

# Changing views of *tianxia* in pre-imperial discourse\*

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Half a century ago Joseph Levenson defined the traditional concept of *tianxia* 天下 (“world”, “All under Heaven”) as referring primarily to a cultural realm, being “a regime of value”, as opposed to a political unit, *guo* 國, “a state”.<sup>1</sup> The implication is clear: *tianxia* was a supra-political unit, larger than the manageable *Zhongguo* 中國, “the Central States”, i.e. the Chinese empire. Authors of modern Chinese dictionaries, such as *Cibai* 辭海 or *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典, disagree with Levenson: they suggest that *tianxia* was a political unit basically identical with *Zhongguo*, while its meaning as “the larger world” was secondary. The difference is more than purely semantic; for Levenson, at least, the distinction between *tianxia* and *guo* had far-reaching implications on China’s problematic entrance into the modern world of nation-states.<sup>2</sup>

Levenson’s study relied primarily on late imperial discourse. In this article I will complement his research by tracing the origins of the term *tianxia* and its earliest usage. I shall try to verify first whether Levenson’s juxtaposition of cultural and political meanings of this term is traceable to pre-imperial texts, and second, what were the limits of pre-imperial *tianxia* and whether or not it was confined to the Central States, i.e. the Zhou 周 realm.

A preliminary warning which has to be made is that unlike many other terms of political and philosophical discourse, the precise meaning of the term *tianxia* was never scrutinized by pre-imperial statesmen and thinkers, and its usage remained quite loose, reminiscent of the modern usage of such terms as “nation”, “humanity” or “the world” by politicians and journalists, rather than the rigid lexicon of philosophical discourse.<sup>3</sup> A single text, and sometimes a single passage, could refer to *tianxia* in two or more different, even contradictory, ways. This lack of terminological precision requires utmost caution when we analyze earliest meanings of *tianxia*. Nonetheless, as I shall show below, a systematic survey of major pre-imperial texts reveals distinct semantic fields of this term, and these differences not only reflect significant developments in early Chinese political thought but also inform us of the changing identities of the inhabitants of the would-be Chinese world. In particular the juxtaposition of inclusive and exclusive definitions of *tianxia* sheds new light on the complex processes of identity building in the Zhou world on the verge of imperial unification.

## Origins: Tianxia as the Zhou realm

The term *tianxia*, which is so common in Zhanguo (戰國, 453-221 BCE)<sup>4</sup> texts, was introduced into political discourse relatively late, and is largely a creation of the middle to late Chunqiu period (春秋, 722-453). While *Tian* (天, Heaven) became the highest deity of the Zhou pantheon from the very beginning of the Western Zhou (西周, 1046-771) rule – if not earlier – and the term *tianzi* (天子,

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1 Levenson, “T’ien-hsia and Kuo”, 447-451. More recently, Peter Bol identified the opposition between *tianxia* and *guo* as “society” versus “the state” or the dynasty; see his “Government, Society and State”, 140.

2 See Levenson, “T’ien-hsia and Kuo”, 447-451.

3 See e.g. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 18 about the imprecision with which the term “nation” is used.

4 Hereafter all dates are Before Common Era unless indicated otherwise.

Son of Heaven) was a common designation of Zhou kings,<sup>5</sup> the concept of “All under Heaven” is almost nonexistent in early Zhou sources. It is never mentioned in bronze inscriptions, which employ instead the Shang (商, ca. 1600-1046) term *si fang* 四方.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, *tianxia* is all but absent from the earliest chapters of the *Shu jing* 書經 and the *Shi jing* 詩經 odes and hymns. In the earliest layer of the *Shu jing*, *tianxia* appears only once, in the “Shao gao” 召誥 document, which states that the king’s great virtue would be emulated by the people under Heaven; it is unclear from the context whether or not *tianxia* is used as a compound or just as literal designation: “under [the supreme deity,] Heaven”.<sup>7</sup> Another early appearance of *tianxia* is in the “Huang yi” 皇矣 ode of the *Shi jing*, which praises King Wen’s (文王, d. ca. 1047) martial achievements that brought tranquility to All under Heaven.<sup>8</sup> In both cases *tianxia* apparently refers to the area under the jurisdiction of the Zhou kings, although the contexts do not support a definitive answer.

To clarify the earliest meaning of *tianxia* we should look at its pre-compound occurrences as *tian zhi xia* 天之下. The most famous and frequently cited of these is the presumably eighth-century BCE “Bei shan” 北山 ode, which states “Everywhere under Heaven is the King’s land, each of those who live on the land is the King’s servant”.<sup>9</sup> What are the limits of “everywhere under Heaven”? The evidence strongly suggests that the ode refers to a limited territory of the Zhou royal domain. The poem was composed in the age when the royal house lost much of its power and the former fiefs of the Zhou relatives and supporters had become independent political entities; the kings therefore could administer lands and population in their domain, but not in the fiefdoms. The cited phrase furthermore cannot be interpreted as an implicit protest against the decline of the royal power in fiefs, since the “Bei shan” ode concentrates exclusively on internal problems within the royal domain. It is therefore likely that originally *tianxia* referred to the area under the direct rule of the Son of Heaven, and its limits might have shrunk together with the contraction of royal power.

During the Chunqiu period we may discern a gradual increase in the use of the term *tianxia*. Despite the ongoing political disintegration of the Zhou world, frequent diplomatic contacts between Chunqiu states might have reinforced the sense of cultural unity between members of the ruling elites, and in these conditions *tianxia* became the designation of the Zhou oikoumenē. The *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, our major source for the history of the Chunqiu period, reflects a gradual increase in references to *tianxia*: this term appears only four times in the first half of the *Zuo zhuan*, but no less than eighteen times in the speeches of the sixth century BCE statesmen.<sup>10</sup> This increase is accompanied by gradual changes in the meaning of the term as outlined below.

<sup>5</sup> For the earliest usages of the term *tianzi*, see Takeuchi, “Seishū kinbun uchi no ‘tenshi’ ni tsuite”, 105-130.

<sup>6</sup> The discussion of the bronze inscriptions is based on Zhang, *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng yinde*; the only bronze inscription which mentions *tianxia* is that on a late fourth century BCE Zhongshan Wang Cuo *da ding* (for which see Matos, “Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions”, 104-111). For the term *si fang*, see Wang Aih, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 23-74.

<sup>7</sup> 其惟王位在德元，小民乃惟刑；用于天下 (*Shang shu zhengyi*, “Shao gao” 召誥15: 213).

<sup>8</sup> *Mao shi zhengyi*, “Huang yi” 皇矣 16: 520 (Mao 241).

<sup>9</sup> 溥天之下，莫非王土，率土之濱，莫非王臣。 *Mao shi zhengyi*, “Bei shan” 北山 13:463 (Mao 205).

<sup>10</sup> For the reliability of the speeches in the *Zuo zhuan* as sources for Chunqiu intellectual history, see Pines, “Intellectual Change”, 77-132, and the modified discussion in idem, *Foundations of Confucian Thought*, 14-39. To recapitulate, I argue that most of the speeches were incorporated into the *Zuo zhuan* from its primary sources – narrative histories produced by the Chunqiu scribes. Although some of the speeches were heavily edited or even invented by the scribes, the evidence suggests that they reflect the Chunqiu intellectual milieu and that their content was not significantly distorted by the author/compiler of the *Zuo zhuan*. The above statistics omit a speech which, as I have argued elsewhere, was clearly interpolated into the *Zuo zhuan* at a later stage of its transmission (Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* [hereafter *Zuo*], Wen 18: 633-643; see a detailed discussion in Pines, *Foundations*, 234-238).

The primary meaning of *tianxia* in the *Zuo zhuan* supports Levenson's observation of *tianxia* as a cultural realm, "a regime of value". The speakers often mention that certain behavior would be detested, or alternatively welcomed, by All under Heaven, and the context invariably points at those segments of the world that possess common cultural values, i.e. the Zhou elite. In these instances *tianxia* evidently refers to "public opinion", i.e. common values of the ruling aristocracy in Chunqiu states.<sup>11</sup>

In the later part of the *Zuo zhuan*, aside from the predominant cultural meaning of *tianxia*, a new, political, dimension of this term becomes observable, as certain statesmen ponder the possibility of attaining universal supremacy, if not universal rule. Not surprisingly, these new voices became particularly pronounced in the state of Chu 楚, which by 541 BCE had effectively established its dominance over most of the Zhou world. The *Zuo zhuan* tells of King Ling of Chu (楚靈王, r. 541-529), who divined by making cracks, requesting: "Let me attain All under Heaven!"<sup>12</sup> Other Chu statesmen also raised the issue of attaining *tianxia*.<sup>13</sup> Apparently, the political achievements of King Ling convinced some of the Chu leaders that attaining universal dominance was no longer an idle dream. For them *tianxia* became not only a source of public opinion but an actual field of operations.<sup>14</sup>

But what is meant by "universal"? Did "All under Heaven" sought by the Chu leaders exceed the territory of the Central States? Not necessarily. Examination of the occurrences of *tianxia* in the *Zuo zhuan* suggests that its limits never surpassed that of the Zhou world; alien tribes were apparently beyond the fringes of All under Heaven. In 636 a Zhou minister, Fu Chen 富辰, admonished King Xiang (周襄王, r. 651-619) for establishing amicable relations with the Di 狄 tribesmen, reminding him that former kings "mildly cherished All under Heaven, and yet were afraid of external offences".<sup>15</sup> The very structure of the sentence suggests that certain areas were "external" to the All under Heaven cherished by the kings; *tianxia* was merely a territory under royal jurisdiction. In 533 another Zhou minister, Zhan Huanbo 詹桓伯, complained of the Rong 戎 incursions into the Zhou domain lands saying:

The Rong possess Central States (*Zhongguo*) – whose fault is it? Hou Ji 后稷 [the Zhou progenitor] cultivated All under Heaven, but now the Rong rule it – is it not a real problem?<sup>16</sup>

Here *tianxia* is clearly coterminous with *Zhongguo*, and the Rong are evidently excluded from it, just as barbarians were often excluded from the Greek *oikoumenē*. These are not isolated cases: whenever in a *Zuo zhuan* passage the limits of *tianxia* are determinable, they are invariably confined to the Zhou world.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the Chu struggle for attaining All under Heaven actually meant imposing its dominance on the dwellers of the Central States, the Xia 夏.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. *Zuo*, Zhuang 12: 192; Cheng 2: 804; Xiang 26: 1112; Xiang 31: 1195; Zhao 8: 1302; Ding 10: 1583.

<sup>12</sup> See *Zuo*, Zhao 13: 1350.

<sup>13</sup> See *Zuo*, Zhao 19: 1402; Zhao 26: 1474-75.

<sup>14</sup> For Chu achievements and for Chunqiu inter-state dynamics see Pines, *Foundations*, 105-135. Another indication of the increasing *tianxia*-oriented discourse in Chu is the inscription on the Gan-*zhong*, in which the author, a mid-sixth century BCE Chu noble, praises himself: "I never err; and under Heaven (*tian zhi xia* 天之下) it is difficult to obtain a minister like myself" (see Chen Shuangxin, "Gan Zhong mingwen buyi", 281).

<sup>15</sup> 其懷柔天下也，猶懼有外侮 (*Zuo*, Xi 24: 425).

<sup>16</sup> 戎有中國，誰之咎也？后稷封殖天下，今戎制之，不亦難乎？ (*Zuo*, Zhao 9: 1309).

<sup>17</sup> On another occasion, the limits of *tianxia* are even smaller: the rebellious Prince Chao 王子朝 from the royal domain complained in 516 that his adversaries "set calamity in All under Heaven", although their calamity was largely limited to the royal domain (*Zuo*, Zhao 26: 1475-79).

<sup>18</sup> In 516, Fei Wuji 費無極 proposed to King Ping (楚平王, r. 528-516) a strategy of "attaining All under Heaven" (*Zuo*, Zhao 26: 1474-75); his strategy focused exclusively on neutralizing the power of the state of Jin among the Xia polities.

In the *Lunyu* 論語, insofar as this text reflects the fifth-century BCE lexicon, we may discern slight changes in the usage of the term *tianxia* in comparison with the *Zuo zhuan*.<sup>19</sup> First, the term becomes more frequent: it appears twenty-three times, that is, slightly more than in the *Zuo zhuan*, which is ten times as long. Second, political aspects of *tianxia* become more pronounced. While in the *Zuo zhuan* the cultural meaning of *tianxia* clearly prevailed, in the *Lunyu* both semantic aspects are balanced. In approximately half of its occurrences the term *tianxia* refers to the “regime of value” as is evident from such phrases as “All under Heaven will return to benevolence”, “three-years mourning is the common mourning in All under Heaven” and so on.<sup>20</sup> However, *tianxia* is not only a cultural, but also a political realm; hence the *Lunyu* frequently mentions the ancient sage kings who possessed or yielded “All under Heaven”.<sup>21</sup> *Tianxia* had to be ruled. This politicization of *tianxia* is observable in one of the most important political sayings in the *Lunyu*:

When the Way prevails under Heaven, rites, music and punitive expeditions are issued by the Son of Heaven; when there is no Way under Heaven, rites, music and punitive expeditions are issued by the overlords. If they are issued by the overlords, few [states] will not be lost within ten generations; if they are issued by the nobles, few will not be lost within five generations; when the retainers hold the destiny of the state, few will not be lost within three generations.<sup>22</sup>

This saying is a good example of the transformation of *tianxia* from a cultural into political entity. The prevalence of the Way clearly refers to common cultural values that are supposed to unify All under Heaven. However, the prevalence of these values is conceived politically, as the restoration of political unity, characteristic of the Western Zhou period. All under Heaven ought to be ruled by the Son of Heaven, suggests Confucius. Furthermore, the above statement is the first to juxtapose a state (*guo* 國, elsewhere referred to as *bang* 邦) and the larger unit, All under Heaven. As we shall see below, this juxtaposition appears frequently in Zhanguo texts (and elsewhere in the *Lunyu*), where, *pace* Levenson, it refers usually to larger and smaller political units, and not to a cultural versus a political realm.

Finally, what are the limits of *tianxia* in the *Lunyu*? Here the text is largely identical to the *Zuo zhuan*: *tianxia* is the area under the rule of the Son of Heaven, that is the Zhou realm. When Confucius praised the great Qi 齊 statesman, Guan Zhong (管仲, d. 645), for “bringing unity and order to All under Heaven”,<sup>23</sup> he definitely knew that Guan’s efforts had stabilized only parts of the Zhou realm, but this did not matter: the Central States were coterminous with All under Heaven. For Confucius the limits of the civilized world were evidently the limits of the universe.

## From Oikoumenē to Imperium – Tianxia as a Political Unit

The above discussion suggests that prior to the fifth century BCE the term *tianxia* remained relatively insignificant in political discourse, that it referred primarily to the cultural rather than the political realm, and that its limits were largely identical to that of the Zhou world, i.e. the *Zhongguo*

<sup>19</sup> The dating of the *Lunyu* is too complicated a question to be dealt with adequately here. For my present concern I tentatively adopt the view that insofar as the vocabulary of the *Lunyu* reflects fifth-century BCE usages, the bulk of the text might have been compiled within two to three generations from Confucius’ death. See detailed discussion in Pines, “Lexical Changes”.

<sup>20</sup> See Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, “Yan Yuan” 顏淵 12.1: 123; “Yang Huo” 陽貨 17.21: 188; see also “Li ren” 里仁 4.10: 37.

<sup>21</sup> See *Lunyu*, “Tai bo” 泰伯 8.1: 78; “Xian wen” 憲問 14.5: 145; “Yan Yuan” 12.22: 131.

<sup>22</sup> 天下有道，則禮樂征伐自天子出；天下無道，則禮樂征伐自諸侯出。自諸侯出，蓋十世希不失矣；自大夫出，五世希不失矣；陪臣執國命，三世希不失矣。（*Lunyu*, “Ji shi” 季氏 16.2: 174).

<sup>23</sup> *Lunyu*, “Xian wen” 憲問 14.17: 151-52.

(Central States). Yet by the late Chunqiu period we may discern tendencies toward increasing the importance of *tianxia* on the one hand, and a gradual shift of its semantic field from purely cultural to the political domain on the other. These tendencies continued into the Zhanguo period, turning *tianxia* into a focus of thinkers' political interest.

The *Mozǐ* may be considered a watershed between two stages of the usage of *tianxia* in pre-imperial discourse. The discussion in the so-called core chapters of this text, compiled apparently in the early fourth century BCE, often focuses on *tianxia*.<sup>24</sup> The term is mentioned no less than four hundred times in these chapters, which are only two-and-a-half times longer than the *Lunyu* and much shorter than the *Zuo zhuan*. For Mozi *tianxia* is a more important and more frequently mentioned unit than a single state (*guo*); he may be the first known thinker to promote a political program of a truly universal appeal.

In the *Mozǐ* the tendency of politicization of *tianxia* matures, as All under Heaven is treated primarily as a political unit. Sayings such as “to possess All under Heaven” (*you tianxia* 有天下, 14 times), “to be a king of All under Heaven” (*wang tianxia* 王天下, eight times) “to [properly] rule All under Heaven” (*zhi tianxia* 治天下, 23 times) and the like are ubiquitous in the text; and unlike in the *Lunyu* their usage is not necessarily confined to the ancient sage kings, but also refers to those rulers who are supposed to unify and rule All under Heaven now. The political reorientation of *tianxia* in the *Mozǐ* does not imply, however, the neglect of other aspects of this term. Mozi continued to believe in *tianxia* as not only a political, but also a cultural unit, a realm of unified values. He frequently criticized erroneous views of “*shi* and superior men of All under Heaven” (*tianxia zhi shi junzi* 天下之士君子), implying thereby that some kind of public opinion existed in *tianxia*. Mozi furthermore proclaimed his commitment to preserve the cultural unity of All under Heaven, by establishing the single criterion of propriety (*yi* 義) for the entire *tianxia*.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, for Mozi *tianxia* was not only a political and cultural but also as an economic unit, whose people possess common resources that should be protected by proper government policy. This equation of *tianxia* with society in general was adopted by later Zhanguo thinkers and might have influenced references to *tianxia* as “society” in late imperial discourse.<sup>26</sup>

Later Zhanguo texts, such as the *Mengzi* 孟子, *Xunzi* 荀子, *Han Feizi* 韓非子 and others, largely resemble the picture of the *Mozǐ*. Each of these texts treats *tianxia* as a political, cultural, and social unit. The cultural aspect of *tianxia* is observable from frequent discussions of common values of All under Heaven, ubiquitous in most texts. For instance, when Mencius (孟子, ca. 379-304) declares: “he who rules the people is fed by the people – this is a common sense of propriety of All under Heaven”,<sup>27</sup> or “talks of Yang Zhu and Mo Di fill All under Heaven”,<sup>28</sup> it is clear that he implies the culturally and perhaps ethically unified realm. Mencius is echoed by Xunzi (荀子, ca. 310-218), who talks among other things about the common Way of All under Heaven, and even by Han Feizi

<sup>24</sup> Wu Yujiang 吳毓江 has convincingly argued that the core chapters (8 to 38) might have originated within Mozi's lifetime (ca. 460-390 BCE) or shortly thereafter (see his “*Mozǐ* gepian zhenwei kao” 墨子各篇真偽考, in *Mozǐ jiaozhu*, 1025-55). I concur with Wu's research, leaving aside for the time being the question of the possible separate origin of each of the triple sections into which the core chapters are divided, for which see Graham *Divisions in Early Mohism*, Maeder, “Some Observances”, 27-82.

<sup>25</sup> See *Mozǐ jiaozhu*, “Shang tong” 尚同 chapters, 11-13: 109-153.

<sup>26</sup> See Bol, “Government, Society and State”, 140.

<sup>27</sup> 治於人者食人，治人者食於人——天下之通義也。(Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu*, “Teng Wen gong shang” 滕文公上 5.4: 124).

<sup>28</sup> 楊朱、墨翟之言盈天下 (*Mengzi*, “Teng Wen gong xia” 滕文公下 6.9: 155).

(韓非子, d. 233), who is aware of the universal public opinion, which can cause a bad ruler to be “ridiculed by All under Heaven”.<sup>29</sup>

The cultural dimension of the term *tianxia* remained therefore pronounced throughout the Zhanguo period and thereafter; yet in the period under discussion it was unequivocally overshadowed by political interpretation of this term. The lion’s share of late Zhanguo discussions of *tianxia* deal with the need to unify, harmonize and establish proper rule in All under Heaven. Moreover, Zhanguo texts follow the *Lunyu* precedent in juxtaposing *tianxia* and *guo*, and the latter invariably means a unit of the former.<sup>30</sup> *Tianxia* was no longer a mere oikoumenē, an inhabited world, but rather it became a field of potentially unified political rule, an imperium.

Aside from cultural and political dimensions the term *tianxia* attained additional meanings. The economic and social aspect of *tianxia* became particularly strongly pronounced in the *Xunzi*, where the need to properly maintain the resources of All under Heaven and to benefit All under Heaven is discussed in the chapter “Fu guo” (“Enriching the state” 富國). *Tianxia* furthermore obtained a cosmic dimension, as can be seen from the *Laozi* 老子, but this meaning remains evidently marginal in other texts, and hence will not be discussed here.<sup>31</sup> The variety of meanings should, however, not obscure a basic feature of the vast majority of Zhanguo discussions of *tianxia*, namely the predominantly political usage of this term. *Tianxia* is first the realm of proper rule, and only then it is “a regime of value”, as Levenson suggested, or “society” as suggested by Peter Bol.

The reasons for this shift of emphasis from the cultural to political interpretation of *tianxia* lie in the dynamics of Chunqiu and Zhanguo cultural and political life. During the Chunqiu period, political disintegration reached its apex, as dozens of small and medium-sized polities coexisted on the ruins of the Zhou world. This disintegration, however, did not necessarily mean the demise of cultural unity throughout the Zhou lands. A survey of burial patterns and remnants of material culture from most of the areas that had been under Zhou dominance reflects a remarkable cultural unity, regional variations notwithstanding.<sup>32</sup> The ritual culture inherited from the Western Zhou remained very much intact throughout most of the Chunqiu period, and eventually its impact even expanded with the entrance of the southeastern states of Wu 吳 and Yue 越 into close cultural ties with the Zhou states. Common ritual culture, bolstered by frequent diplomatic intercourse and by occasional migration of aristocrats from one state to another,<sup>33</sup> strengthened the sense of cultural unity among members of the elite throughout the Zhou realm, which evidently resulted in a feeling of belonging to the common cultural All under Heaven.

Since the late Chunqiu and early Zhanguo period two evolving trends altered the predominantly cultural meaning of *tianxia*. On the one hand, the demise of aristocratic society brought about the decline of common ritual norms, as evident, for instance, in departures from Zhou burial patterns. Concomitantly, powerful “peripheral” states, such as Chu and Qin 秦, began promulgating their

<sup>29</sup> See e.g. Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jiyi*, “Zhong Ni” 仲尼 7: 112-113; “Ru xiao” 儒效 8: 133; Wang Xianshen, *Han Feizi jiyi*, “Shi guo” 十過 10: 70; 10: 74; “Shuo yi” 說疑 44: 408.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. *Mengzi*, “Liang Hui Wang xia” 梁惠王下 2.3, p. 30; “Jin xin xia” 盡心下 14: 13, p. 328; Jiang Lihong, *Shang jun shu zhuzhi*, “Kai sai” 開塞 7:57; “Xiu quan” 修權 14: 85; *Xunzi*, “Ru xiao” 8: 114 and 8: 134; “Wang zhi” 王制 9: 172; “Fu guo” 富國 10: 185; “Zheng lun” 正論 18: 326; “Li lun” 禮論 19: 351.

<sup>31</sup> For the cosmic meaning of *tianxia* in the *Laozi*, see Gao, *Bushu Laozi*, 28: 369; 43: 35; 52: 74.

<sup>32</sup> See a detailed discussion by Falkenhausen, “The Waning of the Bronze Age”, 450-544; idem, *Chinese Society*; cf. Yin Qun, *Huanghe zhongxiayou diqu*.

<sup>33</sup> The scope of this migration throughout the Chunqiu period was definitely smaller than in the subsequent Zhanguo age, but it still remained a significant integrative factor. See Pines, *Foundations*, 285n95; cf. Zhang Yanxiu, “Chunqiu ‘chu ben’ kaoshu”, 21-25; Zhao Faguo, “Xianqin Qidi renkou”, 171-187.

separate identity, quite distinct from that of the Zhou. Hence, the former cultural and ritual unity of the Zhou world became less pronounced.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, disintegrative factors were counterbalanced by several centripetal tendencies. First, late Chunqiu to early Zhanguo economic developments, particularly the growing commercialization of the Zhanguo economy, galvanized inter-regional connections and increased regional interdependence, with economic ties transcending the boundaries of individual states, contributing thereby to the sense of economic unity of All under Heaven, as represented e.g. in Xunzi's thought.<sup>35</sup> Second, military developments during this period likewise contributed to the increasing sense of common fate in the Chinese world. Unlike in the early Chunqiu, when military conflicts were mostly confined to neighboring states and long-distance expeditions were infrequent, by the late sixth century BCE deep penetration into enemy lands became common tactics, and states formerly considered remote became active participants in military conflicts throughout the Central Plain and beyond.<sup>36</sup> Third, and perhaps most important for our discussion, the increasing migration of statesmen across state boundaries perpetuated cultural links between these states and increased their political interdependence. Almost all of the known Zhanguo thinkers routinely crossed borders in search of a better appointment and many served more than one state.<sup>37</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that these thinkers turned All under Heaven, and not individual states, into a focus of their interest.

The process of economic, military and partly cultural consolidation of the Zhou world amidst political and ritual disintegration and ongoing warfare encouraged contemporary statesmen and thinkers to contemplate solutions to the centuries-long conflict. For the majority of the thinkers this solution lay in political unification of All under Heaven as the only adequate means to restore stability and peace. Their political experience taught them that no state would achieve orderly rule unless this rule were imposed on its neighbors as well, and ultimately – on the entire politically and militarily active realm. This quest for unification, which I have discussed in greater detail elsewhere,<sup>38</sup> explains the politicization of the term *tianxia* in Zhanguo discourse. The question to be asked now is what where the limits of the due-to-be-unified world; what was the scope of *tianxia* for Zhanguo thinkers?

<sup>34</sup> The decline of common ritual culture in the Zhanguo period is discussed in Yuri Pines, “Disputers of the *Li*”, 20-21; for the new identity building by Chu, see, for instance Li Ling, “On the Typology of Chu Bronzes”; for the case of Qin, see the discussion below.

<sup>35</sup> See the detailed discussion by Yang Kuan, *Zhanguo shi*, 89-150; Hsu Cho-yun, *Ancient China in Transition*, 116-126; cf. Leonard S. Perelomov, *Imperia Ts'in*, 22-34.

<sup>36</sup> The first military encounter of the Qi 齊 and Chu forces in 656 was an astonishing experience to the participants. The Chu envoy told Lord Huan of Qi (齊桓公, r. 686-643 BCE): “You live near the Northern Sea, I live near the Southern Sea, even the smell of [sacrificial] horses and oxen do not reach each other; now, unexpectedly you entered my lands – what is the reason?” (*Zuo*, Xi 4: 289). Chu leaders evidently considered Qi as too remote a state to become a real enemy. A century and a half later, however, the situation completely changed. In 506, the south-eastern state of Wu 吳 launched an unprecedented campaign against Chu, penetrating deep into the Chu heartland and invading the Chu capital, Ying 郢. It was only the military assistance of Chu's north-western neighbor, Qin 秦, that helped Chu to recover its lands. Thus, for the first time two opposite parts of the Chinese world were linked in the same campaign, inaugurating the age of long-distanced expeditions. For Zhanguo warfare, see Yang Kuan *Zhanguo shi*, 303-316 *et passim*. Certain Zhanguo statesmen were aware of the changes in the scope and the duration of the warfare, as suggested e.g. in a discussion recorded in the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 for which see He Jianzhang, *Zhanguo ce zhushi*, “*Zhao ce* 趙策 3” 20.1: 709.

<sup>37</sup> Some of the cynical Zhanguo ministers succeeded even in serving simultaneously several states, undermining thereby the state's internal cohesiveness; for details about these “servants of several masters”, see Mark E. Lewis, “Warring States”, 632-34.

<sup>38</sup> See Yuri Pines, “The One that pervades All”, 280-324.

## “This World of Ours”: Inclusive and Exclusive Definitions

In the first part of our discussion we have seen that during the Chunqiu period *tianxia* was largely coterminous with the culturally unified area under the ritual superiority of the Zhou Son of Heaven, i.e. the Central States. In the Zhanguo period, as political aspects of *tianxia* began to overshadow its cultural dimension, its equivalence to *Zhongguo* was no longer taken for granted. As mentioned above, the Zhanguo world underwent contradictory processes: on the one hand, the ritual uniformity of the Zhou realm markedly declined, and its former components, particularly the peripheral states of Qin and Chu, began developing their unique identity, which was only partly related to the Zhou legacy. On the other hand, however, the migration of statesmen across boundaries perpetuated a common cultural legacy; and simultaneously, the territorial expansion of the major states brought about a certain extension of the Zhou civilization as well. These complex processes of defining and redefining the boundaries of cultural and political entities and of their relation to the Zhou legacy are reflected in the changing scope of *tianxia* in Zhanguo discourse.

Mozi may have been the first to challenge the equation of *tianxia* and *Zhongguo*. His ideal of political and ethical unity of the world, as expressed in the “Universal Love” (“Jian’ai” 兼愛) and “Elevating the Uniformity” (“Shang tong” 尚同) chapters was clearly universal, transcending the boundaries of the Central States. When Mozi praises the sage hero Yu 禹 for “bringing order to All under Heaven” in the aftermath of the deluge, he emphasizes Yu’s contribution to the aliens on the fringes of the Zhou civilization; they were equal beneficiaries of Yu’s deeds just as much as the Chinese (Xia) were. The aliens were by no means part of *Zhongguo* but they definitely belonged to *tianxia*. In sharp contradiction to the *Zuo zhuan*, Mozi saw the Central States as a part of All under Heaven rather than its totality.<sup>39</sup>

Mozi’s inclusive vision partly derives from his rejection of the paradigm of Xia ritual and cultural superiority. Mozi ridiculed long-respected Chinese ritual habits that could be as wrong headed in his view as cannibalism or other disgusting practices customary among “the barbarians”. This nascent cultural relativism allowed Mozi to free himself of automatic admiration of the Central States and to expand *tianxia* beyond their limits.<sup>40</sup> Yet the expansion of *tianxia* in the *Mozi* may reflect a deeper process of broadening the limits of the Zhou world since the sixth century BCE. By then, certain alien states, such as southeastern Wu and Yue, had become increasingly involved in the affairs of the Central States, establishing their hegemony for brief periods, and solidifying their ties with the Xia polities. While the southerners’ acculturation and even their attempts to claim Zhou-related genealogy were occasionally questioned,<sup>41</sup> their political impact on the affairs of the Zhou world was indisputable. Political, even if not necessarily cultural expansion of the *tianxia* became a *fait accompli*.

This political background explains the proliferation of the inclusive vision of the *tianxia* even in the texts that unlike the *Mozi* promoted the cultural superiority of the Zhou states. The *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, for instance, albeit notorious for its preoccupation with the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy, is nonetheless consistent in its emphasis that the differences between Xia and the aliens are cultural and hence amenable to change. The *Gongyang* idea of a universal imposition of cultural norms, as well as the universal rule of the Son of Heaven, is expressed in the following passage,

<sup>39</sup> See *Mozi*, “Jian’ai zhong” 兼愛中, 15: 160; cf. discussion of Mozi’s views in Chen Guying, *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* (“Tianxia” 天下, 33: 863).

<sup>40</sup> For Mozi’s mockery of Chinese rites, see *Mozi*, “Jie zang xia” 節葬下25: 267-68; “Lu wen” 魯問 49: 735. For more about Mozi’s cultural relativism, see Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans”.

<sup>41</sup> See Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans”.

which explicates the *Chun qiu* 春秋 entry about the 576 interstate meeting during which the representatives of the Northern alliance met for the first time with Wu envoys:

Why does [the *Chun qiu*] particularly emphasize meeting with Wu [envoys]? – It considers Wu as external. What does “external” mean? – *Chun qiu* considers its state (Lu 魯) as internal, and All the Xia as external, considers All the Xia as internal, and Yi and Di [“barbarians”] as external. – [But] the Son of Heaven wants to unify All under Heaven, so why talk of internal and external? – This means that he must begin with those who are close.<sup>42</sup>

The *Gongyang zhuan* regards the “barbarians” as inferior, but still sees them as an inseparable part of the would-be-unified realm. As Wu, Yue and other non-Xia entities became important players on the international scene, their incorporation into *tianxia* became inevitable. This process was further intensified due to the expansion of the great powers of the Warring States, which were continuously absorbing new lands, inhabited by non-Xia peoples. *Tianxia*, accordingly, transcended its original boundaries and became an inclusive term that comprised both the Central States and alien lands. For most late Zhanguo thinkers *tianxia* was evidently identical to the entire known world.

The inclusive vision of All under Heaven can be demonstrated from many sources and does not demand a separate discussion here.<sup>43</sup> What is more interesting is that parallel to the process of expansion, we witness a process of the contraction of *tianxia* to its Chunqiu scope, namely to the Central States, and the emergence of the exclusive vision of *tianxia*. Surprisingly, the exclusion from this “world of ours” was directed not against the uncultivated aliens, but rather against the most powerful state under Heaven, the future unifier of China, the state of Qin.

To exemplify this, let us begin with a brief passage from the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策. A person argues that if a Zhou minister, Zhou Zui 周最, proceeds with a mission to the state of Qi 齊, the state of Qin “would become suspicious of [the intentions] of All under Heaven”.<sup>44</sup> Leaving aside the diplomatic context, it is clear that a state can become suspicious of *tianxia* only if it is not considered a part thereof. Many of the *Zhanguo ce* speeches convey a similar feeling: Qin is treated as the Other of All under Heaven, the potential enemy against which *tianxia* must unite. This motive is omnipresent in the series of anti-Qin speeches attributed to Su Qin 蘇秦, the putative architect of the anti-Qin “vertical” alliance. Su claims for instance:

Qin is the state of tigers and wolves; it has an intention of swallowing up All under Heaven. Qin is the mortal enemy of All under Heaven. All the proponents of the [pro-Qin] horizontal alliance want to cut off the overlords’ lands to serve Qin; this is what is called to nourish the enemy and to serve an adversary. Ministers who [propose] to cut off the ruler’s lands and to strengthen internationally the ti-

<sup>42</sup> 曷為殊會吳？外吳也。曷為外也？《春秋》內其國而外諸夏，內諸夏而外夷狄。王者欲一乎天下，曷為以外內之辭言之？言自近者始也。（*Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan*, 18: 2297).

<sup>43</sup> For instance, the “Zhong yong” chapter of the *Liji* mentions that the “greatest sage under Heaven” would first establish his fame in the Central States, and then his good deeds would reach the Man and the Mo tribes; the notion here clearly resembles that of the *Gongyang zhuan* (唯天下至聖 … 聲名洋溢乎中國，施及蠻貊, see *Zhong yong zhuanju*, 31: 38). The *Lishi chunqiu* echoes Mozi in its emphasis on the inclusiveness of Yu’s field of action as the basic characteristic of this sage (*Lishi chunqiu jiaoshi*, “Qiu ren” 求人 22.5: 1514). Mencius mentioned several times the supposed desire of the aliens to be incorporated as swiftly as possible in the empire built by Tang 湯, the founder of the Shang dynasty (*Mengzi*, “Liang Hui Wang 梁惠王 xia” 2.11: 45, and “Teng Wen Gong 滕文公 xia” 6.5: 148). Xunzi likewise stressed that although aliens may not be ruled directly, their lands should nevertheless be unequivocally incorporated into the unified empire (*Xunzi*, “Zheng lun” 正論 18: 328-29); cf. *Xunzi*, “Wang ba” 王霸 11:204-205, “Qiang guo” 疆國 16:300.

<sup>44</sup> *Zhanguo ce*, “Dong Zhou ce” 東周策, 1.13: 23.

ger-and-wolf Qin, allowing it thereby to invade All under Heaven, would end up with the Qin calamity; [these ministers] do not discern where disaster lies.<sup>45</sup>

This speech is remarkable not only for the extremely pejorative treatment of Qin, but mostly for its overt exclusion of Qin from All under Heaven. Qin is the mortal enemy of *tianxia*, it invades All under Heaven and plans to swallow it up; Qin is definitely beyond *tianxia* boundaries. This attitude recurs in many of the *Zhanguo ce* anecdotes.<sup>46</sup> Although not all the speakers share this attitude toward the mighty super-power,<sup>47</sup> the evidence suggests that a significant portion of Zhanguo statesmen excluded Qin from the common realm under Heaven.

How can we explain such an exclusive vision? Is it merely a rhetorical device by Zhanguo alliance persuaders, which should not be treated too seriously? After all, we know how easily the modern media can put the enemy beyond “the pale of humanity” and claim that “all the world” is united against the “rogue” regime. Insofar as we do not take these claims literally, or the accusations that Qin is a country of tigers and wolves, why should we take its exclusion from *tianxia* more seriously?<sup>48</sup>

The scrutiny of late Zhanguo texts suggests, however, that aside from being a rhetorical device, the exclusion of Qin from *tianxia* reflected substantial changes in Qin’s self-image during the late Zhanguo period. Not only Qin’s rivals considered it an outsider. Many Qin statesmen might have developed an outsider’s psychology. Just as some modern regimes claim that “the entire world is against us”, imposing on themselves a kind of self-exclusion, so certain Qin statesmen might have adopted the notion that opposition to *tianxia* would lead to solidarity and internal unification against the collective Other. Such an attitude is manifest in a memorandum allegedly submitted by Han Feizi (韓非子, d. 233) to the king of Qin:

I heard that All under Heaven has Yan at north, Wei at south; [they] will connect with Jing (Chu) and rely on Qi, absorb Han and establish a vertical alliance, and then face to the west and make trouble for powerful Qin. I look at this and laugh. In the world there are three factors of defeat, and All under Heaven possess all three... Now, as for Qin lands, if you cut the longer and extend the shorter lines, they will be several thousand *li* squared, and its elite troops are counted in the millions. Prizes and punishments in Qin’s orders and ordinances, its topographical advantages – in all these All under Heaven cannot be compared to Qin. If using all these you raise [troops] against All under Heaven, All under Heaven can be annexed and possessed.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> 夫秦，虎狼之國也，有吞天下之心。秦，天下之仇讎也。橫人皆欲割諸侯之地以事秦，此所謂養仇而奉讎者也。夫為人臣而割其主之地，以外交強虎狼之秦，以侵天下，卒有秦患，不顧其禍。 (*Zhanguo ce*, “Chu ce 1” 楚策 14.17: 508).

<sup>46</sup> See, for instance, “Xi Zhou ce” 西周策, 2.13: 65; “Qin ce 3” 秦策, 5.9: 172; 5.14: 192; “Zhao ce 2” 19.1: 655-657; “Wei ce 2” 魏策 23.7: 860.

<sup>47</sup> In some *Zhanguo ce* anecdotes Qin is referred to as a part of All under Heaven (see “Dong Zhou ce”, 1.14: 24; cf. “Qin ce 4” 6.9: 240; “Chu ce 1” 14.18: 514-515).

<sup>48</sup> Actually, Zhanguo texts sometimes refer to a broad coalition of major powers against a single state as “*tianxia*”, excluding thereby the coalition’s adversary from the *tianxia*. This exclusion may refer not only to Qin, but also to other states, such as Qi (see, e.g. *Lishi chunqiu* “Quan xun” 權勳 15.2: 867; *Zhanguo ce* “Dong Zhou ce” 1.21: 34; “Qi ce 齊策 3” 10.7: 365). Nowhere, however, Qi, or any other state, are treated with the same contempt and hatred as Qin in the examples above.

<sup>49</sup> 臣聞天下陰燕陽魏，連荆固齊，收韓而成從，將西面以與秦強(強秦)為難，臣竊笑之。世有三亡，而天下得之... 今秦地折長補短，方數千里，名師數十百萬。秦之號令賞罰、地形利害，天下莫若也。以此與天下，天下不足兼而有也。 *Han Feizi*, “Chu xian Qin” 初見秦 1: 2-3.

The provenance of the cited memorandum is not clear and it remains a subject of heated scholarly discussion; for the matter of the present study its author and dating are less important.<sup>50</sup> Whoever composed this document might have formulated it in accord with the argumentation acceptable at the court of Qin during the late Zhanguo period. As such it suggests that Qin accepted its unique position as a state beyond All under Heaven, and a singular enemy of *tianxia*.

If this analysis is correct, and Qin's exclusion from *tianxia* became widespread not only among its adversaries but among its courtiers as well, then we must explain the reasons for this phenomenon. The answer, to my mind, is both political and cultural. Politically, since the second quarter of the third century BCE, Qin established itself as a unique super-power, the explicit goal of which was to "swallow up" All under Heaven. Its officials arrogantly treated alien states as Qin dependencies, dispensing with the pretensions of inter-state ritual equality current in Chunqiu and early Zhanguo diplomacy.<sup>51</sup> Qin's haughtiness and aggressiveness may have been the determining factor that led to its exclusion from the communality of All under Heaven by its neighbors.

Aside from political reasons, Qin's exclusion and self-exclusion may be explained culturally. Archaeological and textual data suggest that Qin's self-perception changed decisively between the Chunqiu and the Zhanguo period, and that it alienated itself from other heirs of the Zhou. This was a complex process, largely unnoticed by later historians. While many Zhanguo and Han sources routinely depict Qin as a "barbarian" state, this was definitely not the case during the Chunqiu period. Evidence from Qin graves suggests that during that period Qin elite strongly adhered to Zhou ritual regulations, certain idiosyncrasies notwithstanding, and Qin was an inseparable part of the Zhou ritual realm.<sup>52</sup> Qin leaders of that age may have even cherished hopes of becoming the leaders of the Zhou world: bronze and chime-stones inscriptions cast by the order of the Qin rulers from Lord Wu (秦武公, r. 697-678) to Lord Jing (秦景公, r. 576-537) consistently state that since the lords' ancestors received Heaven's mandate (*tian ming* 天命), they would now bring peace and stability to their state, and "bring about the submission of all the many Man [tribes],"<sup>53</sup> "cautiously care for the Man and the Xia";<sup>54</sup> and "broadly spread out over the Man and the Xia."<sup>55</sup> Qin rulers' hubris and their firm belief that they received Heaven's mandate aside,<sup>56</sup> these claims indicate that Qin considered itself a part of the Zhou realm and the potential leader of the Xia. Significantly, the *Zuo zhuan*, unlike later texts, contains no hints about Qin's alleged barbarianism, although refined Lu statesmen apparently considered this state "uncouth".<sup>57</sup>

The situation changed entirely in the Zhanguo period, particularly since the mid-fourth century BCE, when Shang Yang's (商鞅, d. 338) reforms changed the face of Qin. As this state abandoned significant aspects of Zhou ritual culture, its unique identity became more pronounced, resulting in

<sup>50</sup> The same memorandum appears also in the *Zhanguo ce*, where it is erroneously attributed to an earlier Qin statesman, Zhang Yi (張儀, d. ca. 310). See a summary of distinct views regarding the authenticity of "Han Feizi's" memorandum in Jiang Zhongyao, *Han Feizi*, 14-25.

<sup>51</sup> For Qin views of alien states as dependencies, see the Shuihudi documents cited below.

<sup>52</sup> For a traditional view of Qin as a "barbarian other", see Bodde, *China's First Unifier*, 2ff.; cf. Liu Yutao "Qin yu Huaxia wenhua", 61-67. For a radically different interpretation of the recent archaeological and epigraphic data, see Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions*, 63 ff.; Falkenhausen, "Bronze Age", 486-497; idem, "Diversity and Integration".

<sup>53</sup> The eight Qin bells, cited from Mattos, "Eastern Zhou", 113; cf. Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 85.

<sup>54</sup> Qin Gong-bo inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 73; cf. Qin chime-stones inscription, Fragment 2, *ibid.*, 90.

<sup>55</sup> Qin-gui inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 79.

<sup>56</sup> See a discussion of Qin's concept of Heaven's mandate by Zang Zhifei, "Qin ren de 'shou ming' yishi", 243-260.

<sup>57</sup> The *Zuo zhuan* mentions the surprise of a Lu statesman when the Qin's envoy to the Lu court behaved in accord with refined ritual norms (*Zuo*, Wen 12: 589).

abundant pejorative remarks about Qin's alleged "barbarianism" in Zhanguo texts.<sup>58</sup> Eventually, the broadening gap between Qin and the Xia may have influenced Qin's self-image. The late Zhanguo Qin statutes unearthed in Shuihudi 睡虎地, Hubei province, clearly indicate Qin's self-differentiation from the Xia, who are arrogantly treated as vassal states:

When persons of vassal states are not satisfied with their lords and chiefs and wish to leave Xia, this is not to be permitted. What is the meaning of "[to leave] Xia"? Wishing to leave the Qin dependencies, that is the meaning of "[to leave] Xia".<sup>59</sup>

This passage shows Qin superiority over the Xia, akin to that expressed by Qin lords four centuries earlier; but different from that case, Shuihudi documents prove that Qin did not consider itself a part of the Xia, but that the latter became a designation of Qin dependencies:

When princes and leaders of genuine vassal states commit crimes that go so far as (warranting) shaving off the beard and higher, they must be made to redeem these. What is the meaning of "genuine"? Children born of a vassal state father and mother, as well as born in another state, these are called "genuine". What is the meaning of a "Xia child"? [Children born of] a vassal state father and a Qin mother are meant.<sup>60</sup>

It is clear from the above passage that late Zhanguo Qin officials distinguished their state from the Xia, which became a different entity, separated by location and by blood and not only by culture.<sup>61</sup> The otherness of Qin in the late Zhanguo cultural landscape is therefore not a post-factum Han construction, but an outcome of deep cultural and political processes of that age. Qin's self-proclaimed otherness coupled with its aggressiveness eventually turned it into the enemy of *tianxia*, leading to its exclusion from All under Heaven. An unsuccessful attempt by the pre-unification Qin leaders to expel officials of foreign origin might have been a culmination of the process of separation between Qin and *tianxia*.<sup>62</sup> Thus paradoxically, at the time when multiple alien entities were incorporated into All under Heaven, the state located at the birth-place of the Zhou dynasty was expelled, at least partly, from the common realm. The universality of All under Heaven was therefore questioned.

<sup>58</sup> For a reflection of Qin's new identity-building in archaeological data see Falkenhausen, "Ahnenkult und Grabkult im Staat Qin", 44-46; cf. Falkenhausen, "Diversity and Integration". As Falkenhausen points out, changes in Qin mortuary practices might have had deeper religious and not only political background; see his "Mortuary Behavior". For an alternative interpretation of the process of estrangement between Qin and its eastern neighbours in the aftermath of Shang Yang's reforms, see Pines and Shelach, "Power, Identity and Ideology".

<sup>59</sup> 臣邦人不安其主長而欲去夏者，勿許。何謂「夏」？欲去秦屬謂「夏」。See *Qin li da wen* 秦律答問, slip 176, p. 134. I follow the translation by Hulsewe, *Remnants of Ch'in Law*, 170.

<sup>60</sup> 真臣邦君公有罪，致耐罪以上，令贖。何謂「真」？臣邦父母產子及產它邦而是謂「真」。何謂「夏子」？臣邦父，秦母謂也。See *Qin li da wen*, slips 177-178, p. 135; Hulsewe, *Remnants*, 171.

<sup>61</sup> This interpretation is not unanimously accepted. Both the editors of the Shuihudi slips and more recently Kudō Motoo in his *Suikochi Shin kan*, 100-118, argue that Xia in the above slips refers to Qin; they are echoed by Zang Zhifei, "Qin ren de shou ming", 256; and Takatsu Junya, "'Natsu' ji no 'Chūka' teki yōhō ni tsuite", 270-271. I reject this interpretation for the following reasons. First, in the first passage "leaving Xia" clearly means "leaving vassal states" and not leaving Qin (why should a person of a vassal state who is not satisfied with his ruler leave Qin?). Second, *pau* Kudō, a Xia child is clearly not a Qin child, since the paternal line of descent has priority over the maternal in determining a child's belonging. Thus, the term "vassal states" in Shuihudi documents refers to all the states beyond Qin's immediate rule, including the Xia states, and not just "minorities' dependencies" as implied by Kudō, Zang, Takatsu and by the Shuihudi documents' editors. See also an insightful discussion by Ookushi Atsuhiko, "Shin hō – Urnei Suikochi Shin kan", 319-324.

<sup>62</sup> For this event see *Shiji*, 87: 2541-2545.

This universality had been restored with the imperial unification of 221 BCE. Qin's military successes restored its position as the center of All under Heaven.<sup>63</sup> To facilitate their rule, Qin leaders did their best to convince the new subjects that Qin was a unifier and not a conqueror. Accordingly, the stone inscriptions of the First Emperor (秦始皇帝, r. 221-210) never mention the state of Qin but instead concentrate on the newly unified *tianxia*. The emperor is praised for "making All under Heaven a single family",<sup>64</sup> for "pacifying All under Heaven";<sup>65</sup> he "gave warp and woof to All under Heaven"<sup>66</sup> and by "uniting All under Heaven, he put an end to harm and disaster, and then forever he put aside arms".<sup>67</sup> This propaganda evidently achieved its goals; even after the collapse of the Qin dynasty, its successor, the Han founder, Liu Bang (劉邦, d. 195 BCE), established a capital near the former Qin seat of power, thereby indicating that the Wei 渭 river valley was restored to its central place under Heaven. Former Qin lands and its populace were no longer excluded from *tianxia*; and to a certain extent they became the model to be emulated by the rulers of the subsequent generations.<sup>68</sup>

The process of Qin's exclusion and subsequent re-incorporation into *tianxia* reflects the flexibility of the boundaries of All under Heaven. The universality of *tianxia* was subject to continuous negotiation, and its meaning was influenced by both political and cultural considerations. This flexibility was present, albeit in a different form, in imperial discourse as well, when the universality of *tianxia* was occasionally questioned with regard to "barbarians". The changing boundaries of *tianxia* and the coexistence of political and cultural dimensions of this term allowed imperial statesmen and thinkers to accommodate political changes in the map of East Asia, preserving the sense of normality even during times of dynastic decline and foreign conquest.

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<sup>63</sup> Already in the late Zhanguo period the impact of Qin material culture and burial patterns on the Eastern states becomes observable (for a different interpretation of this impact see Yin Qun, *Huanghe*, 99-103, 252; cf. Falkenhausen, "Mortuary Behavior"). This partial infiltration of Qin culture eastward might have laid the foundation for imperial Qin's subsequent cultural hegemony. This does not mean, however, that coercion was not required; as indicated by the 227 BCE *Yu shu* 語書 document from Shuihudi, Qin administrators were preoccupied with imposing uniform customs on the conquered population (see "Yu shu", pp. 13-16; see also Zang Zhifei, "Zhou Qin fengsu de rentong yu chongtu", 8-18; for ritual manipulations aimed at promulgating new cultural unity after the political unification, see Li Ling, "Qin Han liyi zhong de zongjiao", 131-186),

<sup>64</sup> 壹家天下 (Yishan 嶧山 inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 13; translation is mine).

<sup>65</sup> 平天下 (Taishan 泰山 inscription; *Shiji* 6: 243; Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 21).

<sup>66</sup> 經緯天下 (Zhifu 之罘 inscription; *Shiji* 6: 249; Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 37).

<sup>67</sup> 闡并天下·災害絕息·永戢戍兵 (Zhifu eastern inscription: *Shiji* 6: 250; Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 39).

<sup>68</sup> For the impact of Qin burial patterns on those of the early imperial rulers, see Falkenhausen, "Diversity and Integration"; for the ideological impact of Qin on China's imperial system, see Liu Zehua, *Zhongguo de wangguanzhuyi*, 128-137; for Qin's impact on early Han ritual culture, see Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, 164-182; Huang Liuzhu, "Qin lizhi wenhua shulun".

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