Civilisation Recast: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives. STEPHAN FEUCHTWANG and MICHAEL ROWLANDS. 2019. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. vi + 218 pp. $99.99 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-108-48434-3. $80.00 (e-book), ISBN 978-1-108-75443-9.

Reviewed by Rowan Flad, Harvard University

In his recent journalistic account of the rapid social changes in early twenty-first-century China during what he calls "the age of ambition," Evan Osnos (*The Age of Ambition*, 2014, p. 219) cites a declaration in the *Beijing Daily* that "everyone knows that stability is a blessing and chaos is calamity"—perfectly encapsulating the extreme weight given to social stability in contemporary policy making in China. Feuchtwang and Rowlands here define "civilization" in opposition to chaos, which, according to the *Beijing Daily,* would mean that civilization is a blessing.

Many people have written about whether or not civilization is a blessing that is universally shared. Justin Jennings (*Killing Civilization,* 2016) traces the concept of civilization back to Lewis Henry Morgan and earlier Enlightenment thinkers. Jennings critiques stepwise models of evolution to a peak stage of social development, and he notes problematic references to "civilization" as a justification for colonialism and racism. He calls for the concept to be abandoned entirely rather than attempting to define the term in ways that skirt this problematic history.

Feuchtwang and Rowlands, in contrast, lean in to the concept, although their historical engagement with the term does not engage at all with Jennings's approach or other conversations about neoevolutionary social history. Instead, Chapter 1 builds from a discussion of Durkheim and Mauss through a consideration of transcendence and immanence, the *longue durée*, Goody, Weber, Freud, Foucault, Dumont, and Sahlins, and others—perhaps most notably, the German sociologist Norbert Elias (*The Civilizing Process,* 1994), whose notion of civilization focused on the historical process by which bodies are pacified through ritual action. They outline various aspects of what civilization should be understood to encompass, and they reach the conclusion that "civilisations are material modes of learning and self-fashioning that are transformed by long processes of assimilation from each other" (p. 37). Their *minimal* definition of civilization is "self-fashioning by restraint and with reference to an encompassing sense of the world that also defines what is human and what humans do, what is perceptible by living human senses and what is not, distinguishing insides from outsides" (p. 182). And yet, unless I misunderstand (and the prose is sometimes difficult to follow), civilization for them is not simply what "makes humans human," because in some cases, civilizations can be destroyed by chaos: "chaos is the brutalization of human relations and the abandoning of whatever was civilisation" (p. 177).

Furthermore, according to Chapter 2 and the Conclusion, civilizations are distinguishable from one another:

> Neither the several millennia-long migrations nor the long strings of exchange that then linked the continents unified the species into a single civilisation. On the contrary, we have also shown that geographical differences in something as basic as the methods of cooking and offering food, though they are not as old as the phylogenetic differences that were selected in the very long first migrations, have lasted for tens of thousands of years [p. 183].

I find parts of this summary statement fundamentally problematic, but within it, the authors point to one of the threads of the book that are among the most interesting: the methods of cooking and offering food.

In Chapter 3 (coauthored with Dorian Fuller), the authors distinguish East Asian practices of commensalism, ancestral engagement, and the use of boiling and sticky foods from West Eurasian practices of roasting and sacrifice. Although I was mystified both here and throughout the book by the use of "BPE" (rather than BCE or BC, for which it is an apparent equivalent, and easily confused with BP, for which it is not), and a bit puzzled by the figures—which are not entirely legible or explained—Chapter 3 is empirically grounded, thoroughly interesting, and provocative. In it, the authors argue for long-term conservatism in food systems that are core elements of distinguishing among civilizations.

The remainder of the book is less focused on specific data, and later chapters move beyond food to examine other aspects of their investigation of "self-fashioning." Chapter 4 argues that "worlds of the south" (Island Southeast Asia, parts of Melanesia, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa) saw "forms of Neolithicity" that "constitute distinct future trajectories for a different kind of 'modernity'" that reflect "their own forms of civilisation" (p. 94). Chapter 5, in which comparisons between Africa and China (regions of specialization of Rowlands and Feuchtwang) are made most explicit, emphasizes long-term

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continuities that distinguish the civilizations of these regions from each other and from world areas.

Chapter 6 focuses further on China. As a specialist in the archaeology of China, I must admit to some dismay at the superficial and sometimes sloppy treatment of much of the relevant data: a brief consideration of the Liangzhu site and culture (about which there is an ample corpus of publication) cites only a Wikipedia page; a discussion of the introduction of metallurgy to East Asia references the important scholar Chen Jianli only through a talk rather than the numerous publications by him and others; an incorrect statement asserts that the sources of copper and tin for metals at Erlitou come from Central Asia; an incorrect claim is made that there is writing at the Bronze Age sites of Sanxingdui (the authors conflate the Sanxingdui materials with other, later weapons that have so-called "Ba-Shu script" in the same region) and Zhengzhou (where there are oracle bones, but these lack inscriptions); and a series of scholars writing on early East Asia in English have their names misspelled (Frachetti, Pankenier, Allan). Other parts of the chapter do much better at summarizing the ritual reforms of the Western Zhou and emphasizing the dynamism and diversity of Chinese civilization, all to set up the argument that there was a process by which Chinese civilization came to incorporate these various elements.

That process is the subject of Chapter 7, which tacks between recognizing that civilization is heritage and tradition, and attempting to encapsulate Chinese civilization. In this chapter, for the first time, the authors bring up the term *wenming* 文明—a neologism introduced into Chinese from Japanese and translated as "civil," "civility," or "civilization" (see Romero Moreno, *(Con)Textos* 8:23–36). Although the etymological roots and nuanced meanings of *wenming* are not discussed (the lack of a Chinese glossary is regrettable), the chapter emphasizes rituals, beliefs, practices, and philosophies that ebb and flow within an interconnected cultural sphere and contribute to an impression of homogeneity—"a *style* (as Mauss called it) of varying and changing material practices and products" (p. 160). This style contributes to a "wenming rhetoric" (Romero Moreno, *(Con)Textos* 8:32) that places Chinese civilization (as characterized by "sage rule" and "self-cultivation" inherently connected to Confucian philosophy and urban-Han society) as "one hierarchy of moral authority and aspiration among others" (p. 181).

They assert that their "recasting" of civilization seeks to escape a Eurocentric bias (p. 1), and it is true that they propose a way to bring equivalence to various contrasting modernities. But at the same time, they emphasize deep and essential continuities, particularly in food preparation and ritual practices. This emphasis casts "civilization" in contrast to chaos and, consequently, in the service of nationalisms that may not be a blessing for everyone encompassed within.

New Frontiers in the Neolithic Archaeology of Taiwan (5600–1800 BP): A Perspective of Maritime Cultural Interaction. SU-CHIU KUO. 2019. Springer, Cham, Switzerland. xvii + 224 pp. $109.99 (cloth), ISBN 978-981-329-262-8. $84.99 (e-book), ISBN 978-981-329-263-5. $79.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-981-329-265-9.

Reviewed by Charles Higham, University of Otago

Taiwan sits center stage in any consideration of the expansion of prehistoric settlement into the wider Pacific. Its role as a hub linking mainland China with maritime migrations across Oceania began with the realization that the deepest strata of the Austronesian language family, which ultimately spread from Madagascar to Rapa Nui, with forays even into South America, are to be found on this island. Archaeobotanical and archeological research have greatly refined this model by tracing the domestication of rice in the Yangtze River region. Millet, too, is now well documented in the Central Plains of the Yellow River. There is a great deal of valuable new archaeological data presented in this book, and the author, Su-chiu Kuo, has been prominent in advancing our knowledge through her own fieldwork.

The first chapter summarizes the history of archaeological research on Taiwan, noting the early dominance of Japanese scholars during the period spanning the late nineteenth century through the Second World War. Since then, Taiwanese archaeologists have dominated the field, creating a veritable tsunami of new information that has been a side effect of rapid industrialization. Western scholars have also been involved, led by Wilhelm Solheim, whose major contribution has been his proposal that Austronesian speakers, whom he names the Nusantao, originated as maritime traders and migrants stimulated by post-Pleistocene rise in sea levels that created many new islands that had formerly been connected to larger islands or mainlands.

Paleolithic occupation on Taiwan, represented by the Changbin culture, dates between 30,000 and 14,000 years ago. What happened between then and the initial Neolithic settlement is not documented, except that at least some vestiges of a preceramic culture are known from about 5800 BP. Kuo divides the Neolithic occupation—characterized by pottery

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