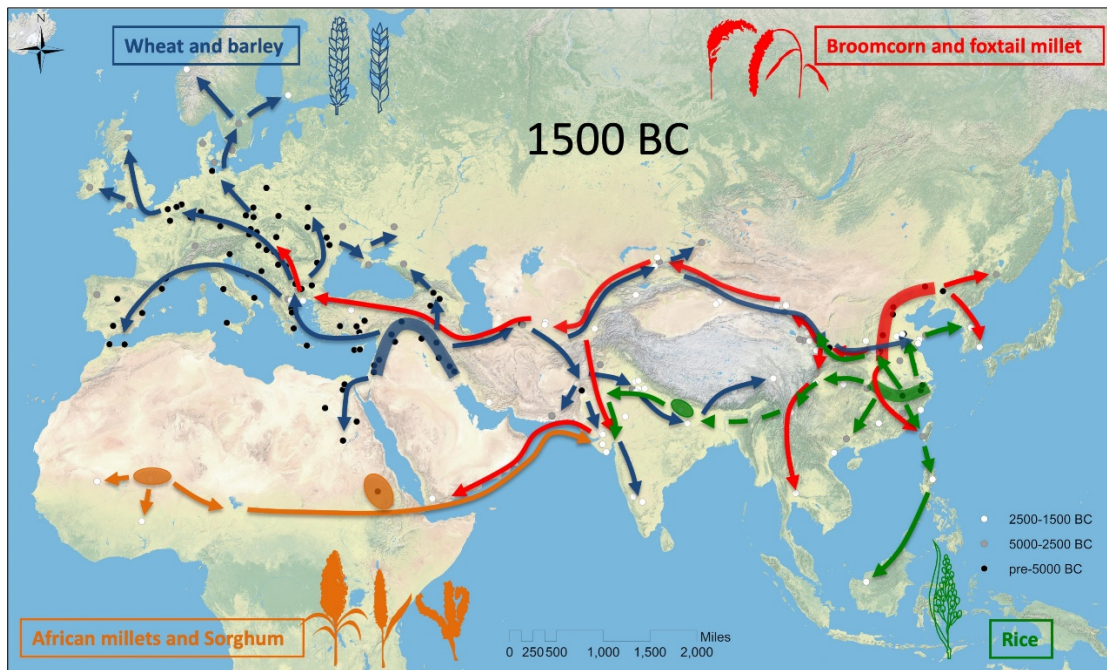




EARLY CHINA SEMINAR LECTURE SERIES

The Wind that Shakes the Barley: Consequences of the Food Globalization in Prehistory

Xinyi Liu · Washington University in St. Louis



In the context of recent conversations on food globalisation in prehistory, there has been growing scholarly interests in process of the eastern expansion of the ‘Neolithic founder crops’ from southwest Asia to East Asia. By c. 1500 BC, the geographical distribution of the Fertile Crescent crops, free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) and naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare* ssp. *vulgare*), stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, north to Scandinavia, and south to the Indian Ocean. In this paper, I shift the focus from the chronology and routes of the eastern journeys to consider the context in which wheat and barley cultivations were adapted to the existing agrarian system established since the Neolithic time in China. We shall consider the environmental, seasonal and culinary drivers of the trans-Eurasian exchange of cereal crops between 5000 and 1500 BC, and emphasize the role played by the primary agents of agricultural production, the ordinary farming communities, whose cultural and culinary choices facilitate not only the adoption of some crops but also the rejection of others.

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403 Kent Hall, 1140 Amsterdam Avenue, Columbia University

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Jue Guo, Barnard College, Columbia University

Glenda Chao, Ursinus College

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