

and exploited the new technologies, including the formally demarcated borderlines and even the telegraph lines, which were to empower the forces of order. In this section, Davis probably reaches a bit too far in his efforts to demonstrate continuity in the face of change—linking the older world of bandit networks to anti-Qing revolutionary activity in the first decade of the twentieth century, for example; the evidence as presented is not yet fully contextualized or explained. But Davis's larger point is worth considering carefully: the technologies of so-called civilization and modern state-building, including the borderline, census, and telegraph, do not necessarily bring order when introduced to borderland communities; nor do they eradicate the perceived need for states to participate in and seek to justify cultures of violence against borderland inhabitants. In my own reading, I found this insight particularly pertinent to developments in China today.

This book is a welcome study because of its focus on the late nineteenth-century Sino-Southeast Asian borderlands, a time period and region that deserves more good studies like this one. Davis brings to bear a wealth of knowledge about Qing, Nguyễn, and French politics while also providing a humane and detailed analysis of northern Vietnam's diverse upland and lowland communities. The book is difficult to follow at times (the introduction could use an explanation of each chapter's contributions), and Davis relies, in my opinion, a bit too much on a particular interpretation of Qing frontier policies. Nevertheless, this is a study that should be read widely by those interested in East and Southeast Asia, particularly because the key dynamics—armed non-state actors, state-promoted violence, and the suffering of upland communities—have resonated for decades throughout the Sino-Southeast Asian borderlands.

*Information, Territory, and Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China.* By HILDE DE WEERDT. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016. xxiv + 512 pp. \$59.95, £47.95, €54.00 (cloth).

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As Hilde De Weerdts recounts in her "Introduction," Sima Guang 司馬光, the great Song historian, noted in his memorial of 1061 that from the eighth century BCE until the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960 CE, China had been unified as one polity only for a total of some five centuries—less than half of the entire seventeen hundred years (6). By 1126–27, about seventy years after Sima's observation, the Song state lost its northern territories to the conquering Jurchens, and it would struggle for more than a century with this traumatic partition of its empire. This was the last time that China would be split up, however. De Weerdts argues that this had much to do with the new educated elite that evolved in the Song—basically a managerial elite that based its political power on service in the state bureaucracy and its economic wealth largely on landholding. In the three centuries of the Song dynasty (960–1279), the interests of this elite and the nature of its commitment to the state and to the country on the national, regional, and local scale would change. These developments have been amply examined in the last half century, with many studies highlighting the turn from a national to a local focus in the Song elite's interests. De Weerdts examines how the literati elite read and responded to

official and non-official writings and produced their own writings, and how they communicated and connected with each other—activities that changed and increased in quantity and scope from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries. In doing so, she shows “that the literati culture and identity and the structure and geography of communication networks taking hold in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries played a key role in the continuous maintenance of imperial traditions from the twelfth century onward” (6).

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the various kinds of court and government documents generated during the Song, how the state perceived its authority to control access to these writings, and how the literati elite viewed its need of (and right to) this information. Government regulations restricted circulation of archival and historical compilations by the central government (ranging from the relatively “raw” materials such as court diaries and the daily calendar of the emperor’s activities to compiled dynastic histories, collected statutes, and similar documents) to within the offices that produced or stored them. Yet, the complaints by officials about the information in these documents being circulated outside of official circles suggest the ineffectiveness of these rules. In fact, government documents were copied and disseminated both in manuscript and print, probably as early as the twelfth century, because members of the educated elite felt they needed such information. Government examination questions presumed knowledge of current events based on official documents, and a report in 1201 complained not about illicit access to these works, but that it was unfair to scholars in remote areas who could not obtain them! Not only examination candidates, but anyone who was concerned about the affairs of the empire would want information from government documents. Thus we can understand the “tacit and gradual accommodation to the leaking and reproduction” (48). But does this situation not indicate that the state and its officials even at very high levels of the bureaucracy were engaged in the tacit collusion in the leaking of documents? And how did the state arrive at this mentality of accommodation? Was it just a matter of giving in to the inevitable, and eventually realizing that there were *some* benefits for the state as well as for the recipients of the leaked information? For instance, after the sack of Kaifeng and the attendant loss of many government documents, the new Southern Song regime was forced to rely on private collections that had copies of state documents in the attempt to make up for the materials missing in the court repositories—an attempt that was only partially successful, since collectors valued their copies more highly than the rewards offered by the state. A more explicit and detailed explanation of how the state and its officials came to acquiesce to the illicit though nearly inevitable leaking of official information would have been useful.

Chapter 2 focuses on court gazettes and their digests, the short reports, which contained material on personnel actions, missions abroad, edicts, memorials, and other information that was particularly newsworthy not just to government officials, but also other members of the educated elite who were not office holders (at the time). The reception of this information went beyond listening to or reading it; readers composed letters, poetry, and other works expressing their reactions and views on the contents in the gazettes and short reports, and they acted on them—either by protecting themselves or their associates from political attacks, or by persuading into action those in official positions with the power to reverse government actions (or contemplated actions). The issues to which the literati reacted were on all levels—national, regional, and local, and personal—and might include, for example, information about exercising caution in publishing works

that might inspire political attack (79), or on surtaxes being levied on the local population, or on local attacks in an area (99), or simply news about acquaintances. There was apparently—even more than for other genres of government documents—a broad, implied consensus that leaking gazette information was done all the time and served useful purposes, because the educated elite of the empire should have this information. Moreover, gazette reports were sold in public, benefiting not just those who did not have legal access to the original, but even those who did, because the leaked materials often circulated more speedily than through the official channels, and might contain information that could have been edited out by the relevant government offices.

With the maps that are the subject of Chapter 3, we come to a graphic cum textual genre that was no longer produced exclusively by the government in the Southern Song, but increasingly by the educated elite, who generated, disseminated, and examined them with great interest. As De Weerdts points out, it is telling that dozens of empire maps from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are extant, in contrast to earlier times, from which none survive. Thanks to reproduction through printing, maps appeared in various kinds of works—atlasses, encyclopedias, works discussing the classics, histories, Buddhist histories, and so forth. Moreover, ways of formatting and presenting cartographical information changed and became more clearly explained. And even if the mapmakers thought they were doing nothing very different from the earlier government mapmakers, they succeeded in making cartographical knowledge something that the literati in general were expected to know. One of the most significant effects of the broader dissemination of maps of the Chinese empire—the normative idea of what this empire included—was imprinted in the eyes and minds of the map readers, in De Weerdts's words, a “political imaginary” that showed what China should be, rather than the territory actually controlled by the current government, and certainly not the reduced region controlled by the Southern Song.

Chapter 4 builds on the previous chapter, by considering how the huge amount of information generated by the government, especially on border affairs but also on all aspects of governing and the state's bureaucratic administrative practices, not only diffused into the literati world, but also inspired private scholars to produce their own materials, from maps to geographies to books on what one must know about (*xuzhi* 須知) many different subjects. The private writings and compilations allowed the literati to voice their opinions and propose their ideas on state policies and practices and demonstrate their role as stakeholders in the governing of the empire.

Chapter 5 examines several works that discuss borders between Chinese and non-Chinese areas. The two earliest texts from the Tang both highlight the stark contrast between Chinese and non-Chinese territories and the desirability of distance and isolation between the two. By the Northern Song period, with the government's grave concerns of powerful enemies to the north (Khitan Liao) and northwest (Tangut Xi Xia), court-compiled works emphasized the need for detailed planning and knowledge about defenses in administrative jurisdictions on the border. By the thirteenth century, there were private writings, commercially published, that paid great attention to chorographic details and the necessity of effective walled fortifications along this Southern Song–Jin border. As De Weerdts states, these are meant not as an exhaustive survey of the changing views of the “periphery” but as illustrations of the growing complexity in how the literati viewed the borders.

This is true, but it would be interesting to know more about the literati's specific responses to the Southern Song works. Furthermore, the author could point out the obvious: that after 1127, the military works were talking about the shifting border between Southern Song and Jin territories, especially in the Huai River area, in the heart of traditional Chinese territory, rather than in the more distant north. De Weerdts does allude to this challenge to dynastic legitimacy at the end of the chapter, but it seems like a very important point that needs more discussion. Another point worth developing is that the details discussed in Hua Yue's work on military geography defense and on (re)gaining territorial control may have been useful to local leaders in keeping order against bandits and other armed insurgents within Southern Song territory, part of the localist trend we see in that period.

In Chapters 6 and 7, we come to notebooks (*biji* 筆記, and related terms like *suibi* 隨筆, *bilu* 筆錄, and *bitan* 筆談), a genre of writing produced not by the state, but by literati authors writing privately. Notebooks originated far earlier than the Song, but the number of such works greatly proliferated, and depending on the somewhat problematic definition of what constituted a notebook, the number of notebooks in the Song range from about 100 to over 700. Moreover, as time went on, increasing numbers of authors came from either the lower levels of officialdom or the educated elite who were non-officeholders and were based in the provinces rather than the capital. For these individuals, more than for more politically or culturally prominent members of the elite, notebooks proved to be even more important means of developing and continuing their communication networks throughout the country.

Thus the value of notebooks, for their authors, for contemporary readers, and for later audiences, was multifaceted. They record not only information from official sources that may not have survived, but also conversations and correspondence between the authors and associates, or such communication known to the authors. Thus the rich and complex communication networks among the Song literati are revealed through an examination of the notebooks. Chapter 6 surveys the production of notebooks and how they developed into a recognizable genre, and also how these works were published. Not all notebooks ended up in print, but that those that did came not only from commercial publishers but also from local government offices. It is interesting that while sensitive materials like political commentary by identifiable living speakers might have begun as manuscript in limited circulation, they were retained after appearing in print. Thus, as De Weerdts points out, print was used to circulate materials beyond the initial small group of close associates of the author. Indeed, in presenting a manuscript to a reader, the author was tacitly inviting the former to make copies and further disseminate the text.

The monstrously long Chapter 7 covers several important topics that would have been better organized into two chapters. The issues addressed include how notebooks revealed information about the social and geographical backgrounds of the authors and their interlocutors and informants, as well as how these individuals were related to each other. The focus is on five notebooks from three authors: one by Sima Guang, *A record of hearsay from Su River* (*Sushui jiwén* 涑水記聞) from the late eleventh century in the Northern Song; three by Wang Mingqing 王明清 from the end of the twelfth century, *Waving the Duster* (*Huizhu lu* 揮塵錄), *Keeping Guests* (*Tou xia lu* 投轄錄), and *New record from the Jade Shine Studio* (*Yuzhao xin zhi* 玉照新志); and one by Zhang Shinan 張世南 from the early thirteenth century, *Records of official travel* (*Youhuan jiwén* 游宦紀聞).

De Weerdts analyzes the notebooks' informants considering their social and political status, the frequency they are cited, and their location, among other factors. There are notable differences between the informants of Sima Guang's work and those of Wang Mingqing and Zhang Shinan. For example, although officeholders continued to make up an important percentage of the informants in all the notebooks, more of those for the Southern Song works were lower-level officials in the provinces rather than high-ranking ones in the capital, or perhaps not office holders at all, but relatives and other associates of the author. Moreover, the informants for the Southern Song notebooks also came from a wider geographical area. For Wang Mingqing's notebook, *Waving the Duster* (in four installments, 1166–97), there was a total of 309 informants, with many more for the second than the first installment of the work. It may be that as each installment of the notebook was circulated, readers would volunteer information to Wang that was incorporated into entries in later installments.

This is also the chapter where De Weerdts demonstrates, with varying degrees of effectiveness, the different tools available for research in the digital humanities. Much of this huge amount of information is presented in seven pie charts, four bar graphs, five tables, and five maps of informant networks throughout the empire, and there is even more such information online. There is also a “topic map” diagram (for Wang Mingqing's *Waving the Duster*, Figure 7.9, pp. 380–81), showing topics for the notebook entries in ovals, connected to a number of other topics, with sizes of ovals indicating frequency of the topics, something that would be useful to do for other notebooks. For first-time readers, these materials are of varying usefulness; they squeeze in so much information that readers may want to rely primarily on the discussions in the main text at first. On the other hand, these kinds of tables, diagrams, and maps would be highly useful for researchers wanting to examine the issues addressed in greater depth.

One might say that much of the contents of the notebooks in the Southern Song figured as blogs of that time. The freedom from the formal strictures of the state's official genres allowed the literati to use notebooks in multiple ways, not always undermining the official genres, but “supplementing” (though this may be a disingenuous description)—correcting and pointing out “hidden agendas” and oversights of government actions and policies. Notebooks also allowed a much broader intertextuality, juxtaposing different written genres and recorded conversations made notebooks a dominant genre in the development of literati political, cultural, and social identities.

The eighth and last chapter looks especially at the way the Southern Song literati wrote and thought about the political and military issues that most riveted them—border affairs, what the Chinese empire should be and what it was not under the Southern Song, and how to describe the “foreign other.” De Weerdts primarily uses Wang Mingqing's *Waving the Duster* here, but she is able to show that Wang (and very likely other notebook writers of the Southern Song) probably recorded different views (through word analysis) of the Song–Jurchen conflict. This is not surprising, but nevertheless, reliance on a single author, who gave “a mild endorsement of prowar opinion” (425) does slant the discussion, and it would have been useful to examine at least one other notebook that may have been pro-peace (mildly or not).

De Weerdts's most important conclusions have to do with the evolution of the Song literati elite, whose turn, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, toward “localization went hand in hand with the consolidation of a commitment to unified rule over the

Chinese territories among literati in the provinces” (428). By the Southern Song this group consisted of the broad literati-elite, both officeholders and non-officeholders, whose loyalty to the Song state did not mean unquestioning obedience to the government rules and regulations, but was based on their attachment to the empire as a whole and to their local areas.

Relying on information from official and increasingly non-official sources circulating through the communication networks that extended throughout the country and linked different levels of officials and their associates, the literati elite was able to envision and express their “imperial mission.” That is, in different kinds of writings inspired by, commenting on, and reshaping textual and graphic productions that were originally the purview of the government at its highest levels (the emperor, the court, and high-level officials) the elite gave voice to “this culture of ours and this empire of ours.” It is telling that even as the Song state resisted its weakening control over the dissemination of important information, it also tacitly recognized the educated elite’s need and desire for information—their knowledge and debates about the condition of the empire made them more effective subjects and servants of the state. In broader terms, it was this literati elite, as it continued to evolve over the millennium between the Song and the end of the Qing, that helped the imperial state keep the country together, and helped the country recover from severe crises during each dynasty. The maintenance of the late Chinese imperial state did not require absolute control at the center, nor the survival of a particular dynasty. Rather, what was essential was the formation and survival of a group or groups that cherished the *idea* of a united empire, even if it was an idealized version not conforming to actual historical territorial boundaries.

In sum, this substantial monograph makes some very important points about the evolution of the literati elite over the course of the Song dynasty, points that are substantially supported by De Weerd’s multifaceted analysis of her sources. In fact, the book has been condensed in part from some thirty of De Weerd’s earlier articles, papers, and supplementary materials published in print or appearing online, available to readers interested in pursuing further the issues discussed in the book. She also demonstrates clearly the value of the various types of textual and data analysis, methods that scholars in the humanities need to learn to use to mine the maximum information from their various sources. There are some minor problems in presenting so much material in the book, such as the unusually small type size accompanying the various charts and graphs and the lack of a character glossary that could have been part of the index. Moreover, some descriptions and arguments are repeated more than necessary, as if the author does not trust the reader to get them on first presentation, or perhaps because so much of the book began as earlier articles; somewhat more attentive editing could have cut out repetitions (e.g., nearly identical descriptions of the contents of court gazettes are given on pp. 38–39, 76, and again on 77). These small imperfections, however, cannot detract from the author’s impressive contribution to our understanding of the cultural and political history of the literati elite during the Song and beyond.