and the Levant), particularly as providers of coveted goods (minerals, livestock, plants, hides, *etc.*), meant that such an ideal could hardly be followed in practical life. Literary texts such as the *Tale of Sinuhe* present nomads in a more favorable light, and many inscriptions reveal that mobile populations were indispensable in mining operations, for instance in the Sinai, and quite probably in the exploitation of the natural resources of the Nile Valley too (pasture land, *etc.*).<sup>60</sup> In fact, nomads lived peacefully among Egyptians (as revealed by the papyrus of Gebelein, c. 2500 BCE),<sup>61</sup> were buried in their own cemeteries in Egypt (like the Pan-Grave necropoli) and migrants from the Levant claimed proudly to be *aamu* “Asiatic” in their otherwise perfectly Egyptian-style monuments. Ultimately, the geographical and cosmic role both of nomads and of the territories in which they lived was, from a perspective centered on *maat*, that of a peripheral world of little use (except as producers of rare goods) for the core, Egypt. As negotiation and diplomatic arrangements were impossible with them, erecting fortified barriers and launching military campaigns served to keep them away from Egypt.

A final word concerns the ideological challenge posed by periods of political fragmentation, when the unified monarchy was replaced by two or more polities. From the perspective of *maat*, in such an anomalous situation each regional power tried to legitimize its own authority by presenting itself as *the* center of order, prosperity and wealth, whereas its neighbors starved and were afflicted by misfortune. Perhaps the most popular ideological expression was the motif of famine, developed particularly during the First Intermediate Period (c. 2160–2050 BCE), when officials claimed that their own city or province was well nourished during an episode of shortage and famine that affected only neighboring areas, never their own (contiguous provinces even made the same statement simultaneously, with neighbors always being prone to calamity). In this way the old *topos* of a prosperous Egypt surrounded by miserable peoples and foreign territories was adapted to a local scale, when a chosen city or province ruled by an efficient official emerged as a center of

60 Moreno García, “*Hwt ih(w)t*.”

61 Posener-Krieger, *I Papiri di Gebelein*.

order blessed by *maat*.<sup>62</sup> Foreign rulers of Egypt made similar statements, as their own times and deeds were likewise the expression of *maat*. Thus, when the Kushite king Taharqa described an exceptionally high Nile in the sixth year of his reign (684 BCE), he claimed that:

This land is overflowing in his time, just as it was in the era of the Lord of the Universe, with every man sleeping until dawn without a care at all, for *maat* has been introduced throughout the banks and wrongdoing pinned to the ground.<sup>63</sup>

And when the Saite king Psametik I forced the adoption of his daughter Nitocris as God's Wife at Thebes by Amonardis II, the daughter of Taharqa, in 655 BCE—a political measure that marked the end of Nubian control over Thebes and the effective reunification of Egypt—he stated carefully that he followed the proper legitimate rules, without arbitrarily evicting the former holder of this critically important position:

Now, however, I have heard that a king's daughter is already there, of ... the Good God [Taharqa], the justified, whom he had given to his sister to be her eldest daughter and who is there as God's Wife. I shall not do the very thing that should not be done and expel an heir from his position, because I am a king who loves *maat*, while my special abomination is falsehood, being a son and protector of his father, who has seized the inheritance of (god) Geb and united the two portions (of Egypt) as a youth. Thus I shall give her (Nitocris) to her (Amonardis II) to be her eldest daughter likewise, as she (Amonardis II) was made over to the sister of her father.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.2 Tianxia

The most immediate resemblance between *tianxia* and *maat* is that political disintegration was considered anomalous and most unwelcome. In the case of *tianxia* this was arguably the single most important point. Ever since the Warring States Period, texts abound with discussions about the need to “order (or “to rule well”) All-under-Heaven” (*zhi tianxia* 治天下), to “stabilize All-under-Heaven” (*ding tianxia* 定天下), to “pacify All-under-Heaven” (*ping tianxia* 平天下), and so forth. Each of these actions presupposed unification

62 Moreno García, *Études sur l'Administration*, 1–92.

63 Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy*, 543.

64 Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy*, 578.

of All-under-Heaven under a single monarch. Thus, when one of Confucius's major followers, Mengzi (a.k.a. Mencius, c. 380–304 BCE) was asked by a regional king “how to stabilize All-under-Heaven,” his answer was unequivocal: “stability is in unity.”<sup>65</sup>

This quest for unity was not just the bottom line of the political recipes distinctive of the Warring States Period but became the cornerstone of traditional Chinese political culture as a whole. It was a *sine qua non* for a dynasty's legitimacy. Regional regimes, which recurred on Chinese soil during periods of fragmentation, tried—very much like regional rulers in fragmented Egypt—to speak loftily of themselves as rulers of All-under-Heaven, but this was not just a rhetorical convention. The paradigm of the singularity of the emperor required of powerful regional leaders to reject the legitimacy of any alternative claimants to the imperial throne. This inevitably led rival imperial regimes to the life-or-death struggle from which only one winner could emerge. Although under certain circumstances recognizing a rival emperor could be expedient, such recognition rarely lasted for long. Stable coexistence of two “Sons of Heaven”—*e.g.*, during the Northern Song (960–1127) and Liao (907–1125) century of peaceful relations (between 1005 and 1122)—was considered an aberration. However beneficent peaceful relations were, they could never be accepted as a permanent solution. In due time one of the sides was prone to act so as to restore the normative situation: there are “neither two suns in Heaven, nor two monarchs among the people.”<sup>66</sup>

But what were the limits of the due-to-be-unified All-under-Heaven? Here major differences between China and Egypt, between *tianxia* and *maat*, become evident. First and foremost, China could never be reduced to one core territory such as the Nile Valley. Whereas most political centers throughout China's history were indeed located in the Yellow River basin, the Yellow River never played a role as an exclusive center. Chinese civilization was polycentric from its inception: already in the Neolithic Period equally important cultural centers evolved not just in the Yellow River basin but also in the Yangzi basin to the south and in northeastern China.<sup>67</sup> During the subsequent Bronze Age (c. 1500–400 BCE), the major loci of political power were spread in the middle to lower reaches of the Yellow River and its major tributaries, but alternative centers of power existed elsewhere, *e.g.*, in the Sichuan basin, in the Han River

65 *Mengzi* 1.6.

66 *Mengzi* 9.4. For the paradigm of “universal” unity and its impact on political dynamics during the periods of fragmentation, see Pines, *The Everlasting Empire*, 11–43. For the peculiar situation between Song and Liao, see Tao, *Two Sons of Heaven* and the more updated and comprehensive study by Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*.

67 Shelach-Lavi, *The Archaeology of Early China*.

valley, and in the lower Yangzi valley.<sup>68</sup> Neither then nor later could Chinese civilization be equated with a single heartland.

Nor was the concept of border in China, especially during its pre-imperial (pre-221 BCE) period, as important as it was in ancient Egypt. Despite later systematizing texts (discussed below), which placed “the aliens of the four quarters” at the fringes of the *oikumene*, historical texts reveal the presence of the pockets of non-Sinitic ethnic groups well within the core territories of China proper. In 478 BCE, a ruler of the Wei 衛 polity, located in the heartland of the Central Plains, was surprised to spot a settlement of the Rong people in the close vicinity of his capital, whereas another Rong group settled just a few dozen kilometers away from the Zhou royal capital.<sup>69</sup> With the advance of iron tools and more intensive cultivation of internal wastelands starting c. 400 BCE, these pockets of alien ethnicities gradually disappeared from Northern China, but in the south, especially to the south of the Yangzi River these “internal boundaries” continued throughout the imperial millennia. Their very existence weakened the idea of a clear border separating “us” versus “them,” except along the steppe boundary (on which see more below).<sup>70</sup>

The term *tianxia* itself was much more “universal” and inclusive than *maat*. Whereas in its earliest occurrences the spatial dimensions of *tianxia* resembled *maat* quite closely insofar as the term remained coterminous with the Zhou (“Chinese”) cultural sphere, from the Warring States Period onward *tianxia* was more often than not identified as pertaining to all the known habitable world.<sup>71</sup> Back then, thinkers who supported a more *maat*-resembling Sino-centric spatial view promulgated narrower schemes of Nine Provinces (*jiu zhou* 九州) and/or Five (Nine) Zones (*wu fu* 五服). The Nine Provinces (the precise location and names of which vary from one text to another) are fundamentally congruent with the territories of China proper, *i.e.*, with the Zhou civilization. This terrestrial organization implies that the entire known world is a

68 For archeological surveys of the Bronze Age cultures in China, see Bagley, “Shang Archaeology”; Rawson, “Western Zhou Archaeology”; and Falkenhausen, “The Waning of the Bronze Age.”

69 *Zuo Tradition*, Ai 17.5b. For the very recent (November 2020) discovery of a major Rong cemetery just 60 km away of the Zhou capital, see Gui and Shi, “Henan Luoyang.”

70 For the complexity of the Sinitic polities’ southward expansion in the pre-imperial and early imperial period, see Korolkov, “Empire-Building and Market-Making”; for the lengthy and bumpy process of China’s incorporation of its southern and southwestern territories, see Anderson and Whitmore, *China’s Encounters on the South and Southwest*. For a quite exceptional preoccupation of Chinese rulers with precise boundaries—including even a rare attempt to delineate them in the South—see Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, 105–39.

71 Pines, “Changing Views of *tianxia*.”



complete and closed system, organized in a 3-by-3 grid that cannot be meaningfully altered.<sup>72</sup> The immutability of this scheme becomes even clearer from a parallel “field-allocation” (*fen ye* 分野) astrological system, which divides the sky into nine partitions associated with each of the Provinces below. As noticed by Paul R. Goldin, this association meant that “no tenth region [to the Nine Provinces] could ever have been added. There would simply have been no tenth part of the sky to identify with it.”<sup>73</sup> The Nine Provinces scheme was purely Sino-centric, as it glossed over the areas associated with alien ethnic groups. As such it was much closer to *maat* than *tianxia*.

Another Sino-centric model was that of Five (or Nine) Zones. It subdivides the earth into five concentric zones of five-hundred *li* (approximately 200 km) breadth each. The zones start with the royal domain, for the dwellers of which different types of tribute obligations are defined; then come the zone of regional lords, the “pacified zone,” the “zone of restraint,” and the “zone of wilderness.” The third zone is the last inhabited by Chinese; it is subdivided into the domain of “civilized learning” and that of “military defense.” The two outer zones are inhabited by alien ethnicities and by Chinese criminals who undergo different types of banishment. The precise division into five or nine zones differs from one text to another,<sup>74</sup> but the major principle—that of separation between the civilized realm under the direct control of the Son of Heaven and the “realms of wilderness” inhabited by the outsiders—remains intact.

This narrow, *maat*-like view of the world had a relatively limited appeal during the Warring States Period. At that time, and well into the early imperial age, the inclusive and universal model of *tianxia* appears to have enjoyed much higher prominence than the limited visions of Nine Provinces and Five Zones. This universalism peaked with the establishment in 221 BCE of the Qin empire, the first unified empire on Chinese soil. Its founder, the First Emperor of Qin, proudly proclaimed: “Within the six combined [directions], //This is the land of the August Thearch [= the Emperor] ... //Wherever human traces reach, //There is none who does not declare himself subject.”<sup>75</sup> Much like Egyptian kings who prided themselves on expanding the domain of *maat* at the expense of chaos, the First Emperor prided himself on the expansion of uniform and universally beneficent rule throughout the entire subcelestial realm. In this unified realm there was no distinction between Chinese and aliens; actually, even horses and oxen were supposed to benefit from the emperor’s munificence.<sup>76</sup>

72 See Dorofeeva-Lichtman, “Ritual Practices.”

73 See Goldin, “Representations of Regional Diversity,” 44.

74 See details in Dorofeeva-Lichtman, “Ritual Practices,” 606–07.

75 See *Shiji* 6:45; Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions*, 32–33.

76 For studies of the First Emperor steles, see Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions* and Pines, “The Messianic Emperor.”



Propagandistic brouhaha aside, the First Emperor's proclamations do reflect the magnitude of his success: in just a few years of energetic campaigns he succeeded in annexing most of the human habitat known to the dwellers of China back then. Nor did the Qin armies stop after vanquishing all of the rival "hero-states" of the Warring States era. Rather, they started expanding into the unknown, advancing southward toward Guangdong coast and northern Vietnam, and northward toward the steppe. Yet it was in the latter direction that the First Emperor's endless expansion had to come to a halt. Having reached the steppe boundary, the Qin armies discovered ecological limits for further advancement. Hence, having scored major victories over their steppe rivals, the Qin leaders decided to stop their push northward and erect the new Long Wall ("Great Wall") along the northern perimeter of the Qin realm. That this cessation of further expansion came under one of the most militant emperors in China's history was hugely symbolic. Even such a megalomaniac as the First Emperor of Qin had to recognize that parts of All-under-Heaven will forever remain beyond his effective control.

The encounter with the steppe (of which see more in section 5.2) was the first event that shattered the belief that All-under-Heaven in its entirety can eventually be incorporated under the rule of a single monarch. This belief was dealt a further blow during the second peak of China's territorial expansion under Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty (r. 141–87 BCE). Han advancement into the so-called Western regions (current Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia) expanded the geographic horizons of the Han leaders. Soon enough they realized that further expansion into outlying territories was neither feasible militarily, nor justifiable economically. Much like in Egypt (and elsewhere), the ideology of universal rule came into conflict with Realpolitik.<sup>77</sup> The result was a lengthy process of accommodation between ideological dictates and reality. The preferred solution of most (albeit not all) of the empire's leaders was to divide All-under-Heaven into "inner" and "outer" realms. The inner territories were under the direct control of the Son of Heaven (albeit a certain degree of local autonomy of distinct ethnic groups under "native leaders" [*tusi*] was usually tolerated).<sup>78</sup> As for the outer realm, there the symbolic superiority of the Son of Heaven was maintained primarily through the so-called tribute system, whereas in practice, much like in Egypt, the actual balance of power dictated

77 For the perennial tension between major Eurasian empires' ideological drive for territorial expansion and a variety of ecological, military, and economical factors that dictated the expansion's cessation, see Pines, with Biran and Rüpke, "Introduction."

78 For the *tusi* system, see, e.g., Herman, "The Cant of Conquest"; Took, *The Native Chieftaincy*.

manifold other arrangements, including at times the recognition of *de facto* parity with the foreign ruler.<sup>79</sup>

The distinction was not neat, though. The boundaries between the “inner” and the “outer” constantly fluctuated, reflecting the shifting balance of power between China and its neighbors, as well as the changing demographic and cultural composition of the extensive frontiers of China proper. At times, such as during the peak of territorial expansion under the Tang dynasty (618–907), the “inner” realm could include the steppe nomads; intermediate areas under military rule were established, expanding well into Central Asia; and the even broader “outer” realm was defined as an area of “loose reign” (*jimi*), highlighting the largely symbolic superiority of the Chinese monarch there.<sup>80</sup> At times of weakness, the designation “outer” could be applied not only to border areas once under Chinese control, but even—scandalously—to the Chinese heartland itself, the Yellow River valley, ruled by the Jurchens since 1127.<sup>81</sup> Regions once rendered “outer” could be firmly reincorporated into China proper, as happened to Gansu and Yunnan Provinces under the Ming dynasty, while other areas could move in the opposite direction, as happened to North Vietnam (Annam), once an imperial province, which turned into an “outer subject.” Yet these fluctuations aside, the empire leaders’ commitment to the universal vision of All-under-Heaven as the realm that should be “ordered, stabilized, and pacified” by Chinese emperors was never fully abandoned. Robust territorial expansion remained an important asset that bolstered legitimacy of the emperors, especially those who came from an alien stock. A latent desire for attaining truly universal unification remained intact—or was reproduced—well into the time of the Qing dynasty (1636/1644–1912), a full two millennia after the First Emperor ordered the construction of the Great Wall, which was supposed to set limits to “All-under-Heaven.”<sup>82</sup>

## 5 Imperial Expansion and the Challenge of Dealing with the Other

### 5.1 *Egypt*

In ideal representations of the world, Egypt was conceptualized as surrounded by the Nine Bows, that is to say, enemy/neighbor peoples designated mostly by

79 The complexity of imperial China’s foreign relations is immense and a new comprehensive study of the so-called “tribute system” is much overdue. For an example of flexibility of the empire’s foreign ties and accommodation to shifting balance of power, see the articles in Rossabi, *China Among Equals*.

80 Pan, *Son of Heaven*; Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*; Wang, *Tang China in Multi-Polar Asia*.

81 Goncharov, *Китайская Средневековая Дипломатия*.

82 See more in Pines, “Limits of All-under-Heaven.”

metaphorical terms (Iuntiu Seti, Mentiu, *etc.*) but encompassing, in general, Asiatics, Libyans and Nubians.<sup>83</sup> They were usually depicted in submission, lying under the feet of the king, for instance at the base of his throne or under the sole of his sandals. A sharp distinction thus separated Egyptians from Others, the latter being assimilated to the category of real or potential enemies of Egypt. In fact, it was common in Egyptian art to represent Libyans, Nubians, Asiatics, Aegeans, Hittites, *etc.*, wearing distinctive clothes, hairstyles, personal ornaments, *etc.*, that were different from those used by Egyptians. This was the case, for example, of the processions of tribute bearers that decorated tombs and temples of the Late Bronze Age. Furthermore, Egyptians regarded themselves as *rmt* “people” (an ideological stereotype<sup>84</sup>), in opposition to foreigners whose human condition was considered disputable. Such an idea probably derives from the oligarchic nature of Egyptian power, in which common Egyptians (*rhyt*) were frequently assimilated to the condition of enemies (and thus could be among the Nine Bows), as opposed to *prt*, the nobility. Similarly, some rituals of protection involved the use of figurines that symbolized foreign prisoners, covered with lists of countries, people (including Egyptians), and localities regarded as hostile and located in Nubia, Libya, and the Levant. Even when people from diverse origins lived and worked together in Egypt, an ethnic label tended frequently to underline their non-Egyptian roots. Thus, Asiatics living in Egypt, who held Egyptian titles and functions, represented themselves wearing Egyptian clothes on their own Egyptian-like monuments and who bore Egyptian names nevertheless self-identified as *ꜥmw* “Asiatics” in their inscriptions. The stela of the Nubian soldier Qedes, who settled at Gebelein during the First Intermediate Period, is a good example:

I was an excellent citizen who acted with his strong arm, foremost of his entire generation. I acquired oxen and goats. I acquired granaries with Upper Egyptian barley. I acquired title to a [great?] field. I made a boat of 30 (cubits) and a small boat which ferried him who had no boat across during the inundation-season. It was in the house of my father Iti that I did this, (but) it was my mother Ibeb who acquired it for me. I surpassed everyone in this entire town in swiftness, its Nubians as well as its Upper Egyptians.<sup>85</sup>

Members of the elite were not spared such “ethnic” markers. The Nubian prince Heqanefer, who lived during the reigns of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten,

83 Valbelle, *Les Neuf Arcs*.

84 On this see, for example, Moers, “Auch der Feind war nur ein Mensch.”

85 Moreno García, “Ethnicity in Ancient Egypt,” 7–8.

and Tutankhamun, was represented as a “typical” dark-skinned Nubian in the tomb of the Egyptian viceroy Amenhotep Huy, but depicted as a red-skinned Egyptian in his own tomb at Toshka.<sup>86</sup> As for foreign officers serving in the Egyptian army, administrative texts usually cited them by their names accompanied by foreign or ethnic designations such as Sherden.<sup>87</sup> Material culture also reveals culinary, ornamental, and hygienic practices that distinguished Egyptians from their neighbors in the settlements where they lived together. For instance, the presence or absence of toggle pins in some areas of Tell el-Dab’a, in the Eastern Delta, points to dressing styles common among some people living there—in this instance Levantine—but hardly used at all by their Egyptian neighbors.<sup>88</sup> Finds of squat bell-shape jars used to hold *kohl*, a type of eye make-up, as well as of razors in Levantine settlements are good indicators of the presence of Egyptians living there.<sup>89</sup> Finally, foreigners occasionally lived or were settled in distinctive settlements in Egypt, designated by foreign and/or new terms (*whyt, wnt, sgr*).<sup>90</sup>

That foreigners settled and living in Egypt may display a foreign identity overtly shows the distance that separated social realities from ideological claims that emphasized a sheer opposition and hostility between Egyptians and non-Egyptians, inherent to the ideology of the Nine Bows and derived from the concept of *maat*. A similar practical means of living together is also apparent beyond Egyptian borders, at sites where Egyptians and foreigners co-existed and collaborated, as happened in harbors and mining areas. Common cults (such as those of Hathor) left their archaeological traces in temples located at Byblos (Lebanon), Timna (Israel), and Serabit el-Khadim (Sinai Peninsula) in which Egyptians and non-Egyptians worshiped collectively. Conversely, it seems that foreign communities living in Egypt built distinctive sanctuaries. The most clear is that of the Jewish community who settled at Elephantine during the Achaemenid Period (525–404 BCE and again from 343–332 BCE), precedents for which however can be traced back to the third millennium BCE, in the Eastern Delta.<sup>91</sup> As for foreign languages, they were ideally conceived as inferior, so foreigners should forget their own languages and replace them with Egyptian, as many texts from the Late Bronze Age show.<sup>92</sup> Ironically, these

86 Moreno García, “Elusive ‘Libyans,’” 149; Smith, “Hekanefer and the Lower Nubian Princes.”

87 Moreno García, “Ethnicity in Ancient Egypt,” 5. Cf. also Candelora, “Hybrid Military Communities”; Cole, “Ethnic Enclaves.”

88 Bietak, “The Egyptian Community in Avaris.”

89 Sparks, “Strangers in a Strange Land.”

90 Moreno García, “Ethnicity in Ancient Egypt,” 4–5.

91 Moreno García, “Ethnicity in Ancient Egypt,” 4.

92 Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*, 38.

texts were written in the period when Akkadian was the diplomatic language used by Egyptians in their correspondence with foreign powers, and when many Semitic terms and expressions entered the Egyptian language.<sup>93</sup> Yet, in the time of pharaoh Akhenaten, the universalist values he promoted accepted differences as something natural:

You (= god Aten) made the world as you wished, you alone, all peoples, herds, and flocks; all upon earth that walk on legs, all on high that fly on wings ... you set every man in his place, you supply their needs; everyone has its food, his lifetime is counted. Their tongues differ in speech, their characters likewise, their skins are distinct, for you distinguished the peoples.<sup>94</sup>

However, such practical common living of Egyptians and foreigners hardly conceals the fact that, from an ideological point of view, the concept of *maat* provided a very limited capacity for integration of non-Egyptians. Ideally, foreigners could only submit or be destroyed, whereas the expansion of the borders of Egypt and, consequently, of the domain of *maat* was conceived as an activity of war, a hostile endeavor against neighboring populations. Obviously, when contacts with foreign states intensified and borders or areas of influence emerged and made evident the limited capacity of pharaohs to expand their authority (and *maat*) at will (from c. 1550 BCE onward), tensions between ideological claims and practical realities became exacerbated. In this respect, it is possible to discern two different attitudes. In the case of Nubia, total conquest and direct administration of this region prevailed, and pharaohs did not tolerate any vassal king there. But in the Levant things were quite different. Any firm presence in the southern Levant went back only to the reign of Thutmose III, as the interest of earlier pharaohs concentrated further north, in Lebanon and southern Syria.<sup>95</sup> There armed encounters with Mitanni and Hatti erupted until they gave way to diplomatic agreements between the Great Powers of the Near East that recognized their respective areas of influence and regulated their relations. As for the petty kings under Egyptian authority in the Levant, the written evidence (royal annals, letters of El Amarna, etc.), reveals a relatively loose military and administrative organization based on a reduced

93 Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts*; Mynářová, *Language of Amarna*.

94 Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* II, 98.

95 Höflmayer, "Egypt's 'Empire' in the Southern Levant."

number of Egyptian administrative sites, strategic harbors, and garrisons.<sup>96</sup> In any case, pharaonic relations with both Great and Small Powers shared several characteristics that appear to have been specific to Egypt.

On the one hand, treaties between Egypt and these powers appear surprisingly scarce when compared with the Mesopotamian or Hittite “diplomatic” traditions.<sup>97</sup> Leaving aside the famous Hittite-Egyptian treaty, Jana Mynářová has discussed some probable precedents that confirm nevertheless that such diplomatic agreements were rather alien to the Egyptian mentality (the more so concerning dealings with the petty Levantine kings). In fact, Egyptian terms and expressions intended to designate formal treaties with foreign powers are very rare (“the mere idea of a treaty between the Egyptian king and his royal Hittite partner might represent a rather foreign, though not completely unknown concept in the Egyptian milieu.”)<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, “diplomatic” exchanges of gifts seem quite unbalanced. Pharaohs refused to send Egyptian princesses away to become spouses of foreign rulers whereas *reciprocal* exchanges of gifts were routinely described in Egyptian ideology as *unbalanced* deliveries of tribute, as if foreign rulers could only expect to get the “breath of life” and “peace” from Egyptian kings in return for their precious presents.

It seems, then, that geopolitical reality provoked a noticeable discomfort in traditional Egyptian ideology and values. So, the long lists of foreign toponyms (cities, countries, regions) allegedly defeated or submitting to the authority of Egypt that were reproduced in many Egyptian temples and monuments included many long-vanished sites, anachronistic designations, or even actual allies of the pharaohs. In other words, cooperation, alliances, or balanced relations (that is to say, agreements between equals) were inconceivable in the perspective of Egyptian ideology even if reality was marked by pragmatism. The ironic letter addressed by Khattushili III to Ramesses II and quoted above is quite significant in this regard. One can also mention literary compositions such as *The Tale of Wenamun* in which Wenamun, an Egyptian agent (c. 1100 BCE) dispatched to the Levant, expected that the commercial mission

96 Redford, *Egypt and Canaan*; Liverani, *Prestige and Interest*; Cohen and Westbrook, *Amarna Diplomacy*; Morris, *The Architecture of Imperialism*; Mynářová, *Language of Amarna*.

97 Parpola and Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties*; Canfora, Liverani, and Zaccagnini, *I trattati nel mondo antico*; Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* and “International Law in the Second Millennium”; Lafont, “Relations Internationales, Alliance et Diplomatie”; Altman, “How Many Treaty Traditions”; Devecchi, “Treaties and Edicts,” “(Re-)defining the Corpus of the Hittite Treaties,” and “Missing Treaties of the Hittites.” Cf. also the increasing use of “International Relations Theory” in ancient Near Eastern studies: Adali and Freire, *International Relations Theory*.

98 Mynářová, “Lost in translation,” 5 and “Egypt among the Great Powers,” 158.

he led to Lebanon and Cyprus should follow the old ideological model, one in which foreign rulers were supposed to deliver timber without expecting any payment in exchange. In the case of *The Tale of Sinuhe*, exile in a pastoral Levantine environment was not materially uncomfortable. But nostalgia for Egypt and its lifestyle finally prompted Sinuhe to leave his family and the wealth gained abroad and to return to Egypt, where the king graciously received him at the court and covered him with rewards and honors. In both cases *maat* provided the template for acceptable behavior and a desirable life—and it was only to be found in Egypt.

A final point concerns the problematic construction of ideological values and political identities in states born in Egypt in periods of monarchical crisis. When the so-called Hyksos kingdom, centered at Avaris/Tell el-Dab'a, emerged in the Eastern Delta (c. 1750–1550 BCE),<sup>99</sup> many of its rulers bore Semitic names and chose to use not only Egyptian titles but a new royal title that emphasized either a foreign origin or a non-Egyptian identity, *ḥꜥꜣ* *ḥꜣswt* “ruler of foreign countries.” High dignitaries and kinglets who lived in Lower Egypt during the first centuries of the first millennium BCE claimed with pride their Libyan ancestry, in sharp contrast with the ideology of the late second millennium BCE, when Libyans were depicted as a serious menace for Egypt. Both examples seem to confirm that the values encompassed by *maat* hardly favored the assimilation of foreign peoples and the construction of Egyptian identities in otherwise multicultural communities and polities, when foreigners made up a substantial part of the local population. In these cases, *Realpolitik* inspired original solutions as traditional models of Egyptian kingship and ideology proved ineffective or, at least, of little use and when, on the contrary, emphasis on foreignness could be indispensable to gaining legitimacy.<sup>100</sup>

## 5.2 *China*

China's case strongly resembles that of ancient Egypt while also differing in certain crucial aspects.<sup>101</sup> Much like the ancient Egyptians, the Chinese believed in the absolute superiority of their civilization, especially insofar as social and

99 Forstner-Müller and Moeller, *The Hyksos Ruler Khyran*.

100 Moreno García, *The State in Ancient Egypt*, 103–04, 182. About the tensions between conservative and innovative values in periods of transition in the ancient Near East, see Liverani, “Ramesside Egypt in a Changing World” and “Conservative versus Innovative Cultural Areas.”

101 For a thoughtful comparison between Egyptian and Chinese views of aliens, see Poo, *Enemies of Civilization*.



political order were concerned. China was “a land of ritual and propriety”<sup>102</sup> (one is almost tempted to translate, the “land of *maat*”), whereas aliens were immensely inferior. Derogatory references to aliens in certain texts imply that their humanity is impaired: they are “wolves and jackals,” who “have a human face and a beast’s heart.”<sup>103</sup> Not a few scholars have combed early Chinese texts for similar statements to create an image of perpetual “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy as essential to Chinese worldview.<sup>104</sup> The situation is much more complex, though. A closer look at the texts shows major differences between the Egyptian and Chinese perceptions of aliens. First, prior to the imperial unification of 221 BCE (*i.e.*, during the formative age of China’s political culture), aliens played only a marginal role in contemporaneous political and philosophical discourse. Second, despite the harsh pronouncements cited above, the vast majority of thinkers considered the Sino-alien dichotomy as relative, and optimistically expected that under proper conditions erstwhile “barbarians” (much like equally uncouth native commoners) could be acculturated. Third, it was only in the early imperial period, in the aftermath of the encounter with pastoral nomads, that an Egypt-like exclusivist view of foreigners gained substantial support. And, fourth, even after that traumatic encounter, the inclusivist view—as represented by the term *tianxia* with its universalist appeal—remained dominant, even if not unchallenged.<sup>105</sup>

The relative marginality of aliens during much of the Zhou Period is explained primarily by the immediate historical context. Whereas foreign incursions into the Zhou heartland did occur from time to time, *e.g.*, in the seventh century BCE (the period which generated several [in]famous derogatory remarks about the outsiders), overall non-Sinitic ethnic groups played a minor role in political dynamics marked by the bitter struggle for supremacy among the Sinitic states. Derisive statements about the aliens’ alleged bestiality should be read in the context of war-time propaganda. Actually similar accusations of “bestiality” could under certain conditions be directed against powerful Sinitic states, such as Qin (the would-be unifier of the Chinese world), which was reimagined by some of its adversaries as the ultimate cultural Other of the civilized All-under-Heaven.<sup>106</sup> In any case, derisive pronouncements coexisted with more neutral depictions of aliens, and even with explicit adoration

102 He Xiu’s gloss on *Gongyang Commentary* in *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu* (Yin 7).

103 See *Zuo Tradition*, Min 1.2; *Han shu* 94: 3834.

104 For an example of the most manipulative treatment of this topic, see Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*.

105 This discussion is based on Pines, “Beasts or Humans.”

106 For anti-Qin propaganda and its context, see Shelach and Pines, “Secondary State Formation.”

of those aliens who succeeded in mastering China's sophisticated ritual culture.<sup>107</sup> Overall, in marked contrast to ancient Egypt, the “barbarian” trope is next to non-existent in pre-imperial Chinese art and is marginal in contemporaneous historical and philosophical texts. Normally these texts treat “distant and peripheral groups less as ends in themselves than as foils for central culture.”<sup>108</sup>

The mildness of the Sino-alien dichotomy in pre-imperial China is explained not just by the overall marginality of alien groups in contemporaneous politics but also by the optimistic view of most pre-imperial thinkers with regard to the potential mutability of aliens. Insofar as any human being (or at the very least any male) could master ritual and cultural norms and join the elite ranks by becoming a “noble man” (*junzi*), descent did not matter.<sup>109</sup> Hence, Mengzi, who derided aliens as culturally inferior people who “speak the birds’ tongue,” lauded those of them who succeeded in studying the Way of the Central States (“China”), and even attained superiority over native scholars. Mengzi readily recognized the alien origins of the two greatest paragons—the primordial thearch Shun and the founder of the Zhou dynasty, King Wen—who, despite being born among eastern and western ethnicities, attained the pinnacle of moral and political uprightness.<sup>110</sup> Belief that an alien could be changed was shared by the vast majority of pre-imperial thinkers.

This optimism was shattered, however, by the encounter with pastoral nomads, whose different ecological habitat posed a huge challenge to Chinese policy makers. The Xiongnu empire (c. 209 BCE–92 CE), the first powerful tribal confederacy, became a major menace for the Han dynasty (206/202 BCE–220 CE); and similarly tensed relations continued between the later avatars of the steppe empires and the post-Han Chinese dynasties. The Han leaders tried a variety of diplomatic and military means to deal with the Xiongnu—from marriage alliance, to lavishly subsidizing submitted Xiongnu leaders, to adopting a “divide and rule” policy, to outright war—but none proved effective in the long term.<sup>111</sup> The nomads turned out to be both unconquerable and unassimilable *en masse*. Even when some of the Xiongnu surrendered and were resettled closer to China's borders, whereas others were exterminated, the solution proved to be ephemeral. The power vacuum in the steppe was filled in by new groups of nomads, such as Xianbei (or Särbi),

107 Pines, “Beasts or Humans.”

108 Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 132.

109 For the relative openness of the “noble men” ranks, see Pines, “Confucius's Elitism.”

110 *Mengzi* 5.4 and 8.1.

111 See Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies*. Compare to Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*.

who continued to harass China's borders.<sup>112</sup> As generations passed, it became increasingly clear to many members of the Han elite that the steppe predicament could not be adequately dealt with. This frustration is fully observable in the comments of the eminent Han historian, Ban Gu (32–92 CE). Ban Gu summarized his account of the ebbs and flows in Han's relations with the Xiongnu with a lengthy personal digression, in which he dismissed the ideas of military commanders eager to combat the Xiongnu, as well as those of civilian officials who hoped to acculturate the enemy. Instead, he proposed the third course—that of segregation:

Their [the Xiongnu] lands cannot be tilled for living; their people cannot be treated as subjects; therefore they must be regarded as external and not internal, as strangers and not as relatives. Cultivation through proper government does not reach these people, proper calendar cannot be given to their lands; when they arrive, we must block and repel them; when they leave we must take precautions and be on guard against them.... This is the constant Way applied by the sage kings to repel the savages.<sup>113</sup>

Ban Gu is unequivocal: the ecological division between the external and internal realm makes any attempt to incorporate the former or even to establish firm control over it unfeasible. The savage inhabitants of the outer lands would never become part of the cultivated Central States, and should not be enticed to do so. The separation is eternal and should be maintained forever; the connections between the two realms should be limited to an absolute minimum. This was, as Ban Gu readily admitted, a minority view in his time; but this was not a negligible minority. For generations to come, voices suggesting segregation between the cultivated “Central States” and the menacing “barbarians” reverberated throughout debates at court. Fueled by the perception that the nomads' habitat makes them unsuitable for cultivation, exclusivists relegated them to the margins of *tianxia*, to the perennially “outer” realm.<sup>114</sup> These voices clearly resembled the Egyptian notion of *maat*.

112 De Crespigny, *Northern Frontier*.

113 *Hanshu* 94: 3834.

114 The exclusivist views were particularly strong during periods of China's weakness *vis-à-vis* its northern neighbors, especially during the Song dynasty (960–1279) during which period Tackett identifies elements of China's transformation into a “nation-state” (*The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, see especially 143–210). For a radical case of exclusivist views, see, *e.g.*, Tillman, “Proto-Nationalism.”

And yet, the universalist and inclusivist view of *tianxia* in which the distinctions between Chinese and aliens were relative rather than absolute remained extraordinarily powerful throughout much of imperial history. Eventually, it allowed China's accommodation to the conquest dynasties which appeared on Chinese soil from the fourth century CE onward, and which dominated the last millennium of China's imperial history. Putting aside for the time being the thorny question of the extent to which the conquerors were "Sinicized," suffice it to say that even partial adaptation to the political norms of China usually served to legitimate foreign rule in the eyes of many (eventually most) members of the Chinese elite.<sup>115</sup> Insofar as a foreign ruler succeeded in "ordering, stabilizing, and pacifying All-under-Heaven," his dynasty would gain legitimacy on a par with any native entity. Thus, whereas *tianxia* was not a geographically and ethnically neutral term, it was elastic enough to allow much fuller accommodation of foreigners into the world order than would be accepted under the *maat* ideology.

## 6 Epilogue: Inclusivity and Longevity?

This discussion has highlighted numerous parallels between Egyptian *maat* and Chinese *tianxia*. Whereas the semantic center of gravity of both terms was different—*maat* was primarily the "regime of value" and only secondarily a spatial term, whereas *tianxia* was the other way around—similarities between the two are strongly pronounced. In both cases the political unity of at least the core areas was considered essential for the proper functioning of *maat* and *tianxia*. In both cases the domestic sociopolitical and cultural system was considered uniquely correct, whereas outlying ethnic groups were deemed culturally impaired. And in both cases this normative superiority of the center over the periphery was frequently shattered due to the changing balance of power between domestic and alien groups, allowing—beneath the veneer of the discourse of superiority—accommodation to less hierarchical relations with aliens, and, in certain circumstances even grudging acceptance of alien rule. And yet, similarities aside, there were also pronounced differences. The universalistic and inclusivist aspects of *tianxia* were incomparably more strongly pronounced than in the case of *maat*. The very absence in China of a clear geographical core on a par with the Nile Valley in Egypt allowed for *tianxia* to be geographically more elastic and more accommodating of distant peripheries.

---

115 For the complexity of the issue of Sinicization see, e.g., Honey, "Stripping off Felt and Fur."

This final observation poses an interesting question: did this elasticity and inclusiveness contribute to an even greater resilience of Chinese civilization than was the case in Egypt? Was it not the ability of China's powerful neighbors to claim leadership of *tianxia*—even if the core of their empires was located outside China proper—which facilitated their readiness to accommodate, even if selectively, aspects of Chinese political culture, turning them into defenders rather than destroyers of broadly understood Chinese civilization? Recall that it was the nomads—first the Xianbi Northern Wei dynasty (386–534) and its successors, then the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1261–1368), and then, most notably, the Manchu Qing dynasty (1636/1644–1912) that reinvigorated the Chinese empire after lengthy periods of domestic turmoil or military weakness and brought about its robust territorial expansion. Was it the possibility to claim leadership of *tianxia* without necessarily abandoning one's indigenous cultural traits that turned potential destructors of “China” into its defenders? This question deserves further research.

### Bibliography

- Abu Bakr, A.M. and J. Osing. “Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich.” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 29 (1974): 97–133.
- Adah, S.F. and L.G. Freire, eds. “International Relations Theory and Ancient Near Eastern History.” In *Text and Image. Proceedings of the 61<sup>e</sup> RAI, Geneva and Bern, 22–26 June 2015*, P. Attinger, A. Cavigneaux, C. Mittermayer, and M. Novák, eds., 467–509. OBO Series Archaeologica 40. Leuven/Paris/Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2018.
- Allen, J.P. “The Egyptian Concept of the World.” In *Mysterious Lands*, D.B. O'Connor and S. Quirke, eds., 23–30. London: UCL Press, 2003.
- Altman, A. “How Many Treaty Traditions Existed in the Ancient Near East?” In *Pax Hethitica: Studies on the Hittites and Their Neighbours in Honour of Itamar Singer*, Y. Cohen, A. Gilan, and J.L. Miller, eds., 17–36. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.
- Anderson, J.A. and J.K. Whitmore, eds. *China's Encounters on the South and Southwest: Reforging the Fiery Frontier Over Two Millennia*. HOS Section 3, Southeast Asia, Vol. 22. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
- Assmann, J. *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Ägypten*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006<sup>2</sup>.
- Bagley, R. “Shang Archaeology.” In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, M. Loewe and E.L. Shaughnessy, eds., 124–231. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Baines, J. “Civilizations and Empires: A Perspective on Erligang and Early Egypt.” In *Art and Archaeology of the Erligang Civilization*, K. Steinke with D.C.Y. Ching, eds., 99–119. Princeton: P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art and Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 2014.

- Baines, J. "Kingship, Definition of Culture, and Legitimation." In *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, D.B. O'Connor and D.P. Silverman, eds., 3–47. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Baines, J. "Origins of Egyptian Kingship." In *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, D.B. O'Connor and D.P. Silverman, eds., 95–156. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Baines, J. and N. Yoffee. "Order, Legitimacy and Wealth in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia." In *Archaic States*, G.N. Feinman and J. Marcus, eds., 199–260. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research, 1998.
- Barfield, T. *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- Bárta, M. and V. Dulíková. "Divine and Terrestrial: The Rhetoric of Power in Ancient Egypt (the Case of Nyuserra)." In *Royal versus Divine Authority: Acquisition, Legitimization and Renewal of Power*, F. Coppens, J. Janák and H. Vymazalová, eds., 31–47. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015.
- Bárta, M. and V. Dulíková. "Politics of Religious Symbols: Maat as a Concept of Rule, Justice and Kingship." In *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology 7. Proceedings of the International Conference, Università degli Studi di Milano 3–7 July 2017*, P. Piacentini and A. Delli Castelli, eds., 26–41. EDAL 6. Milan: Pontremoli Editore, 2019.
- Beckman, G. *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*. WA 7. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999<sup>2</sup>.
- Beckman, G. "International Law in the Second Millennium: Late Bronze Age." In *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, vol. 1., R. Westbrook, ed., 753–774. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
- Bickel, S. *La Cosmogonie Égyptienne avant le Nouvel Empire*. Orbis biblicus et orientalis 134. Freiburg-Göttingen: Universitäts Verlag Freiburg and Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994.
- Bickel, S., ed. *Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Studien zum historischen Bewusstsein in der Thutmosidenzeit*. Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2013.
- Bietak, M. "The Egyptian Community in Avaris during the Hyksos Period." *Ägypten und Levante* 26 (2016): 263–274.
- Borrego Gallardo, F.L. "Señor de Maat: Innovaciones y Cambios de la Realeza Divina Egipcia bajo el Reinado de Snefru." *Antigüedad, Religiones y Sociedades* 12 (2014): 87–127.
- Caminos, R.A. *The Chronicle of Prince Osorkon*. AO 37. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1958.
- Caminos, R.A. *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*. London: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Candelora, D. "Hybrid Military Communities of Practice: The Integration of Immigrants as the Catalyst for Egyptian Social Transformation in the 2nd Millennium BC." In *A Stranger in the House—the Crossroads III. Proceedings of an International Conference on Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age Held in Prague, September 10–13, 2018*, J. Mynářová, M. Kilani, and S. Alivernini, eds., 25–48. Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, 2019.

- Canfora, L., M. Liverani, and C. Zaccagnini, eds. *I Trattati nel Mondo Antico. Forma, Ideologia, Funzione*. Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1990.
- Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊傳注疏. (1815) 1991. Annotated by He Xiu 何休 (129–182) and Xu Yan 徐彥 (fl. 800–820). In *Shisan jing zhushu fu jiaokanjì* 十三經注疏附校勘記, compiled by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), vol. 2, 2189–2355. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Cohen, R. and R. Westbrook, eds. *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginning of International Relations*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Cole, E.M. "Ethnic Enclaves: A Modern Understanding of How Migratory Groups Preserve Ethnic Identity as a Potential Explanation for the Libyans' Retention of a non-Egyptian Identity in the Late New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period." In *A Stranger in the House—the Crossroads III. Proceedings of an International Conference on Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age held in Prague, September 10–13, 2018*, J. Mynářová, M. Kilani, and S. Alivernini, eds., 221–238. Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, 2019.
- Cornelius, S. "Ancient Egypt and the Other." *Scriptura* 104 (2010): 322–340.
- Davies, V. *Peace in Ancient Egypt*. HES 5. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2018.
- De Crespigny, R. *Northern Frontier: The Policies and Strategy of the Later Han Empire*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1984.
- Devecchi, E. "Missing Treaties of the Hittites." *Kaskal* 12 (2015): 155–182.
- Devecchi, E. "(Re-)defining the Corpus of the Hittite Treaties." *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 19 (2013): 89–98.
- Devecchi, E. "Treaties and Edicts in the Hittite World." In *Organization, Representation, and Symbols of Power in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 54th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Würzburg 20–25 July 2008*, G. Wilhelm, ed., 637–645. Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, 2012.
- Di Biase-Dyson, C. *Foreigners and Egyptians in the Late Egyptian Stories. Linguistic, Literary and Historical Perspectives*. PdA 32. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2013.
- Di Cosmo, N. *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Diego Espinel, A. "'Unusual Herders': Iconographic Development, Diffusion and Meanings of Dwarfes, Boys and Lame and Emaciated People as Drivers from the Old Kingdom to the Early Middle Kingdom." In *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology 7. Proceedings of the International Conference, Università degli Studi di Milano 3–7 July 2017*, P. Piacentini and A. Delli Castelli, eds., 418–435. EDAL 6. Milán: Pontremoli Editore, 2019.
- Dikötter, F. *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- Dorofeeva-Lichtman, V. "Ritual Practices for Constructing Terrestrial Space (Warring States-Early Han)." In *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han*



- (1250 BC–220 AD), vol. 1, J. Lagerwey and M. Kalinowski, eds., 595–644. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Enmarch, R. *A World Upturned. Commentary on and Analysis of the Dialogue of Ipuwer and the Lord of All*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Falkenhausen, L. von. “The Waning of the Bronze Age: Material Culture and Social Developments 770–481 B.C.” In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, eds. M. Loewe and E.L. Shaughnessy, 450–544. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Fischer-Elfert, H.-W. *Abseits von Ma'at: Fallstudien zu Außenseitern im Alten Ägypten*. WSA1. Würzburg: Ergon, 2005.
- Forstner-Müller, I. and N. Moeller, eds. *The Hyksos Ruler Khyam and the Early Second Intermediate Period in Egypt: Problems and Priorities of Current Research. Proceedings of the Workshop of the Austrian Archaeological Institute and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Vienna, July 4–5, 2014*. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2018.
- Frandsen, P.J. “Aspects of Kingship in Ancient Egypt.” In *Religion and Power Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, N.M. Brisch, ed., 47–73. Oriental Institute Seminars 4. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008.
- Gabolde, M. “Des Travailleurs en Vadrouille.” In *Hommages à Jean-Claude Goyon offerts pour son 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire* (Bibliothèque d'Étude 143), L. Gabolde, ed., 181–196. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2008.
- Galán, José M. *Victory and Border. Terminology related to Egyptian Imperialism in the XVIIIth Dynasty*. НАВ 40. Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1995.
- Gardiner, A.H. and T.E. Peet. *The Inscriptions of Sinai, Parts I–II*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1917–1955.
- Gnirs, A., ed. *Reading the Eloquent Peasant. Proceedings of the International Conference on The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant at the University of California, Los Angeles, March 27–30, 1997*. Lingua Ægyptia 8. Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie Universität Göttingen, 2000.
- Goldin, P.R. “Representations of Regional Diversity during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty.” In *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China*, Y. Pines, P.R. Goldin, and M. Kern, eds., 31–48. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Goncharov, S.N. *Китайская Средневековая Дипломатия: Отношения между Империями Цзинь и Сун, 1127–1142*. Moscow: Nauka, 1986.
- Gui, J. 桂娟 and Shi, L. 史林靜. “Henan Luoyang faxian 2600 duo nian quan Rongren wangji damu” 河南洛陽發現2600多年前戎人王級大墓, Dec. 2, 2020. [http://kaogu.cssn.cn/zwb/xccz/202012/t20201202\\_5228010.shtml](http://kaogu.cssn.cn/zwb/xccz/202012/t20201202_5228010.shtml) (accessed Dec. 3, 2020).
- Hanshu* 漢書. By Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) et al. Annotated by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997.

- Hardy, J. "Political Virtues in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy." [https://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/we01/institut/mitarbeiter/pd\\_apl\\_hon/hardy/Political\\_Virtues.pdf](https://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/we01/institut/mitarbeiter/pd_apl_hon/hardy/Political_Virtues.pdf) (accessed February 4, 2020).
- Herman, J. "The Cant of Conquest: *Tusi* Offices and China's Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontier." In *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, P.K. Crossley, H.F. Siu, and D.S. Sutton, eds., 135–68. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Hoch, J.E. *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Höflmayer, F. "Egypt's 'Empire' in the Southern Levant during the Early 18th Dynasty." In *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E. Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May–2nd June 2012*, B. Eder and R. Pruzsinszky, eds., 191–206. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015.
- Honey, D.B. "Stripping off Felt and Fur: An Essay on Nomadic Sinification." *Papers on Inner Asia* 21 (1992): 1–39.
- Ibrahim, M.R. and P. Tallet. "Trois Bas-reliefs de l'Époque Thinite au Ouadi el-Humur: Aux Origines de l'Exploitation du Sud Sinaï par les Égyptiens." *Revue d'Égyptologie* 59 (2008): 155–180.
- Iwaszczuk, J. "The Legacy of Senwosret I during the Reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III." *Études et travaux* 27 (2014): 161–178.
- Jia, J. and P.-F. Kwok. "From Clan Manners to Ethical Obligation and Righteousness: A New Interpretation of the Term *yi* 義." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17.1 (2007): 33–42.
- Kern, M. *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation*. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2000.
- Kominami, I. 小南一郎. "Tenmei to toku" 天命と徳, *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 64 (1992): 1–59.
- Korolkov, M. "Empire-Building and Market-Making at the Qin Frontier: Imperial Expansion and Economic Change, 221–207 BCE." PhD dissertation, Columbia University (New York), 2020.
- Kryukov, V. "Symbols of Power and Communication in Pre-Confucian China (On the Anthropology of *De*)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 58 (1995): 314–333.
- Lafont, B. "Relations Internationales, Alliance et Diplomatie aux Temps des Royaumes Amorrites." In *Mari, Ébla et les Hourrites. Dix Ans de Travaux*, J.-M. Durand and D. Charpin, eds., 213–328. Amurru 2. Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 2001.

- Langer, C. "The Concept of 'Frontier' in New Kingdom Egypt. A Comparative Approach to the Spatiality of Ideology." In *Time and Space at Issue in Ancient Egypt*, G. Chantraine and J. Winand, eds., 47–69. *Lingua Aegyptia—Studia Monographica* 19. Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2018.
- Lewis, M.E. *The Construction of Space in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
- Lichtheim, M. *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Volume II: The New Kingdom*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1976.
- Lichtheim, M. *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies*. OBO 120. Freiburg-Göttingen: Universitäts Verlag Freiburg and Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992.
- Lichtheim, M. *Moral Values in Ancient Egypt*. Freiburg-Göttingen: Universitäts Verlag Freiburg and Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997.
- Liverani, M. "Conservative versus Innovative Cultural Areas in the Near East ca. 800–400 BC." In *Eurasia at the Dawn of History: Urbanization and Social Change*, M. Fernández-Götz and D. Krausse, eds., 198–210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Liverani, M. "Hattushili alle Prese con la Propaganda Ramesside." *Orientalia, Nova Series* 59 (1990): 207–217.
- Liverani, M. *Prestige and Interest. International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600–1100 B.C.* Padoue: Sargon Press, 1990.
- Liverani, M. "Ramesside Egypt in a Changing World. An Institutional Approach." In *L'impero Ramesside. Convegno internazionale in onore di Sergio Donadoni*, G. Colonna, ed., 101–115. Rome: Università degli studi di Roma "La Sapienza," 1997.
- Lorand, D. "Une 'Chapelle des Ancêtres' à Karnak sous Sésostri I<sup>er</sup>?" *Cahiers de Karnak* 14 (2013): 447–466.
- Mathieu, B. "Du Conflit Archaïque au Mythe Osirien." *Droit et cultures* 71 (2016): 85–117.
- Mathieu, B. "Mais Qui est donc Osiris ? Ou la Politique sous le Linceul de la Religion." *Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 3 (2010): 77–107.
- Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注. Annotated by Yang Bojun 楊伯峻. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992.
- Moers, G. "Auch der Feind war nur ein Mensch: kursorisches zu einer Teilansicht pharaonischer Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmungsoperationen." In *Feinde und Auführer: Konzepte von Gegnerschaft in ägyptischen Texten besonders des Mittleren Reiches*, H. Felber, ed., 223–282. *Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse* 78: 5. Leipzig: Verlag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, 2005.
- Moreno García, J.C. "Elusive 'Libyans': Identities, Lifestyles and Mobile Populations in NE Africa (Late 4th–early 2nd Millennium BC)." *Journal of Egyptian History* 11 (2018): 145–182.

- Moreno García, J.C. "Ethnicity in Ancient Egypt: An Introduction to Key Issues." *Journal of Egyptian History* 11 (2018): 1–17.
- Moreno García, J.C. *Études sur l'Administration, le Pouvoir et l'Idéologie en Égypte, de l'Ancien au Moyen Empire*. *Ægyptiaca Leodiensia* 4. Liège: Centre Informatique de Philosophie et Lettres, 1997.
- Moreno García, J.C. "Ḥwt iḥ(w)t, the Administration of the Western Delta and the 'Libyan Question' in the 3rd Millennium." *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 101 (2015): 69–105.
- Moreno García, J.C. "The 'Other' Administration: Patronage System and Informal Networks of Power in Ancient Egypt." In *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, J.C. Moreno García, ed., 1029–1065. HdO I.104. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Moreno García, J.C. "Social Inequality, Private Accumulation of Wealth and New Ideological Values in late 3rd Millennium BCE Egypt." In *Arm und Reich—Zur Ressourcenverteilung in prähistorischen Gesellschaften*, H. Meller, H.P. Hahn, R. Jung, and R. Risch, eds., 491–512. *Mitteldeutscher Archäologentag 8. Halle (Saale)*: Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte Halle (Saale), 2016.
- Moreno García, J.C. *The State in Ancient Egypt. Power, Challenges and Dynamics*. London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.
- Moreno García, J.C. "The Study of Ancient Egyptian Administration." In *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, J.C. Moreno García, ed., 1–17. HdO I.104. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Moreno García, J.C. "The Territorial Administration of the Kingdom in the 3rd Millennium." In *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, J.C. Moreno García, ed., 85–151. HdO I.104. Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2013.
- Morris, E.F. *The Architecture of Imperialism. Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*. PdÄ 22. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005.
- Müller, F. Max. *Introduction to the Science of Religion: Four Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institution, with Two Essays on False Analogies, and the Philosophy of Mythology*. London: Longmans, Green 1873.
- Mynářová, J. "Egypt among the Great Powers and its Relations to the Neighboring Vassal Kingdoms in the Southern Levant According to the Written Evidence: Thutmose III and Amarna." In *Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2nd Millennium B.C.E. Proceedings of the International Symposium at the University of Freiburg Institute for Archaeological Studies, 30th May–2nd June 2012*, B. Eder and R. Pruzsinszky, eds., 155–163. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2015.
- Mynářová, J. *Language of Amarna—Language of Diplomacy: Perspectives on the Amarna Letters*. Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, Prague, 2007.
- Mynářová, J. "Lost in Translation. An Egyptological Perspective on the Egyptian-Hittite treaties." *Annals of the Náprstek Museum* 35/2 (2014): 3–8.

- Mynářová, J., M. Kilani, and S. Alivernini, eds. *A Stranger in the House—the Crossroads III. Proceedings of an International Conference on Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age held in Prague, September 10–13, 2018*. Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts, 2019.
- O'Connor, D.B. "Egypt's Views of 'Others.'" In *Never Had the Like Occurred: Egypt's View of its Past*. Tait, W.J., ed., 155–247. Encounters with Ancient Egypt. London: University College London Press, 2003.
- Osing, J. "Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich II." *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 32 (1976): 133–185.
- Pan, Y. *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui-Tang China and its Neighbors*. Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1997.
- Parkinson, R.B. *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems 1940–1640 BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Parpola, S. and K. Watanabe. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. State Archives of Assyria 2. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988.
- Pines, Y. "Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of Sino-Barbarian Dichotomy." In *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, R. Amitai and M. Biran, eds., 59–102. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Pines, Y. "Changing Views of *Tianxia* in Pre-imperial Discourse." *Oriens Extremus* 43 (2002): 101–116.
- Pines, Y. "Confucius's Elitism: The Concepts of *junzi* and *xiaoren* Revisited." In *A Concise Companion to Confucius*, P.R. Goldin, ed., 164–184. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017.
- Pines, Y. "Disputers of the *Li*: Breakthroughs in the Concept of Ritual in Preimperial China." *Asia Major* (Third Series) 13.1 (2000): 1–41.
- Pines, Y. *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Pines, Y. "Limits of All-under-Heaven: Ideology and Praxis of 'Great Unity' in Early Chinese Empire." In *The Limits of Universal Rule: Eurasian Empires Compared*, Y. Pines, M. Biran, and J. Rüpke, eds, 79–110. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Pines, Y. "The Messianic Emperor: A New Look at Qin's Place in China's History." In *Birth of an Empire: The State of Qin revisited*, Y. Pines, L. von Falkenhausen, G. Shelach, and R.D.S. Yates, eds., 258–279. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.
- Pines, Y. with M. Biran and J. Rüpke, "Introduction: Empires and their Space." In *The Limits of Universal Rule: Eurasian Empires Compared*, Y. Pines, M. Biran, and J. Rüpke, eds, 1–48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Poo, M.-C. *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes toward Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.

- Posener, G. *Cinq Figurines d'Envoûtement*. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1987.
- Posener, G. and J. Osing. "Tablettes-Figurines de Prisonniers." *Revue d'Égyptologie* 64 (2013): 135–174.
- Posener-Krieger, P. 2004. *I papiri di Gebelein (Scavi G. Farina 1935)*. Turin: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali—Soprintendenza al Museo delle Antichità Egizie.
- Ragazzoli, C. "La Littérature de Scribe au Nouvel Empire, ou Pourquoi les Miscellanées ne sont pas des Textes Scolaires." *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie* 201 (2019): 44–78.
- Ragazzoli, C. *Scribes. Les Artisans du Texte de l'Égypte Ancienne (1550–1000)*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019.
- Rawson, J. "Western Zhou Archaeology." In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, M. Loewe and E.L. Shaughnessy, eds., 352–449. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Redford, D.B. *Egypt and Canaan in the New Kingdom*. Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1990.
- Redford, D.B. *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books. A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History*. Mississauga: Benben Publications, 1986.
- Richards, J.E. "Conceptual Landscapes in the Egyptian Nile Valley." In *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, A.B. Knapp and W. Ashmore, eds., 83–100. London: Blackwell, 1999.
- Ritner, R.K. *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period*. WA 21. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.
- Rizhili jishi* 日知錄集釋. By Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682). Annotated by Huang Rucheng 黃如成, collated by Qin Kecheng 秦克誠. Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1996.
- Rossabi, M., ed. *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Sato, M. *The Confucian Quest for Order: The Origin and Formation of the Political Thought of Xun Zi*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
- Schaberg, D. 2001. *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.
- Sethe, K. *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefässscherben des Mittleren Reiches*. Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1926.
- Shelach-Lavi, G. *The Archeology of Early China: From Prehistory to the Han Dynasty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Shelach [-Lavi] G. and Y. Pines. "Secondary State Formation and the Development of Local Identity: Change and Continuity in the State of Qin (770–221 BC)." In *An Archaeology of Asia*, M. Stark, ed., 202–230. Malden MA: Blackwell, 2006.



- Shiji* 史記. By Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 85 BCE) *et al.* Annotated by Zhang Shoujie 張守節, Sima Zhen 司馬貞, and Pei Yin 裴駟. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997.
- Skaff, J.K. *Sui-Tang China and its Turko-Mongol neighbors. Culture, power, and connections, 580–800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Smith, M. *Following Osiris. Perspectives on the Osirian afterlife from four millennia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Smith, S.T. "Hekanefer and the Lower Nubian Princes: Entanglement, Double Identity, or Topos and Mimesis?" In *Fuzzy Boundaries (Festschrift Loprieno) II*, H. Amsutz, A. Dorn, M. Müller, M. Ronsdorf, and S. Uljas, eds., 767–779. Hamburg: Widmaier Verlag, 2015.
- Somaglino, C. and P. Tallet. "A Road to the Arabian Peninsula during the Reign of Ramesses III." In *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and beyond*, H. Riemer and F. Foster, eds., 511–520. *Africa Praehistorica* 27. Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut, 2013.
- Sparks, R.T. "Strangers in a Strange Land: Egyptians in Southern Palestine during the Bronze Age." *Archaeology International* 6 (2002): 48–51.
- Stauder-Porchet, J. *Les Autobiographies de l'Ancien Empire égyptien*. OLA 255. Leuven-Paris-Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2017.
- Stauder-Porchet, J., ed. *Ancient Egyptian Biographies. Forms, Contexts, Functions*. Wilbour Studies. Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2020.
- Strudwick, N. *Texts from the Pyramid Age*. WA 16. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.
- Tackett, N. *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Tallet, P. "Le roi Den et les Iouintiou: les Égyptiens au Sud-Sinaï sous la 1<sup>re</sup> Dynastie." *Archéo-Nil* 20 (2010): 97–105.
- Tao, C.-S. *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988.
- Teeter, E. *The Presentation of Maat: Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt*. SAOC 57. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1997.
- Thum, J. "When Pharaoh Turned the Landscape into a Stela. Royal Living-rock Monuments at the Edges of the Egyptian world." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 79/2 (2016): 68–77.
- Tillman, H. "Proto-Nationalism in Twelfth-Century China? The Case of Ch'en Liang." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 39.2 (1979): 403–428.
- Took, J. *A Native Chieftaincy in Southwest China: Franchising a Tai Chieftaincy Under the Tusi System of Late Imperial China*. Sinica Leidensia 70. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Valbelle, D. *Les Neuf Arcs. L'Égyptien et les Étrangers de la Préhistoire à la Conquête d'Alexandre*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1990.



- Van den Boorn, G.P.F. *The Duties of the Vizier. Civil Administration in the Early New Kingdom*. London/New York: Kegan Paul International, 1988.
- Vernus, P. *Affaires et Scandales sous les Ramsès. La Crise des Valeurs dans l'Égypte du Nouvel Empire*. Paris: Pygmalion, 1993.
- Vernus, P. *Essai sur la Conscience de l'Histoire dans l'Égypte Pharaonique*. Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1995.
- Vernus, P. "The Royal Command (*wꜥ-nsw*): A Basic Deed of Executive Power." In *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, J.C. Moreno García, ed., 259–340. HdO I.104. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013.
- Vernus, P. *Sagesses de l'Égypte Pharaonique*. Arles: Actes Sud, 2010.
- Vittmann, G. *Der Demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*. 2 vols. ÄAT 38. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998.
- Vogel, C. "This Far and not a Step further! The Ideological Concept of Ancient Egyptian Boundary Stelae." In *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature. Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3–7 May 2009*, S. Bar, D. Kahn, and JJ Shirley, eds., 320–341. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011.
- Wang, B., ed. *Chinese Visions of World Order: Tianxia, Culture, and World Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Wang, H. *Writing and the Ancient State. Early China in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Wang, Z. *Tang China in Multi-Polar Asia: A History of Diplomacy and War*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013.
- Wilkinson, T.A.H. *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt. The Palermo Stone and Its Associated Fragments*. London/New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000.
- Zuo Tradition / Zuo zhuan Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals." Translated by S. Durrant, W.-Y. Li, and D. Schaberg. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016.