

BEASTS OR HUMANS: PRE-IMPERIAL ORIGINS OF THE “SINO-BARBARIAN” DICHOTOMY¹

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Only a generation ago, it was common among scholars to conceive of pre-modern Chinese identity in terms of culturalism rather than nationalism. According to this paradigm, Chineseness was defined primarily as belonging to a universalizing civilization, and sharing common, predominantly Confucian culture. This identity was inclusive, as those foreigners who acquired, consciously or through diffusion, Chinese cultural values became “Chinese.”² A concept of national identity conceived in ethnic or racial terms was commonly considered a modern phenomenon, closely related to China’s entrance into the world of nation-states.³

Since the 1970s many scholars have questioned this paradigm. Rolf Trauzettel and Hoyt Tillman pointed at the evidence of a “modern,” exclusive kind of nationalism, which appeared as early as the

¹ I am indebted to the conference participants and to the volume editors, as well as to Miranda Brown, Poo Mu-chou and Haun Saussy for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

² Needless to say, the term “Chinese” itself is controversial, particularly as it lacks an exact equivalent in the Chinese language itself. Today it refers to two distinct entities: *Zhongguo ren*, which applies to all citizens of China, whatever their ethnic belong is, and the (more rarely used) *Hanzu*, which is used to distinguish “Chinese proper” from national minorities in the People’s Republic of China. In the past “Chinese” were frequently referred to as the people of the current or the previous dynasty (e.g. *Qin ren*—the people of Qin, *Tang ren*—the people of Tang and so on), or, alternatively, as members of the Hua, Xia or Huaxia cultural community; these (and other) appellations were constantly defined and re-defined in different political and cultural contexts (see brief notes scattered throughout Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* [Cambridge MA, 2000], pp. 95–96, 132, 707–10, 750–53 and his bibliography). For the current discussion the term “Chinese” is used largely for heuristic purposes; for its relevance to pre-imperial “Chinese” identity, see the discussion further in the text.

³ This view is best represented by Joseph R. Levenson in his *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (London, 1958), i, pp. 95–108. For a succinct and critical summary of the “culturalism to nationalism” paradigm, see James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 27 (1992), pp. 98–103.

Song period (960–1279).⁴ Later, scholars such as James Townsend and Prasenjit Duara questioned the validity of the culturalist paradigm altogether, suggesting its inadequacy in conveying the complicated nature of Chinese self-identification.⁵ Deconstructing universalistic pretensions of imperial ideology further contributed to the sense that exclusive, ethno-centric identity existed for centuries in traditional China. Inclusiveness, once considered the hallmark of Chinese civilization, was more and more deemed another myth that cannot withstand radical historical criticism. Finally, in a recent iconoclastic study Frank Dikötter suggested that in traditional China no real dichotomy between culture and race existed, and that ancient Chinese discourse was permeated by a feeling of racial, not only cultural superiority over the “barbarians.”⁶ Dikötter strongly argued for exclusive aspects of Chinese identity at the very beginning of its emergence.

Both inclusive and exclusive perceptions of Chinese identity are present in imperial discourse. Supporters of the culturalist paradigm would eagerly quote Chen An (ninth century), who claimed “the distinction between Hua [Chinese] and ‘barbarian’ rests in the heart,” while their opponents may cite a Song loyalist, Zheng Sixiao (1241–1318), or the early Qing thinker, Wang Fuzhi (1619–1692), who basically denied the “barbarians” any possibility of participating in Chinese culture.⁷ A full spectrum of opinions existed between

⁴ See R. Trauzettel, “Sung Patriotism as a First Step Toward Chinese Nationalism,” in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. J.W. Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 199–214; H. Tillman, “Proto-Nationalism in Twelfth-Century China? The Case of Ch’en Liang,” *HJAS*, 39 (1979), pp. 403–28.

⁵ See J. Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” pp. 97–130; P. Duara, “De-Constructing the Chinese Nation,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 30 (1993), pp. 1–26.

⁶ See F. Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, 1992), pp. 1–30ff. It should be mentioned, however, that not all scholars abandoned the culturalist paradigm; recently it was powerfully reinforced by Ch. Holcombe, in his “Re-Imagining China: The Chinese Identity Crisis at the Start of the Southern Dynasties Period,” *JAS*, 115 (1995), pp. 12–13 *et passim*. See also an insightful study by M. Fiskesjö about “the otherness” of Chinese southern neighbors as primarily a cultural construction (“On the ‘Raw’ and ‘Cooked’ Barbarians of Imperial China,” *Inner Asia*, 1/2 [1999], pp. 135–68).

⁷ For Chen An’s views, see Ch. Hartman, *Han Yü and the Tang Search for Unity* (Princeton, 1986), pp. 158–59; for Zheng Sixiao’s xenophobia, see his “Gu jin zheng-tong dalun,” in *Zheng Sixiao ji* (Shanghai, 1991), pp. 132–37 (for the possibility that this work was forged at the beginning of the Qing dynasty [1644–1911], see A. Mittag, “The Manchu Conquest and the Mission of the Loyal-Hearted Historiographer [*Xinshi*],” paper presented at the XIV European Association of Chinese Studies conference, Moscow, August 2002); for Wang Fuzhi’s views, see Tang Kailin and Zhang Huaicheng, *Liu jing ze wo kai sheng mian: Wang Chuanshan lunli sixiang yanjiu* (Changsha, 1992), pp. 282–91.

these extremes. Policy discussions about the proper way to treat the aliens, as well as behavioral choices of the elite members during the periods of alien rule were deeply influenced by conflicting premises about the possibility or even the desirability of assimilating the Other into “This Culture of Ours.” The question was by no means theoretical, and it often had far-reaching political consequences during both the zenith and nadir of dynastic power.

Distinct perceptions of “Sino-barbarian”⁸ dichotomy were thus of crucial importance for determining relations between Chinese and the aliens. These perceptions have been discussed in numerous studies. Yet, scholars usually focus on the last millennium of imperial history when discussing Chinese views of the Other; earlier origins of these views are given only cursory treatment.⁹ Particularly surprising is the apparent lack of interest in the evolution of the concepts of “us” and “them” during the Chunqiu (722–453 BCE)¹⁰ and Zhanguo (453–221) periods, discussions on which in Western languages amount to no more than a few pages. This brevity may be partly explained by the relative meagerness of deliberations about the aliens in pre-imperial texts. And yet we are talking about the formative period of Chinese political thought, the age that immensely

⁸ Some may dispute the legitimacy of using the term “barbarian” in Chinese context. Indeed, in many cases ethnical definitions such as Di or Yi had no pejorative meaning, and Nicola Di Cosmo is right when he argues that no single term in Chinese language equals precisely the term “barbarian” (see his *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* [Cambridge, 2002], p. 95 n. 7). Yet, as Mikhail Kriukov *et al.* have shown, in many instances names of alien tribes were used in a way clearly reminiscent of the Greek “barbarian” (see their *Drevnie Kıtajtsy: Problemy Etnogeneza* [Moscow, 1978], pp. 274–76 and 287–89), and Di Cosmo insightfully points at the similarity of Chinese compounds such as Yi Di to the Western “barbarian” (*Ancient China and its Enemies*, p. 100). It is in this sense that I use the term “barbarian” in the following discussion.

⁹ See the studies mentioned in notes 2–5 above, and their respective bibliographies. This analysis focuses on Western scholarship only; for an example of Chinese studies, see Pu Muzhou [Poo Mu-chou], “Gudai Zhongguo, Aiji yu Lianghe liuyu dui yizu taidu zhi bijiao yanjiu,” *Hanxue yanjiu*, 17/2 (1999), pp. 137–68 and his bibliography; for an example of Japanese approaches, see Ochi Shigeaki, “Ka-I shisō no seiritsu,” *Kurume Daigaku Hikaku Bunka Kenkyūjo kiyō*, 11 (1992), pp. 43–137. In the west the only significant discussion of pre-imperial views of Sino-alien relations was published long after my original paper, on which this article is based, was presented; see Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, pp. 93–126. Since Di Cosmo is interested primarily in the evolution of Chinese interactions with their Northern Zone neighbors, his discussion focuses exclusively on Chinese views of northern ethnic groups and their political implications; nevertheless our studies largely share the same perspective, which differs radically from that of Dikötter and other Western writers on the topic.

¹⁰ All dates hereafter are Before Common Era (BCE), unless indicated otherwise.

influenced the future course of Chinese history. Sketchy as they are, the references to aliens in pre-Qin philosophical and historical texts were of profound significance for generations of imperial thinkers who routinely resorted to sayings of Confucius (551–479) and Mencius (c. 379–304), or the books like the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Gongyang zhuan* as the repository of ancient wisdom. A detailed look at the pre-imperial legacy will therefore allow us a better understanding of major Chinese cultural premises concerning the aliens.

Most extant surveys of pre-imperial views of the aliens emphasize two closely related issues. First, the Chinese viewed themselves as superior, the dwellers of the Central States, surrounded by “barbarian” zones. Secondly, the Chinese tended to view their “barbarian” neighbors as insufficiently human, as creatures “with human face and beasts’ hearts.”¹¹ These premises convey a picture of a huge, probably unbridgeable gap between the proud heirs of the Xia (i.e. the Chinese) and the “barbarians of the four corners” (*si yi*). In this study I shall try to show that this monochromatic picture fails to do justice to the complexity of pre-imperial thought. I shall first survey views of the aliens as presented in major pre-Qin texts to show that despite their clear sense of superiority, ancient Chinese thinkers and statesmen conceived of the differences with the aliens as primarily cultural, and hence changeable; “Chineseness” referred mostly to the adherence to the common ritual norms of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256) and not to “race” or “ethnicity.” Hence, those radical thinkers who denied the importance of ritual, usually also downplayed the differences with the aliens and even questioned the paradigm of Chinese superiority altogether. Furthermore, in sharp distinction from the thinkers of the imperial age, none of the known pre-imperial thinkers questioned the premise of the changeability of the aliens. In the last part of the paper I shall try to show that the common belief in the transformability of one’s identity, which reflected the actual experience of Chunqiu and especially Zhanguo statesmen and thinkers was inimical to the development of the highly pronounced “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy in the pre-imperial age, and that it was only after the imperial unification and the fixation of China’s boundaries versus the steppe that the situation began to change.

Before we proceed to the discussion, three clarifications are needed.

¹¹ For standard depictions see, for instance, Kriukov *et al.*, *Drevnie Kitajtsy*, pp. 272–281; Dikötter, *The Discourse*, pp. 2–6.

First, to avoid terminological confusion surveyed by Townsend, I prefer to discuss pre-imperial “Chinese” identity in terms of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness and not in terms of culturalism versus nationalism. Secondly, the temporal framework for this presentation, namely the Chunqiu—Zhanguo periods, has been chosen primarily due to its unique standing in the history of Chinese thought. Concomitantly, I tried to avoid what may become a too speculative discussion about Shang (c. 1600–1046) and Western Zhou (1046–771) antecedents of the later views, because the sources for the earlier periods are both scarce and frequently enigmatic, allowing different interpretations.¹² Thirdly, the term “Chinese” used throughout this paper may be justifiably criticized as both anachronistic and misleading. “Chinese” of course is a Western term. Thinkers whose views I survey below referred to themselves as Xia, Hua, or dwellers of the “Central States” (*Zhongguo*). The term “Chinese” would be used hereafter merely as a heuristic convention.

Some critics may ask, whether or not it is justifiable to speak of the pre-imperial “Chinese” as a distinct entity? Recently, Michael Loewe insightfully pointed out the weaknesses of the fashionable view, which mechanically attributes distinct national or cultural cohesiveness, solidarity or sense of identity to the people who inhabited various states, unified in 221 BCE.¹³ This important observation is, however, not necessarily relevant to the present discussion. My paper deals with members of the educated elite from the states that inherited (or adopted at the later period) Zhou ritual norms, and hence sensed themselves as belonging to the distinct world from the uncivilized “barbarians” (and often from the equally uncivilized commoners as well). These elite members, as we shall see, clearly had a sense of distinct identity, and it is their “Chineseness” which concerns us here.

“Wolves and Jackals”—The Paradigm of Barbarian Inferiority

The following saying of Confucius is frequently cited as the *locus classicus* for traditional Chinese views of the Other. Confucius reportedly praised the great Chunqiu statesman, Guan Zhong (d. 645):

¹² For a tentative assessment of pre-Chunqiu views of the aliens, see Pu, “Gudai Zhongguo,” pp. 152–57.

¹³ See Loewe’s “The Heritage Left to Empires,” in *CHAC*, p. 1002.

Guan Zhong assisted Lord Huan [of Qi, r. 686–643] to become hegemon over the overlords, and to bring unity and order to All under Heaven; to these days the people enjoy the benefits [of these acts]. Were it not for Guan Zhong, we might be wearing our hair loose and folding our robes to the left.¹⁴

The last phrase refers to the cultural achievement of Guan Zhong: by repelling invaders of the Rong and Di stock, he presumably preserved the essence of Chinese culture, including the ritually proper clothing of the dwellers of the Central Plain. This contribution outweighed in Confucius' eyes other flaws in Guan Zhong's behavior, including his occasional transgression of ritual norms.¹⁵ Guan Zhong might have agreed to this definition, since he evidently viewed himself as the protector of the Zhou world against the barbarians. According to the *Zuo zhuan*, in 661 Guan Zhong convinced Lord Huan to assist the beleaguered state of Xing, the victim of the Di invasion, applying to the anti-barbarian solidarity:

Rong and Di are wolves and jackals who cannot be satiated. All the Xia are kin who cannot be abandoned.¹⁶

This is another of the stock sayings which are frequently used by proponents of “racial antagonism” in early Chinese history. A notion of what Dikötter calls “the bestiality” of the aliens¹⁷ evidently existed in Chunqiu discourse, and it was invoked both by proponents and opponents of military confrontation with the enemy. In 569, a leading Jin statesman, Wei Jiang, dissuaded his ruler from attacking the Rong tribesmen, claiming that the Rong are “birds and beasts,” against whom attaining victory whom would be meaningless.¹⁸ Similar arguments were invoked by Fu Chen of the Zhou royal domain, who tried to dissuade King Xiang of Zhou (r. 651–619) from allying with the Di tribesmen against the state of Zheng:

¹⁴ Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* (Beijing, 1991), 14.17 (“Xian wen”), pp. 151–52. Hereafter all translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

¹⁵ For these transgressions, see *Lunyu*, 3.22 (“Ba yi”), p. 31.

¹⁶ Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1981, hereafter the *Zuo*), (Min 1), p. 256.

¹⁷ See Dikötter, *The Discourse*, pp. 3–5.

¹⁸ *Zuo*, (Xiang 4), p. 936; cf. *Guoyu* (Shanghai, 1990), 13.5 (“Jin yu 7”), p. 441. Ironically, Wei Jiang's intervention against the proposed aggression against the Rong might have been motivated by purely personal reasons: he was apparently bribed by a Rong envoy to act as an intermediary for the Rong at the Jin court (*Zuo*, [Xiang 4], pp. 935–36).

Ears that do not hear the harmony of the five sounds are deaf; eyes that do not distinguish the displays of the five colors are blind; hearts that are not patterned after the basics of virtue and propriety are obstinate; mouths that do not pronounce loyal and trustworthy words are raucous. The Di pattern all these [modes of behavior], their four perversities are complete.¹⁹

Fu Chen refrained from invoking the beast simile, as that might have infuriated the king who recently married a Di wife, but he left no doubts that the Di are significantly impaired in their humaneness. Lacking basic cultural virtues of the Xia, these uncouth tribesmen remained half way between beasts and humans. Sayings of Fu Chen and the above-cited speakers seem to support Dikötter's proposal of the exclusiveness of early Chinese identity. Can we ever expect of jackals, birds or deaf, blind and raucous creatures to become human?

To answer this question we should first consider the nature of "bestiality" in ancient Chinese discourse. While Dikötter strongly argues for the racial implications of this term, textual evidence suggests otherwise. Let us turn to Mencius, a leading follower of Confucius. In his polemics against two leading thinkers of his age, Yang Zhu (fl. fourth century) and Mozi (ca. 460–390), Mencius claims:

Mr. Yang advocates selfishness, which means having no ruler. Mr. Mo advocates universal love, which means having no father. Having neither ruler nor father means becoming birds and beasts.²⁰

Thus, bestiality seems to be a social condition, which can emerge even among the Chinese should the doctrines of Mencius' opponents prevail. Moreover, elsewhere Mencius suggests that bestiality already prevails among the lower strata of the populace:

There is only a tiny thing that distinguishes human beings from birds and beasts. Commoners cast it away, while superior men preserve it.²¹

It should be remembered that Mencius did not live in aristocratic society where impassable differences separated commoners from the elites. Rather, as the saying itself implies, the difference was conceived as that of moral behavior, not of pedigree. The commoners, who abandoned ritual norms and rules of morality obligatory of the

¹⁹ *Zuo*, (Xi 24), p. 425.

²⁰ Yang Bojun, *Mengzi yizhu* (Beijing, 1992), 6.9 ("Teng Wen Gong xia"), p. 155.

²¹ *Mengzi*, 8.19 ("Li Lou xia"), p. 191.

superior men, sank into bestiality, and were basically indistinguishable from the barbarians, mentioned above. Clearly, these differences cannot be named “racial”; they referred to a behavioral pattern, which could be learned or modified with a proper upbringing.²² Later we shall return to this theme; but first, let us check whether other texts support my suggestion of behavioral rather than racial differences between Chinese and barbarians.

The *Guoyu*, a text that parallels the *Zuo zhuan*, although it was compiled more than a century later than the *Zuo*, contains several references to the bestiality of the aliens. One of these anecdotes tells of Shi Hui, an envoy of the powerful state of Jin, who arrived at the Zhou royal court and was dissatisfied with the small size of a serving of broth, served to him at the banquet. The king hastily explained that at the royal banquets ritual propriety and not the size of the meal matters. Not to understand this meant behaving in the loose manner of the Rong and Di envoys:

It is only Rong and Di who receive the entire corpse [of a sacrificial animal at the banquet]. Yet, Rong and Di enter hastily and despise order, they are greedy and unwilling to yield, their blood and breath is unmanageable, just like that of birds and beasts. When they arrive to submit tribute, they cannot wait for fragrance and fine taste; therefore we make them sit outside the gate and send the translator to give them the corpse [of the sacrificial animal].²³

The king invoked the beast simile, but he also clearly explained the reason for comparing the Rong and the Di to animals. Their outlook did not matter; what mattered was their uncivilized behavior, ignorance of rules of propriety, greediness and being unable to yield, the latter being an important feature of superior men.²⁴ These behavioral deficiencies degraded the Rong and the Di to the position of “impaired humaneness” as implied in Fu Chen’s speech cited above.

Ritual norms were indeed the major delineating line between Self and the Other in pre-imperial China.²⁵ The multi-state Zhou world

²² Another eminent Zhanguo thinker, Xunzi (c. 310–218), considered bestiality a regular behavioral pattern of the “petty men” (*xiao ren*), emphasizing that it emerges from their lack of learning (Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jiyie* [Beijing, 1992], 4 [“Rong ru”], 61; 1 [“Quan xue”], p. 11).

²³ *Guoyu*, 2.6 (“Zhou yu”), p. 62.

²⁴ Unwillingness to yield (*bu rang*) was commonly mentioned as characteristic of barbarians in the *Zuo zhuan* ([Yin 9], pp. 65–66; [Ding 5], p. 1553).

²⁵ For the importance of ritual norms in pre-imperial China, see Y. Pines, “Disputers of the Li: Breakthroughs in the Concept of Ritual in Preimperial China,” *Asia Major*, Third Series, 13 (2000), pp. 1–41.

lost by the seventh century BCE the last semblance of political unity, and hereafter was engulfed in a bitter struggle of all against all. Its religious unity was also diminishing, as local cults in different states became more pronounced at the expense of the ancient worship of Heaven, which was the prerogative of the Zhou king. Yet, despite political and religious divisions, the common ritual system, inherited from the early Zhou period remained largely intact. Ritual norms were applied among others to the rules of inter-state diplomatic intercourse, and to a lesser extent even to warfare. The Rong, the Di and other “barbarian” tribes did not behave in accord with these norms, which sharply distinguished them from the members of the Zhou world. For centuries to come, ignorance of ritual was the most despised feature of the aliens. The mid-fourth century BCE “Tan Gong” chapter of the ritual compendium, the *Liji*, cites Confucius’ disciple, Zi You’s praise of the mourning rituals:

Ritual diminishes feelings, thereby elevating the [mourning] rules. To follow directly one’s real feelings is the way of the Rong and the Di. It is not the Way of Ritual.²⁶

Zhanguo ritualists considered unrestrained expressions of one’s feelings and spontaneity as the hallmark of savagery. Absence of ritual norms was, in their eyes, responsible for the woeful situation of the barbarians on the fringes of human society. It was this lack of ritual restraints that rendered aliens beasts. Another mid-fourth century BCE ritual text, the “Qu li” chapter of the *Liji*, states:

The Way and virtue, benevolence and propriety cannot be accomplished without ritual. Teaching, admonitions and proper customs cannot be prepared without ritual. Divisions, mutual strife and litigations cannot be resolved without ritual. [Positions] of ruler and subject, superior and inferior, father and son, elder and younger brother cannot be fixed without ritual. . . . Therefore, the superior man is respectful and reverent, self-restricting and yielding, thereby clarifying ritual norms. The parrot can speak, but it does not leave [the category of] flying birds, orangutan can speak, but it does not leave [the category of] birds and beasts. So, although a man who lacks ritual can speak, his heart is also one of a bird and a beast, is it not?²⁷

²⁶ Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie* (Beijing, 1996), 10 (“Tan Gong xia”), p. 271.

²⁷ *Liji jijie*, 1 (“Qu li shang”), pp. 8–11. For the dating of the “Tan Gong” and “Qu li” chapters of the *Liji*, see Yoshimoto Michimasa, “Dankyû kô,” *Kodai bunka*, 44/2 (1992), pp. 38–46; *idem*, “Kyôkurei kô,” in *Chûgoku kodai reisei kenkyû*, ed. Kominami Ichirô (Kyôto, 1995), pp. 117–63.

The above passage clarifies beyond doubt that the bestiality simile was applied for the aliens mostly due to their ritual deficiency. This view, popular among ritualists of the Zhanguo age, was not, however, unanimously endorsed. Later we shall see that some thinkers who questioned the validity of ritual norms rejected the paradigm of the Xia superiority altogether. Others, alternatively, sought political and social explanations for the aliens' deficient behavior. Authors of the late third century BCE compendium, the *Lüshi chunqiu*, suggested that the barbarism of the aliens was merely a regrettable result of the surmounting social disorder in their lives:

When the way of treachery, deceit, banditry, calamity, avarice and cruelty prospers for a long time uninterrupted, the people internalize it as if it is their nature. Such is the case of the people of the Rong, Yi, Hu, Mo, Ba and Yue. Even heavy rewards and stern punishments cannot prohibit [their behavior].²⁸

This passage reflects a higher level of theoretical sophistication than previously quoted sayings. Inherent badness and moral deficiency of the barbarians is conceived of not as biological reality but as a consequence of inappropriate social conditions. Importantly, the authors mentioned that the people living in conditions of calamity internalize badness *as if* it were their inborn nature, while after all social conditions prevail in determining their fate. Does this mean that better social conditions would improve barbarians' nature? Later we shall return to this question.

Another significant passage in the *Lüshi chunqiu* is more specific in suggesting the reasons for the aliens' badness. Namely, it is the lack of political authority that causes social disorder and deterioration:

To the east of Feibin there are the villages of Yi and Hui, and the dwellings of Dajie, Lingyu, Qi, Luye, Yaoshan, Yangdao and Daren, many of whom lack a ruler. To the south of Yang and the Han, there are the lands of Baiyue, the lands of Changkaizhu, Fufeng and Yumi, and the states of Fulou, Yangyu and Huandou, many of whom lack a ruler. To the west of Di and Qiang, Hutang and the Li River, there are the rivers of Boren, Yeren and Pianzuo, the villages of Zhouren, Songlong, and Turen, many of whom lack a ruler. To the north of the Yanmen, there are the states of Yangzhou, Suozhi and Xukui, the lands of Taotie and Qiongqi, the place of Shuni and the dwellings of Daner;

²⁸ Chen Qiyou, *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* (Shanghai, 1990), 14.4 (“Yi shang”), p. 779.

many of these lack a ruler. These are the rulerless of the four directions. Their people live like elks and deer, birds and beasts: the young give orders to the old, the old are afraid of the adults, the strong are considered the worthy and the haughty and violent are revered. Day and night they abuse each other having no time to rest, exterminating thereby their kind. The sages profoundly investigate this trouble.²⁹

The above passage is the most profound explanation for the barbarianism of the aliens in the received Zhanguo texts, and it is evidently based on the better acquaintance with the lives of the neighbors of the Xia. Their bestiality is not a matter of inborn nature, but rather the result—and also the depiction—of their living conditions. Lacking proper social and political institutions barbarians are doomed to live in a society of incessant struggle, calamity, and mutual oppression. These conditions were a nightmare for the authors of the *Lishi chunqiu* who sought the ways to perfect the social mechanism; they also served as a warning against ideas of anarchism, which gained prominence by the end of the Zhanguo period.³⁰ This may confirm David Schaberg's assertion, that pre-imperial historiography (and for this matter philosophical writings as well) treated "distant and peripheral groups less as ends in themselves than as foils for central culture."³¹

For the present discussion, however, what matters is how the above depiction of the aliens is relevant to the perception of their otherness. Indeed, if bestiality derives from the ignorance of ritual or from miserable political and social situation, then, would the change in these conditions induce transformation of beasts into human beings? Can barbarians be transformed to become Chinese and should they be transformed?

From Beasts to Humans—the Changeability of the Other

Let us return to the *Zuo zhuan*, which contains some of the harsh sayings cited above. This text, the longest pre-imperial historical

²⁹ *Lishi chunqiu*, 20.1 ("Shi jun"), p. 1322.

³⁰ See the detailed discussion of the above passage in Y. Pines and G. Shelach, "Using the Past to Serve the Present": Comparative Perspectives on Chinese and Western Theories of the Origins of the State" in *Genesis and Regeneration* (preliminary title), ed. S. Shaked et al. (Jerusalem, forthcoming).

³¹ D.C. Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge MA, 2001), p. 132.

compilation, reveals a complicated picture of the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy. Not only competition and enmity prevailed, there were many instances of cooperation and, of course, of acculturation. Perhaps the best example to the last-mentioned is a story told about the interstate meeting of 559. Members of the so-called northern alliance, led by the state of Jin, gathered to discuss common strategy; Gouzhi, the leader of the Rong tribesmen, also attended the meeting. The Jin leader, Fan Xuanzi, suspected that the Rong incited other allies against Jin, and forbade Gouzhi from attending the meeting. In response, Gouzhi made a long speech in which he surveyed the Rong services to the state of Jin in the past, and claimed that treachery among the Jin allies was unconnected to the Rong. Then he continued:

The food, drink and clothing used by us, various Rong, are not the same as those of Chinese (Hua); gifts [presented at diplomatic meetings] do not pass back and forth; our languages are mutually incomprehensible. How could we do any evil? Yet, if you do not want us to participate in the meeting, we shall not be distressed. He recited the “Qing ying” [ode] and left.³²

Many scholars take Gouzhi’s speech at its face value as an important survey of the ethnic differences between Chinese and the aliens. Few pay attention to the irony of the *Zuo zhuan* account. Not only Gouzhi gave a speech (presumably in entirely comprehensible Chinese), which was constructed in the best tradition of Zhou rhetoric, but he also enhanced the effect of his speech by reciting the ode of the *Shi jing*, which implicitly criticized Fan Xuanzi for trusting the slanderers. This recitation was a hallmark of Gouzhi’s high diplomatic skill and of his profound adoption of the Zhou culture. The “uncouth barbarian” proved to be a highly civilized “Chinese,” and his declarations about his people’s savagery should not be taken too literally.³³ By including Gouzhi’s speech in his account of the 559 meeting, the *Zuo* author evidently ridiculed the notion of “Sino-barbarian” cleavage, expressed by some Chunqiu statesmen mentioned above.³⁴

³² *Zuo* (Xiang 14), pp. 1005–1007; I modify the translation of Schaberg (*Patterned Past*, p. 133).

³³ Self-depreciating language was common in Chunqiu diplomatic intercourse: even representatives of great powers routinely designated their states as “humble settlements” (*bi yi*).

³⁴ For more about complicated attitude of the *Zuo* toward the aliens, see Pu, “Gudai Zhongguo,” pp. 157–59.

Aside from the *Zuo zhuan*'s irony, Gouzhi's speech teaches us about the complexity of the process of acculturation by the aliens. While Gouzhi personally was deeply versed in Zhou culture, his people were denied the position of equality with other states of the Zhou realm. In the case of the Rong, who by then long lost their military vigor, such denial may be explained primarily by power considerations. Yet, cultural elements in the rejecting of the Rong equality cannot be easily dismissed. In the late Chunqiu period, as the "barbarian" superpower of Wu began dominating the Zhou world, many overlords succumbed to its military superiority, but denied it cultural equality. Even the Wu rulers' claims that their forefather was an elder scion of the Zhou ruling house, Taibo, were to no avail. Apparently, the major reason for negative views of Wu was the latter leaders' arrogant defiance of some of the Zhou ritual regulations. In 488, a Wu leader demanded of the head of the Lu government to attend an inter-state meeting; in particular, he argued that the head of the government's absence from the meeting would violate ritual norms. These claims, however, were rebuffed by the Lu envoy, Confucius' disciple, Zi Gong:

Do you consider fear of [your] great state as ritual? Your great state does not issue its commands to the overlords according to ritual; if [commands] are not issued according to ritual, how can we measure [our action]? . . . [Besides, the Wu founder,] Taibo wore official robes to cultivate Zhou ritual, but when [his younger brother] Zhongyong succeeded him, he cut his hair and tattooed his body, considering being naked [a proper] adornment. Is it really ritual?! This is another reason [for our defiance of yours orders].³⁵

Zi Gong, emboldened by Wu military setbacks, felt confident enough to openly ridicule the barbarian superpower, refusing it the right to invoke Zhou ritual rules.³⁶ Not only did the Wu leaders' adoption of the Zhou norms of inter-state intercourse remain superficial; it was their preservation of domestic clothing and hair-cut tradition that unequivocally rendered them "barbarians." Other texts similarly indicate that the process of acculturation was not an easy one; what seemed

³⁵ *Zuo* (Ai 7), p. 1641.

³⁶ These sentiments must have been shared by Zi Gong's teacher, Confucius, who reportedly referred to the state of Wu and its nemesis, another "barbarian" power of Yue, when he pronounced his controversial saying: "Xia without ruler are better than Yi and Di barbarians who have one." *Lunyu*, 3.5 ("Ba yi"), p. 34.

to be sufficiently civilized in one's eyes was still considered barbarian by others. This tension could create ironical situations, like those depicted above, or like the anecdote told in the *Guoyu*. In 474, the generation-long struggle between the two "barbarian" super-powers of the southeast, Wu and Yue, ended with the decisive victory of the Yue side. The Wu messenger begged for a mercy, urging the head of the Yue government, Fan Li, to spare his defeated state. Fan Li rejected these pleas; when the messenger persisted, Fan Li replied:

Long ago, our former rulers were sure that the Zhou dynasty would not grant them even the *zi* rank;³⁷ hence, they settled on the coastal line of the Eastern Sea, dwelling together with turtles, alligators, fish and tortoises, and spending the time at water margins with frogs and amphibians. Thus, to my shame although I have a human face, I am still a bird and a beast; how can I understand your refined words?³⁸

The irony, of course is explicit. Fan Li, a brilliant strategist and a highly intelligent statesman, became a legend by the time the cited above chapter of the *Guoyu* was compiled.³⁹ A paragon of political wisdom, he was the farthest possible removed from barbarianism. Yet, his resort to the self-deprecating beast simile was not merely a rhetorical device aimed to quell the Wu messenger's pleas. It may refer to the views, probably held by certain members of the educated elite, for whom a descendant from the "barbarian" tribe or country would remain barbarian forever, no matter how refined his behavior was.

The anecdotes surveyed above indicate that a process of crossing the boundaries between the savage and the civilized world was not entirely smooth, and that at least some heirs of the Zhou civilization were reluctant to welcome newcomers, conceiving of their identity in exclusive terms. Nonetheless, hints of cultural exclusionism remain extremely rare in Zhou texts, disappearing entirely from the middle Zhanguo period on. Much more frequent are stories of paragons of civilized behavior who came from alien origins. Such stories are abundant in the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Guoyu*,⁴⁰ as well as in many later

³⁷ *Zi*, the lowest rank due to the head of an autonomous polity in the early Zhou period.

³⁸ *Guoyu*, 21.7 ("Yue yu xia"), p. 657.

³⁹ About the role of Fan Li in Zhanguo discourse, see Zhou Xuegen, "Dui Fan Li zhaxue sixiang yanjiu de yidian kanfa," *Zhongguo lishi wenxian yanjiu jikan*, 4 (1984), pp. 73–77.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, *Zuo* (Xiang 29), pp. 1161–67; (Zhao 17), pp. 1386–89; *Guoyu*, 15.2 ("Jin yu 9"), pp. 485–86.

compilations. They reflect a prevalent conviction of ancient Chinese statesmen and thinkers—any human being is transformable and changeable, and even the erstwhile barbarian can turn into a sage.

Confucius, at least insofar as the *Lunyu* may be trusted, rarely discussed the possibility of cultural transformation.⁴¹ Yet, some of his sayings indicate that he believed in the universal validity of ethical norms, which should be applied to barbarians just as to Chinese. Twice he is cited as saying that proper behavioral patterns should be observed “even in the barbarian country.”⁴² On another occasion, Confucius replied to those who criticized him for moving to live among the Yi tribesmen: “The place where superior man dwells, how can it be uncouth?”⁴³ These sayings do not amount to a coherent theory, but they strongly imply Confucius’ belief that under proper moral guidance uncouth aliens may become sufficiently civilized.

It was Confucius’ great follower, Mencius, who unequivocally indicated the possibility of cultural transformation of the aliens. Mencius believed that every human being possesses inborn good nature, which allows him to become a sage. By every human being, Mencius definitely implied aliens as well as Chinese. He clarified:

[The legendary sage ruler] Shun was born at Zhufeng, moved to Fuxia, died at Mingtiao—he was a man of the Eastern Yi. [The founder of the Zhou dynasty] King Wen was born at Qizhou, died at Bicheng—he was a man of the Western Yi. More than a thousand miles separated their lands, more than a thousand years separated their generations. But they fulfilled their aspirations in the Central States [in an identical way] as if they matched tallies. The former sage and the later sage, their principles were the same.⁴⁴

This frequently neglected passage is crucial for understanding Mencius’ views of the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy. Not only through the blessed influence of the Chinese could savages be transformed, but they could become in turn moral teachers of the Chinese. Shun and

⁴¹ The *Zuo* cites a rare case of Confucius’ admiration of the cultured ruler of a tiny and “semi-barbarian” state of Tan: “I have heard that ‘when the Son of Heaven has lost his officials [i.e. lost proper understanding of his duties], learning about the officials remains among the barbarians of the four quarters.’ I believe it.” (*Zuo* [Zhao 17], p. 1389; see also Schaberg, *Patterned Past*, p. 133); cf. a similar case in *Liji jijie*, 11 (“Tan Gong xia”), p. 294.

⁴² See *Lunyu*, 13.19 (“Zi Lu”), p. 140 and 15.6 (“Wei Ling Gong”), p. 162.

⁴³ *Lunyu*, 9.14 (“Zi han”), p. 91.

⁴⁴ *Mengzi*, 8.1 (“Li Lou xia”), p. 184.

King Wen—two of the most, perhaps *the* most, respected sages in Mencius' eyes—were of alien, “barbarian” origin. This did not prevent them from fulfilling their aspirations in the Central States (China), with blessed results for all Chinese. Mencius' passage epitomizes his belief in an equal opportunity for every human being, including erst-while barbarians, to attain sagehood.

The idea of transformability of savageness into civilized behavior permeates Zhanguo Confucian thought. The late Zhanguo commentary on the Confucian classic of “Springs and Autumns” (*Chun qiu*), the *Gongyang zhuan*, is notorious for its strong emphasis on “Sino-barbarian” antagonism. Nevertheless, the *Gongyang zhuan* is similarly consistent in stressing the possibility of barbarians to “upgrade” their status by emulating the ritually correct behavior of the Chinese. Similar views are advocated by another commentary, the *Guliang zhuan*.⁴⁵

Late Zhanguo thinkers suggested more sophisticated explanations of the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy and its changeability. Xunzi (c. 310–218), for instance, argued:

At birth, sons of the Gan, the Yue, the Yi and the Mo cry identically, while when they grow up their customs differ from each other. This is because of [different] education.⁴⁶

This notion that education is the prime source of ethnic differences appears also in the *Lüshi chunqiu*.⁴⁷ The idea that the inborn nature of all human beings is common (or, at least, ethnically indistinguishable), while different behavioral patterns result from different socio-political conditions or different education permeates late Zhanguo thought. The *Lüshi chunqiu* elsewhere states:

The countries of the Man and the Yi have incomprehensible languages, distinct customs and different habits. They differ in all: in their clothing, caps and belts; in their palaces, living houses and places of dwellings;

⁴⁵ See He Xiu and Xu Yan, annot., *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu*, rpt. in *Shisanjing zhushu*, comp. Ruan Yuan (Beijing, 1991), 13 (Wen 9), p. 2270; 16 (Xuan 15), p. 2286; 25 (Ding 4), p. 2337; Fan Ning and Yang Shixun, annot., *Chunqiu Guliang zhuan zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 9 (Xi 18), p. 2399; 19 (Ding 4), p. 2444; 20 (Ai 13), p. 2451. For the tentative dating of the *Gongyang zhuan* to the later half of the Zhanguo period, see J. Gentz, *Das Gongyang zhuan: Auslegung und Kanonisierung der Frühlings und Herbstannalen (Chunqiu)* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 345–403.

⁴⁶ *Xunzi*, 1 (“Quan xue”), p. 2.

⁴⁷ “If you let a man of Chu to grow up among the Rong, or the man of Rong to grow up in Chu, then the man of Chu will speak the Rong language, while the man of Rong will speak the Chu language” (*Lüshi chunqiu*, 4.5 [“Yong zhong”], p. 232).

in their boats, chariots and utensils; in their sounds, colors, and tastes. Yet their desires are the same.⁴⁸

“Desires” here refer to the basic nature of the aliens, which remains the same despite external differences. Their nature does not differ, as the authors explain elsewhere, from that of the Chinese. Different behavioral patterns, thus, are not inborn qualities but result from different sociopolitical conditions and different education, and they unequivocally lack racial aspects, as suggested by Dikötter. Zhanguo philosophers firmly believed in transformability of the savages.⁴⁹ While the historical writings cited above indicate that the process of acculturation was never entirely smooth, this did not prevent the various thinkers from believing in the possibility and the desirability of transforming the aliens. Today they might have been beasts, tomorrow they could—and should—become humans.

Critics of the “Chinese Superiority” Paradigm

The discussion heretofore suggests that the pre-imperial discourse harbored two basic premises of “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy. First, Chinese were superior to the barbarians; secondly, the differences between the two groups were not inborn and hence changeable. Yet, most of the texts discussed above belong to what may be broadly defined as the “Confucian” (*Ru*) school of thought.⁵⁰ Did members of the contending schools share these premises? A brief survey suggests that while none of the known Zhanguo thinkers explicitly challenged the belief in transformability of the barbarians, some, to the contrary, questioned the premise of Chinese cultural superiority.

Not surprisingly, most challenges to the Chinese superiority paradigm came from those thinkers who disputed the pivotal role of ritual in social life. Mozi, for instance, was one of the most vociferous opponents

⁴⁸ *Lüshi chunqiu*, 19.6 (“Wei yu”), p. 1293.

⁴⁹ This optimistic belief in human transformability under the blessed influence of proper education led some radical thinkers to suggest that even the beasts can be somehow transformed under the sages’ impact. See the insightful discussion by R. Sterckx, “Transforming the Beasts: Animals and Music in Early China,” *TP*, 86 (2000) pp. 1–46.

⁵⁰ Hereafter I refer to the Zhanguo “schools” of thought for purely heuristic purposes; it is not my intention here to discuss whether or not such “schools” existed in reality.

of certain ritual norms, such as lavish funerals. During his polemics with traditional-minded supporters of rich funerals, Mozi suggested that the Tradition is not necessarily sacrosanct:

This [upholding the tradition] means considering habitual undertakings as proper, and customs as right. Yet, in the past to the east of Yue there was a state of Bimu; when the first son was born, they used to dissect his body and eat him, calling this “to behave appropriately towards the younger brother.” When the grandfather died, they would carry the grandmother and abandon her, saying: “it is impossible to dwell together with the ghost’s wife.” Superiors considered this proper government; inferiors considered this custom; they never stopped doing so, regarding this inexorable practice. But is it really the way of benevolence and propriety? This is what it means “to consider habitual undertakings as proper, and customs as right.” To the south of Chu there is a state of the Yan people. When a parent dies, they wait until his flesh is rotten, throw it away, and then bury his bones; thereby the son completes his filial obligation. To the west of Qin there is a state of Yiqu. When a parent dies, they gather firewood and burn down his body; and when the flame rises up they call it “ascending far off”; only then does the son complete his filial obligation. Superiors consider this proper government; inferiors consider this custom; they never stop doing so, regarding this inexorable practice. But is this really the way of benevolence and propriety? This is what it means “to consider habitual undertakings as proper, and customs as right.” If we examine [the funerals] from the point of view of comparing these three states, then they are too meager. If we examine them from the point of view of the superior men of the Central States, then they are too profuse. These are too profuse, those are too meager, but yet, each funeral has its regulations.⁵¹

Mozi’s depiction of the aliens’ customs is far from laudatory, and in this it does not differ much from the views expressed by other Chinese thinkers. Yet, unlike Confucians, Mozi did not regard Zhou rites as the criterion for proper behavior. Hence, his comparison conveys a sense of relativism: Chinese and aliens’ customs are equally wrong, and Chinese have no reason to emphasize their superiority. Elsewhere, Mozi emphatically rejected his opponents’ claim in favor of the aliens’ inferiority:

Yangwen, the ruler of Lu, said to Master Mozi: “To the south of Chu, there is a state of the Yan people; when the first son is born, they dissect his body and eat him, calling this ‘to behave appropriately

⁵¹ Wu Yujiang, *Mozi jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1994), 25 (“Jie zang xia”), pp. 267–68.

towards the younger brother.’ When it is tasty, they leave [some flesh] to their ruler; the ruler is glad and then he rewards the father. Is it not an evil custom?”

Master Mozi said: “You have the same among the customs of the Central States. When a ruler executes the father and rewards his son, is it different from eating the son and rewarding his father? If one does not resort to benevolence and righteousness, how can he discard the Yi people eating their son?”⁵²

Mozi suggested moral rather than ritual criteria for evaluating proper behavior. Yet, these criteria did not imply automatically that Chinese are superior to their neighbors; to the contrary, both sides fell short of Mozi’s rigid demands. Mozi’s rejection of ritual eventually led him to a notion of basic equality between “us” and “them.”

Other thinkers were usually less explicit when discussing the possible equality between Chinese and the aliens, although they might have shared this vision. Zhuangzi (d. ca. 286), for instance, argued for a basic equality of “all things” and ridiculed the pretensions of the “Central States” to be the pivot of the universe; he compared them to “a tiny grain in a storehouse.”⁵³ Elsewhere Zhuangzi attributed to the progenitor of the Zhou, Tai Wang, a provocative saying: “Is there any difference in being my subject or the Di subject?”⁵⁴ Nonetheless, this thinker evidently found little interest in the lives of the aliens, and found better examples to appall his traditional-minded audience. Philosophical attacks on the paradigm of Chinese superiority generally were not pronounced in Zhanguo discourse.⁵⁵

Unlike philosophy, practical considerations might have been the main impetus for discarding the paradigm of Chinese superiority. To be sure, the process of cultural borrowing from the neighbors existed throughout the known history of China, and the examples are too abundant to be surveyed here. Usually such borrowing occurred through a long process of diffusion. Sometimes, however,

⁵² *Mozi*, 49 (“Lu wen”), p. 735.

⁵³ Chen Guying, *Zhuangzi jinzhu jinyi* (Beijing, 1994), 17 (“Qiu shui”), p. 411. Cf. Zhuangzi’s pejorative remark that “the gentlemen of the Central States are versed in ritual and propriety, but are boorish in understanding the man’s heart” (*Zhuangzi*, 21 [“Tian Zifang”], p. 532).

⁵⁴ *Zhuangzi*, 28 (“Rang wang”), p. 747.

⁵⁵ An interesting story that hails the advantages of “barbarians”’ simplicity over the excessiveness and artificiality of Chinese culture is present in the “Qin Annals” in the *Shiji* (5, pp. 192–93). If Sima Qian (ca. 145–90 BCE) had adopted this story from an earlier source, this may be another example of the Zhanguo thinkers’ rejection of the paradigm of Chinese superiority.

it reflected a conscious choice of the decision makers. One such case, reported in the collection of the *Zhanguo* anecdotes, the *Zhanguo ce*, incited bitter controversy. King Wuling of Zhao (r. 325–299) reportedly decided in 307 to adopt “barbarian clothing” to facilitate the use of cavalry. This decision appalled many of the kings’ aides and led to extensive court debates. While few would doubt that the anecdote concerning the king’s decision is of dubious veracity,⁵⁶ it is nevertheless interesting evidence of conflicting approaches among the members of the educated elite regarding the adoption of the aliens’ ways. The king’s younger brother, Cheng, claimed:

I heard: Central States are the place where cleverness and wisdom dwell; myriad things and wealth are gathered; here sages and worthies are teaching, and benevolence and propriety are implemented; here the *Odes*, the *Documents*, rites and music are used, various skills are practiced; it is the place to be visited by those from afar, and this [Way] is what the Man and the Yi must implement. Now the king discards this and adopts the clothing of the distant regions, changes old teachings, modifies old ways, goes against the people’s heart, turns his back to the knowledgeable, abandons the Central States. I would like you, the Great King, to reconsider.⁵⁷

To this emphatic request the king replied by elucidating the practical advantages of his extraordinary decision:

Clothing must facilitate the use; rites must facilitate the undertakings. Therefore, the sages examine local [customs] and follow whatever is appropriate; rely on their undertakings and determine the rites; thereby they benefit the people and make their state wealthy. The people of the Ouyue cut their hair and tattoo the body; cross their arms and fold robes to the left. In the state of Great Wu, the people blacken their teeth and scar their forehead, wear caps made of scale and stitched crudely with an awl. Their rites and clothing are not the same, but their usefulness is identical. Thus, different localities require change in the use; different undertakings require modification of rites. Therefore, sages do not use a single thing if thereby they can benefit the people, and do not follow the same rites if thereby they can facilitate the undertakings.⁵⁸

King Wuling lived in the age of the collapse of Zhou ritual system, when the norms of antiquity were considered by the increasing num-

⁵⁶ For the strong possibility that the “barbarian clothes” anecdote was patterned after the first chapter of the *Shang jun shu*, see Zheng Liangshu, *Shang Yang ji qi xue-pai* (Shanghai, 1989), pp. 9–19.

⁵⁷ He Jianzhang, *Zhanguo ce zhushi* (Beijing, 1991), 19.4 (“Zhao ce”), p. 678.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 678.

ber of statesmen and thinkers as inadequate to cope with the pressing domestic and foreign problems. The need to ensure military successes was urgent enough to invalidate the desire to preserve “Chinese” ways. While authors of the anecdote were preoccupied with the concept of “changing with the times” rather than with the “Sino-barbarian” dichotomy,⁵⁹ the king’s response is still highly relevant for our discussion. It befits Mozi’s cultural relativism, and may be representative of a significant intellectual undercurrent of the Zhanguo age. In the later generations only a few thinkers, most noteworthy some devoted Buddhists, would be so straightforward in their recommendation to adopt foreign ways.

The Reasons for Pre-Imperial Inclusiveness

Zhanguo thinkers laid foundations for Chinese political culture of the subsequent millennia; their views on different topics often became paradigmatic for the generations of imperial thinkers. Understandably, the premises of Chinese superiority and of changeability of the barbarians became part and parcel of imperial thought. However, on some issues imperial thinkers suggested radically new departures. For the matter of our discussion, the most significant is the exclusive view of the aliens, suggested first in the Han period. The leading Han historian, Ban Gu (32–92 CE), powerfully advocated this approach. After his lengthy survey of centuries-long futile attempts of the Han rulers to get rid of the Xiongnu menace, Ban Gu states:

Thus, when the former kings measured the land, they placed in its middle the royal domain, divided [the land] into nine provinces, arranged five circuits, fixed the tribute of [each] land, and regulated the internal and the external. They either adopted punitive and administrative measures, or illuminated civilian virtue—this is because the power of the distant and the near differ. Therefore, the *Chun qiu* treats all the Xia as insiders, while the Yi and Di as outsiders.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For the concept of “changing with the times” and its importance in late pre-imperial and early imperial discourse, see M. Kern, “Changing with the Times: The ‘Confucian’ Career of a ‘Legalist’ Dogma in Western Han Ritualism,” paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies annual meeting (San Diego, March 2000).

⁶⁰ Ban Gu refers here to the *Gongyang zhuan* interpretation of the *Chun qiu*; see the discussion below.

The people of the Yi and Di are greedy and seek profits; they wear their hair loose and fold the robe to the left; they have a human face and beasts' heart. Their badges and clothes are distinct and customs differ from that of the Central States; their food and drinks are not the same, and their language is incomprehensible. They flee to dwell in the northern borderlands, in the cold and wet wasteland. They follow their herds across the grasslands, and hunt for a living. They are separated [from us] by mountains and gorges, and barred by the desert: thereby Heaven and Earth sever the internal from the external. Therefore, the sage kings treated them as beasts and birds, did not make treaties with them and were not engaged in offensive expeditions: if you make a treaty with them, they spend the gifts and then deceive you; if you attack them, then the army is exhausted and you induce banditry. Their 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. The 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 make preparations and be on guard against them. When they admire rules of propriety and submit tribute, we should accept it in accordance with rules of ritual yielding; we should not sever the loose rein and leave for them the minute details. This is the constant Way applied by the sage kings to repel the *manyi* barbarians.⁶¹

Ban Gu resorted to the familiar Chunqiu-Zhanguo clichés in depicting the barbarians, but his conclusions differ markedly from that of the pre-imperial thinkers. Those, as the above survey suggests, shared the conviction that the boundaries separating savages from civilization can be crossed under proper conditions, and in fact, that many barbarians in the past have already crossed them. Bestiality of the Other was a temporary condition, to be taken into ad-hoc consideration only. For Ban Gu, to the contrary, this bestiality was an inalienable feature of the barbarians (at least of the Xiongnu and other northern nomads); hence any possible contact with them was profitless and self-defeating. For Ban Gu, “this culture of Ours” was a unique asset of the Central Kingdom, which should not be shared with the Other. Physical separation from the nomads, mandated by Heaven and Earth, was in his eyes a blessing.

Ban Gu's views were not representative of his age; and he admitted that his was a minority opinion.⁶² Yet, this minority was not negligible,

⁶¹ Ban Gu, *Han shu* (Beijing, 1997), 94, pp. 3833–34.

⁶² Limits of space prevent us here from dealing adequately with ideological and personal reasons which encouraged Ban Gu to adopt his isolationist view. It is inter-

as it comprised among others such an important thinker as Zheng Xuan (127–200 CE), who opined that the differences between Chinese and aliens are determined by their distinct habitat.⁶³ This view, aptly named by Dikötter “environmental determinism” inspired many late imperial thinkers to adopt exclusive approach towards the “immutable” barbarians.⁶⁴ Yet, none of the known Chunqiu-Zhanguo texts supports this view, and we may plausibly assume that an idea of the barbarians’ inborn or strictly environmentally determined savagery did not appear prior to dynastic unification. Why did the exclusive view remain unknown in pre-imperial discourse, and what spurred its appearance in the age of the unified empire?

The answer to this question is twofold: ideological and historical. Ideologically, Chinese statesmen and thinkers since the fifth century BCE unanimously arrived at the conclusion that the only solution to the continuous and increasingly devastating warfare was the unification of the realm under a single ruler. This principle, manifested by Mencius’ dictum “stability is in unity”⁶⁵ implied that no independent polity should remain within the civilized world, All under Heaven (*tianxia*). Elsewhere I discussed in greater detail the origins and genesis of the “Great Unity” (*da yitong*) paradigm, and its influence on Chinese political culture.⁶⁶ Here we should ask whether or not the would-be-unified *tianxia* comprised only the Zhou world, or included the alien realm as well.

The answer to this question is not easy. A survey of pre-imperial historical and philosophical literature clearly suggests that Chinese

esting to mention, however, that his brother, the renowned general and diplomat, Ban Chao (d. 102 CE), spent his life in pursuing exactly those aims to which Ban Gu so firmly opposed. It should also be noticed that Ban Gu was not as staunch an adherent of the notion of aliens’ bestiality as the above passage suggests. See for instance his extremely positive treatment of the Xiongnu leader, Jin Midi, who surrendered to the Han and later became a loyal and filial exemplar (*Han shu* 68, pp. 2959–67). For an interesting comparison between Ban Gu’s approach with that of Sima Qian, see Di Cosmo, *Ancient China*, pp. 271–72.

⁶³ See his glosses on the *Liji* in: Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, annot., *Liji zhengyi*, rpt. *Shisanjing zhushu*, 12 (“Wang zhi”), p. 1338. Generally, however, Han ritualists tended to emphasize the possibility of the aliens, such as the Xiongnu, to adopt civilized norms of behavior, particularly mourning rites (see M. Brown, “Men in Mourning: Ritual, Politics, and Human Nature in Warring States and Han China, 453 B.C.–A.D. 220” [Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2002], pp. 59–61).

⁶⁴ See Dikötter, *Discourse*, pp. 7–8; cf. H. Tillman, “Chen Liang,” 408 ff.

⁶⁵ *Mengzi*, 1.6 (“Liang Hui Wang shang”), p. 18.

⁶⁶ See Y. Pines, “‘The One that pervades All’ in Ancient Chinese Political Thought: Origins of ‘The Great Unity’ Paradigm,” *TP*, 86/4–5 (2000), pp. 280–324.

thinkers who sought unification of the realm concentrated on the political entities within the boundaries of the Zhou world. This was not a quest for the unity against a common enemy, as suggested by some scholars.⁶⁷ The reason for focusing on the Zhou world as the primary object of unification is that during the four centuries following the Rong and Di incursions into the Central Plain in the eighth-seventh centuries BCE, the major source of instability for the dwellers of the Zhou world were neighboring states, their “brethren” who shared common ritual and textual culture.⁶⁸ Aliens were a marginal player in Chinese politics of pre-unification centuries, and their place in pro-unification discussions is, accordingly, marginal as well. For many Chunqiu-Zhanguo statesmen All under Heaven was therefore more-or-less identical with the Zhou world.⁶⁹

This narrow definition of All under Heaven reflected political circumstances of the Chunqiu-Zhanguo age, but it was not philosophically stipulated. That most unification discussions did not focus on the aliens does not mean that the thinkers consciously wanted to leave them beyond the unified world. On the contrary, aliens were regarded as an inalienable, albeit marginal part of the future empire. This sentiment is strongly pronounced, for instance, in Mozi’s writings. Mozi’s vision of indiscriminating “universal love” (*jian’ai*) explicitly included the aliens as equal beneficiaries of this universal solution to social and political strife. Mozi emphasized that the paragon of universal love, the sage king Yu, benefited in his enterprise not only his Xia subjects, but the “barbarians” as well.⁷⁰ Those, just like the Chinese, were supposed to share the gains of universal fraternity.

Mozi was not alone in presenting the aliens as the ultimate object of the sage’s actions. The inclusiveness of Yu’s field of action was

⁶⁷ For this view, see, for instance, K. Bünger, “Concluding Remarks on Two Aspects of the Chinese Unitary State as Compared with the European State System,” in *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China*, ed. S.R. Schram (Hong Kong, 1987), pp. 321–22.

⁶⁸ A partial exception to this pattern may be the Wu and Yue dominance in the late sixth-early fifth centuries BCE. Yet, although ritual purists, as mentioned above, regarded these states as “barbarian,” this perspective was not necessarily shared by most statesmen of that age, including even the rulers of Confucius’ home state of Lu. Those viewed Wu and Yue as legitimate, albeit ritually deficient players in Zhou politics, not as the threat to the Zhou culture.

⁶⁹ For more about the boundaries of pre-imperial *tianxia*, see Y. Pines, “Changing Views of *tianxia* in Pre-imperial Discourse,” *Oriens Extremus*, 43.1–2 (2002), pp. 101–116.

⁷⁰ See *Mozi*, 15 (“Jian’ai zhong”), pp. 160–61.

emphasized also in the *Liushi chunqiu*. Mencius mentioned several times the supposed desire of the aliens to be incorporated as swiftly as possible in the empire built by Tang, the founder of the Shang dynasty. Xunzi likewise stressed that although aliens may not be ruled directly, their lands should be nevertheless unequivocally incorporated into the unified empire. Thus, universal inclusiveness of the future empire became by the late Zhanguo one of the criteria for defining the true unification.⁷¹

While most thinkers despised the aliens' ritual inferiority, they never denied them a right to enjoy the sages' beneficent impact. The "Zhong yong" chapter of the *Liji*, emphasizes that the sage's fame "permeates the Central States and is implemented into the lands of the Man and Mo."⁷² Thus, the distant barbarian tribes were supposed to be embraced by the sage's universal munificence. This point is most unequivocally pronounced in the *Gongyang zhuan*. While the *Gongyang* is unique in pre-imperial texts because of its relatively strong emphasis on "Sino-barbarian" (*Hua-yi*) dichotomy, it is also the strongest proponent of the inclusive view.⁷³ The *Gongyang* authors postulated that "nothing is external" to the True King (*wang zhe*),⁷⁴ and made numerous efforts to combine this sense of inclusiveness with their contempt for the aliens. The solution is presented in the *Gongyang* explanation of the "great meaning" of the *Chun qiu*:

The *Chun qiu* treats its state [i.e. Lu] as internal, and All the Xia as external; it treats All the Xia as internal and the Yi and Di as external. The true king's desire is to unify All under Heaven. Why should he then use the words "external" and "internal"? It means that he begins with those who are near.⁷⁵

The *Gongyang* suggests, thus, that while the aliens are currently incompatible with the refined Xia, they would by no means remain beyond

⁷¹ See these instances respectively in *Liushi chunqiu*, 22.5 ("Qiu ren"), p. 1514; *Mengzi*, 2.11 ("Liang Hui Wang xia"), p. 45, and 6.5 ("Teng Wen Gong xia"), p. 148; *Xunzi*, 18 ("Zheng lun"), pp. 328–29. Xunzi criticized the erroneous views according to which the Shang and Zhou founders failed to incorporate the southern lands of Chu and Yue under their rule: this failure would presumably seriously impair their sagehood and diminish their role as paragons of universal rule.

⁷² *Liji zhengyi*, 53 ("Zhong yong"), p. 1634.

⁷³ See the detailed discussion by Yanaka Shinji, "Sengoku jidai kōki ni okeru tai ittō shisō no tenkai," *Nihon Chūgoku gakkai gojū shūnen kinen ronbunshū* (Tōkyō, 1996), pp. 1306–9.

⁷⁴ *Gongyang zhuan*, 1 (Yin 6), p. 2199.

⁷⁵ *Gongyang zhuan*, 19 (Cheng 15), p. 2297.

the future unified world ruled by the True King. The aliens' inferior position is merely temporary. This explanation may be applicable to the entire body of pre-imperial texts: their apparent lack of interest in the aliens is not ideologically motivated but reflects a different set of priorities. The unification of the Zhou lands was only a prelude to the full unification of All under Heaven, all the known world.

The ideological emphasis on the universal inclusiveness of the future unified realm did not merely reflect wishful thinking of pre-imperial statesmen. Their assertion that the aliens could be ultimately incorporated into the civilized world relied on the actual political and cultural experience of the Chunqiu-Zhanguo age. History seemingly taught that the aliens were indeed changeable. After all, not only specific personalities successfully accomplished the process of acculturation; the entire ethnic groups similarly transferred their cultural affinities. The course of interaction with the aliens throughout the pre-imperial period was much less marked by the notion of "Sino-barbarian" dichotomy than is suggested by the ritual-oriented texts mentioned above.

The very geographical setting of Sino-alien interaction facilitated mutual cultural influences. *Pace* late Zhanguo ritual texts, which try to place the aliens at the fringes of Chinese world, this was not the case during most of the Zhou period.⁷⁶ The Man, the Yi, and since the eighth-seventh centuries BCE the Rong and the Di tribes often lived within the Zhou heartland, sometimes in close proximity to the Zhou states.⁷⁷ They were engaged in the diplomatic and military life of the Zhou world, their leaders intermarried with the ruling houses of the Zhou states, and their settlements occasionally served as a refuge for fugitive Zhou statesmen. Moreover, some statesmen of alien stock made brilliant careers in Zhou states.⁷⁸ In short, interactions among

⁷⁶ For examples of these texts, see the "Yu gong" chapter of the *Shang shu* (Kong Yingda, annot., *Shang shu zhengyi*, rpt. *Shisanjing* 6, pp. 146–53; and the "Wang zhi" chapter of the *Liji* (*Liji jijie* 15, pp. 359–60).

⁷⁷ The *Zuo* reports, for instance, that in 478 the lord of Wei observed the Rong settlement from the Wei capital's wall, and was appalled by such proximity (*Zuo* [Ai 17], p. 1710). Wei was located in the heartland of the Central Plain, to the north of the Yellow River.

⁷⁸ All these may be exemplified by a single example. Lord Wen of Jin (r. 636–628) was born of a Rong woman, married (among others) a wife of the Di stock, and spent eleven years in exile among the Di. His maternal relative, Hu Yan, made a brilliant career at the Jin court after Lord Wen's ascendancy. Hu's Rong origin never seemed to hinder his career.

Chinese and aliens were much more multi-faceted than Ban Gu would like us to believe.

By the Zhanguo period, the Rong, Di and Yi statelets began disappearing from historical accounts. In all likelihood, Chinese states absorbed their neighbors.⁷⁹ It seems that the absorption was cultural and not only military, as by the age of the imperial unification we can no longer identify alien pockets on the Central Plain. We may plausibly assume, therefore, that the majority of the aliens living within the Zhou world were incorporated by the neighboring “Chinese” states, providing thereby a good example of successful acculturation.

Military subjugation by the Chinese was not the only pattern of acculturation of the aliens. Those non-Xia ethnic groups which succeeded in establishing powerful independent polities likewise underwent the process of integration into the Zhou ritual culture. This process might have been triggered by the necessity to facilitate diplomatic ties with the Zhou states, and also by the influx of statesmen from the Central Plain, whose role was often instrumental in the alien polities’ ascendancy. Three cases may exemplify this process: the “Sinification” (or, more correctly, the Zhou-fication) of the states of Wu, Yue, and Zhongshan.

The states of Wu and Yue were very different from the Zhou states, both in the outlook of their dwellers, as mentioned above, and in their material civilization, as suggested by archeological surveys.⁸⁰ The initial encroaches of Wu on the Chinese statelets since 584 upset ritual-minded Lu statesmen, whose laments about the *manyi* “barbarian” invasion are recorded in the *Zuo zhuan*.⁸¹ However, by the late Chunqiu period, as both Wu and Yue became increasingly engaged in power struggles within the Zhou world, this required the adoption of certain Zhou rites, as well as forging a favorable genealogy that connected Wu to the founders of the Zhou dynasty, and Yue to the legendary sage king Yu. The process of acculturation was speeded

⁷⁹ The *Zuo* suggests that the aliens’ statelets existed on the lands inappropriate for agricultural activities (see, for instance, *Zuo* [Xiang 14], pp. 1006–7). Perhaps, population growth and broad implementation of iron utensils since the fourth century BCE both necessitated and facilitated the Zhou states encroachment on the wastelands in their vicinity, resulting in the disappearance of aliens’ polities.

⁸⁰ For the Wu and Yue civilizations, see L. von Falkenhausen, “The Waning of the Bronze Age: Material Culture and Social Developments, 770–481 BC,” in *CHAC*, pp. 525–39.

⁸¹ See *Zuo* (Cheng 7), pp. 832–33; (Zhao 16), p. 1376.

up, we may assume, by the migration of many statesmen from different Chunqiu states to the newly ascending superpowers. The newcomers, who were naturally well-versed in Zhou rites, often made brilliant careers, reaching the apex of power in their new states.⁸² Although the discussion in the second section above indicates that the process of acculturation of the southeastern powers was not smooth, it was sufficiently successful to incorporate these states retroactively into Zhou history. Many Zhanguo texts eagerly tell anecdotes from Wu and Yue histories, and only rarely do these anecdotes convey a sense of dealing with exotic Others. On the contrary, Wu and Yue rulers and statesmen were absorbed into a common stock of model monarchs and ministers disregarding their distinct origin.⁸³

Both Wu and Yue disappeared from the Zhou world within a century after their ascendancy, and it may be argued that their acculturation was merely a post-factum construction by Zhanguo historians and thinkers. In the case of the third alien polity, the state of Zhongshan established in the sixth century BCE by the Di tribesmen in northern China, we may trace the process of its acculturation with greater clarity. After a brief occupation by the state of Wei, Zhongshan regained its independence in 377 and played an important role in Zhanguo politics until it was finally annexed by the state of Zhao in 295. Zhongshan figures less prominently than Wu and Yue in Zhanguo texts, and some texts make occasional references to its cultural backwardness. Yet, the same texts commonly convey a feeling that the state of Zhongshan, albeit improperly ruled, did not differ markedly from its Chinese neighbors.⁸⁴

⁸² The ascendancy of Wu is directly linked in the *Zuo* to the activities of an envoy from the state of Jin, a former Chu statesman, Qu Wuchen, who presumably introduced in 584 war chariots to the then underdeveloped Wu. All the leading figures of the state of Wu at the zenith of its power were of northern origin, while their immediate ancestors served at the Chu court (such as the brilliant strategist Wu Zixu and the Wu prime-minister, Bo Pi); the leading Yue statesmen Fan Li and Wen Zhong were also presumably of northern stock.

⁸³ See stories about these states scattered in late Zhanguo and early Han texts, such as *Lüshi chunqiu*, *Han Feizi*, *Zhanguo ce*, *Shiji* and other texts.

⁸⁴ Zhanguo references to Zhongshan history were conveniently gathered by Wang Xianqian in *Xianyu Zhongshan Guoshi biao*, *Jiangyu tushuo bushi* (Shanghai, 1993). For the references to Zhongshan cultural “backwardness,” see, for instance, *Lüshi chunqiu*, 16.1 (“Xian shi”), p. 946. Yet, in the same chapter Zhongshan is discussed as an albeit deficient, but entirely “Chinese” state, akin in its faults to the state of Qi. Several anecdotes about Zhongshan statesmen are collected in “Zhongshan ce” section of the *Zhanguo ce*. For more about Zhongshan history, see Goi Naohiro, *Zhongguo gudai shi lun gao*, trans. by Jiang Zhenqing and Li Delong (Beijing, 2001), pp. 216–50.

Luckily enough, we are not dependent exclusively on textual evidence when dealing with the state of Zhongshan. Archeological research, particularly the 1974–1978 discovery of the Zhongshan royal cemetery in Pingshan, Hebei, gives us a fascinating and unbiased look at the late Zhongshan culture. Not only the material culture of Zhongshan indicates its adoption of the Central Plain influences;⁸⁵ the same can be ascertained also with regard to its spiritual culture. In particular, a lengthy bronze inscription on the great cauldron named “Zhongshan Wang Cuo *da ding*” is perhaps the most Confucianized inscription currently available from pre-imperial China. Its content has been discussed in greater detail elsewhere,⁸⁶ and here I shall confine myself to only one point: this is the single pre-Qin inscription, which contains such pivotal terms of Chinese ethical discourse as *li* (ritual), *ren* (benevolence), and *zhong* (loyalty). Ironically, the “sini-cized” state of Zhongshan was destroyed by the “Chinese” state of Zhao, which, as mentioned above, eagerly and successfully adopted “barbarian” clothes. Some astute Zhanguo political analysts, such as Han Feizi (d. 233), did not fail to notice that Zhongshan failure resulted from its radical Confucianization; in Han Feizi’s opinion, it was not the only instance in which the aliens’ adoption of Chinese ways led to their destruction.⁸⁷

Thus, Zhanguo statesmen did not lack examples of successful acculturation of the aliens. What is particularly interesting, however, is that the process was two-directional; namely, “barbarization” of the so-called Chinese occurred with no less frequency than “Sinification” of the barbarians. This crossing of cultural boundaries made them less rigid, and further narrowed the gap between the aliens and the Xia.

Zhanguo texts frequently convey a feeling that the peripheral states of Qin, Chu and possibly Yan were beyond the immediate boundaries of Chinese cultural realm. Mencius, for instance, ridiculed his Chu opponent, Xu Xing, saying that Xu was merely “a southern barbarian

⁸⁵ See N. Di Cosmo, “The Northern Frontier in Pre-imperial China,” in *CHAC*, pp. 949–50.

⁸⁶ See G.L. Mattos, “Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions,” in *New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to Reading Inscriptions and Manuscripts*, ed. E.L. Shaughnessy (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 104–11.

⁸⁷ See Wang Xianshen, *Han Feizi jiji* (Beijing, 1998), 32 (“Wai chu shuo zuo shang”), p. 281; cf. *Zhanguo ce*, 33.7 (“Zhongshan ce”), p. 1246. For a similar story about the state of Xu, established by the Yi tribesmen, which was lost due to its eager following the path of “benevolence and propriety,” see *Han Feizi*, 49 (“Wu du”), p. 445.

who speaks a bird's tongue."⁸⁸ The *Gongyang zhuan* similarly conveys a strong sense of the Chu otherness, regarding this state as the major opponent of Chinese civilization.⁸⁹ The state of Qin is depicted in the *Zhanguo ce* as "having the common customs with Rong and Di; a state with a tiger's and wolf's heart; greedy, profit-seeking and untrustworthy, which knows nothing of ritual, propriety and virtuous behavior."⁹⁰ The same source cites the alleged sayings of the Yan statesmen who portray their state as *manyi* "barbarian."⁹¹ These examples can be easily multiplied.⁹² In light of these sayings, many modern scholars tended to believe that the peripheral states were late newcomers to the Zhou cultural realm, and dismissed as fictional stories of their early ties with Zhou, told by the Han historian Sima Qian (c. 145–90 BCE).⁹³

More recently, archeological studies suggested a different picture, which may partly support Sima Qian's narrative. The state of Chu, for instance, prior to the sixth century BCE essentially preserved Zhou ritual norms in its burial customs, and its material culture definitely belonged to the Zhou civilization. Furthermore, the *Zuo zhuan* never regards Chu as a barbarian country; the Lu statesmen, for instance, named it merely a country of a different clan, not a land of "barbarians" (*manyi*). Chu, albeit different from the states established by the descendants of the Ji clan, was never treated as the fearsome Other, as was the case with the early state of Wu, for instance. Chu's otherness, then, was mostly a Zhanguo phenomenon. In all likelihood, Chu's departure from the Zhou ritual norms since the sixth century BCE reflected a conscious decision by the Chu ruling elite to challenge the Zhou supremacy.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *Mengzi*, 5.4 ("Teng Wen Gong shang"), p. 125.

⁸⁹ See, for instance, the *Gongyang zhuan*, 11 (Xi 21), p. 2256; 23 (Zhao 16), p. 2324.

⁹⁰ *Zhanguo ce*, 24.8 ("Wei ce 3"), p. 907.

⁹¹ *Zhanguo ce*, 29.6, ("Yan ce 1"), p. 1095; 31.5 ("Yan ce 3"), p. 1194.

⁹² On Qin's alleged "barbarianism," see also *Lüshi chunqiu*, 24.1 ("Bu gou"), p. 1584; *Gongyang zhuan*, 12 (Xi 33), p. 2264; 22 (Zhao 5), p. 2319; and Li Si's memorandum in the *Shiji* (87, p. 2544).

⁹³ For Sima Qian's accounts about the early ties of Qin, Chu and Yan with the Zhou house, see *Shiji* (Beijing, 1997), 5, pp. 173–79; 40, pp. 1689–94; 34, pp. 1549–51. For the most recent example of modern scholars' criticism of Sima Qian's account, see C.A. Cook and B.B. Blakeley, "Introduction," in *Defining Chu*, eds. C.A. Cook and J.S. Major (Honolulu, 1999), p. 2.

⁹⁴ For archeological analyses of the early Chu culture, see Falkenhausen, "The Waning of the Bronze Age," pp. 514–16ff.; Li Ling, trans. by L. Falkenhausen, "On the Typology of Chu Bronzes," *Beiträge zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Archäologie*, 11 (1991), pp. 57–113; Xu Shaohua, "Chu Culture," in *Defining Chu*, pp. 21–23ff.; Yang Quanxi, *Chu wenhua* (Beijing, 2000), 12–32. The *Zuo* cites a Lu statesman who

The case of Qin is quite similar to that of Chu. While many Zhanguo and early 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 the Qin elite strongly adhered to Zhou ritual regulations, minor violations notwithstanding, and that Qin was an inseparable part of the Zhou ritual realm.⁹⁵ 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 (r. 697–678) to Lord Jing (r. 576–537) consistently emphasize that the lords’ ancestors received Heaven’s mandate (*tian ming*), and that they would bring peace and stability to their state, “bring about the submission of all the many Man [tribes],”⁹⁶ “cautiously care for the Man and the Xia,”⁹⁷ and “broadly spread out over the Man and the Xia.”⁹⁸ The Qin rulers’ hubris and their firm belief that they received Heaven’s mandate aside,⁹⁹ these claims indicate that Qin considered itself a

dissuaded his ruler from allying with Chu: “They are not of our clan (*zulei*), and their heart must be different” (Cheng 4, p. 818). This saying is sometimes erroneously translated as referring to Chu’s distinct racial origin (see, for instance, Dikötter, *Discourse*, p. 3), which is wrong: in the *Zuo*, *zulei* refers exclusively to the lineal descent group (cf. *Zuo* [Xi 31], p. 487). Chu’s departure from the common Zhou norms may be explained both by its expansion into the non-Zhou south, where it might have been influenced by local ethnic groups, and also by the conscious decision of its assertive sixth century BCE rulers to establish themselves as an alternative locus of political legitimacy versus the house of Zhou.

⁹⁵ For a traditional view of Qin as a “barbarian other,” see e.g. D. Bodde, *China’s First Unifier: A Study of the Ch’in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssu 李斯 280–208 B.C.* (Hong Kong, 1967), p. 2ff. For a radically different interpretation of the recent archeological and epigraphic data, see M. Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch’in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation* (New Haven, 2000), p. 63ff.; for a similar reconstruction of Qin history based on the received texts, see Yoshimoto Michimasa, “Shinshi kenkyū jōsetsu,” *Shirin* 78/3 (1995), pp. 34–67. Qin material culture is thoroughly compared to that of the Zhou realm by L. von Falkenhausen in his “The Waning of the Bronze Age,” pp. 486–97; see also *idem*, “Diversity and Integration Along the Western Peripheries of Late Bronze Age China: Archaeological Perspectives on the State of Qin (771–209 BC),” (unpublished paper). Falkenhausen concludes that Qin culture definitely belonged to the Zhou civilization, despite certain local idiosyncrasies.

⁹⁶ The eight Qin bells, cited from Mattos, “Eastern Zhou,” p. 113; cf. Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, p. 85.

⁹⁷ Qin Gong-bo inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, p. 73; cf. Qin chime-stones inscription, Fragment 2, *ibid.*, p. 90.

⁹⁸ Qin-gui inscription, cited from Kern, *Stele Inscriptions*, p. 79.

⁹⁹ See a discussion of Qin’s concept of Heaven’s mandate by Zang Zhifei, “Qin ren de ‘shou ming’ yishi yu Qin guo de fazhan—Qin Gong-zhong mingwen tanwei,” in *Qin wenhua luncong*, ed. Qin Shi huang bingmayong bowuguan ‘luncong’ pianweihui, Vol. 8 (Xian, 2001), pp. 243–60.

part of the Zhou realm and the 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."¹⁰⁰ Qin otherness appears to be largely a Zhanguo construction.¹⁰¹

The ease with which "peripheral" states changed their identity indicates the fluidity of cultural boundaries in the Zhou world; this fluidity might have increased as the disintegration of the Zhou ritual system speeded up in the early Zhanguo period. With the importance of ritual diminishing, the "Sino-barbarian" dichotomy became less pronounced and it was no longer an easy task to decide who belonged to "us" and who became the Other. Thus, the pejorative treatment of Qin and Chu did not prevent many leading thinkers, including Xunzi and Han Feizi, from traveling to these states with the hope of achieving an appointment; serving the so-called "barbarian" states was, therefore, entirely legitimate. In the rapidly changing Zhanguo world the cultural dichotomy paradigm apparently lost much of its appeal; even the use of self-appellations such as "Xia" or "Huaxia" is extremely rare in Zhanguo texts.¹⁰²

This situation began changing with the establishment of the unified empire in 221 and the subsequent emergence of the nomadic Xiongnu tribe as the major Other of the Chinese world. While Chinese encounters with the nomads might have already begun in the fourth century BCE, it was only after the imperial unification and the aggressive incursions of the Qin forces deep into nomadic territory that the centuries-long conflict began.¹⁰³ Qin territorial expansion and the concomitant establishment of the Xiongnu empire changed the nature of Sino-

¹⁰⁰ The *Zuo* 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], p. 589).

¹⁰¹ The possible reasons for these changes in Qin's image and self-perception are discussed by Y. Pines and G. Shelach in "Power, Identity and Ideology: Reflections on the Formation of the State of Qin (770–221 BC)," in *An Archaeology of Asia*, ed. M. Stark (Malden, forthcoming).

¹⁰² The term "Xia", the most common self-appellation of the "Chinese" is never mentioned in the *Shang jun shu* and *Han Feizi*; it appears only once in the *Lunyu* and the *Mozi*, twice in the *Mengzi*, *Gongyang zhuan*, *Guanzi* and the *Lishi chunqiu* (where it is used as a geographic designation of the Central States), and five times in the *Xunzi*. The highest frequency of the appearance of the term "Xia" is in the *Zuo zhuan* (ten times), reflecting perhaps the relatively strong emphasis on "Chinese" identity in light of the alien incursions of the seventh-sixth centuries BCE.

¹⁰³ For the early stage of Sino-nomadic contacts, see Di Cosmo, "The Northern Frontier," pp. 960–66; see also his general discussion about the novelty of the nomadic factor in Chinese politics since the third century BCE in his *Ancient China and its Enemies*, p. 127ff.

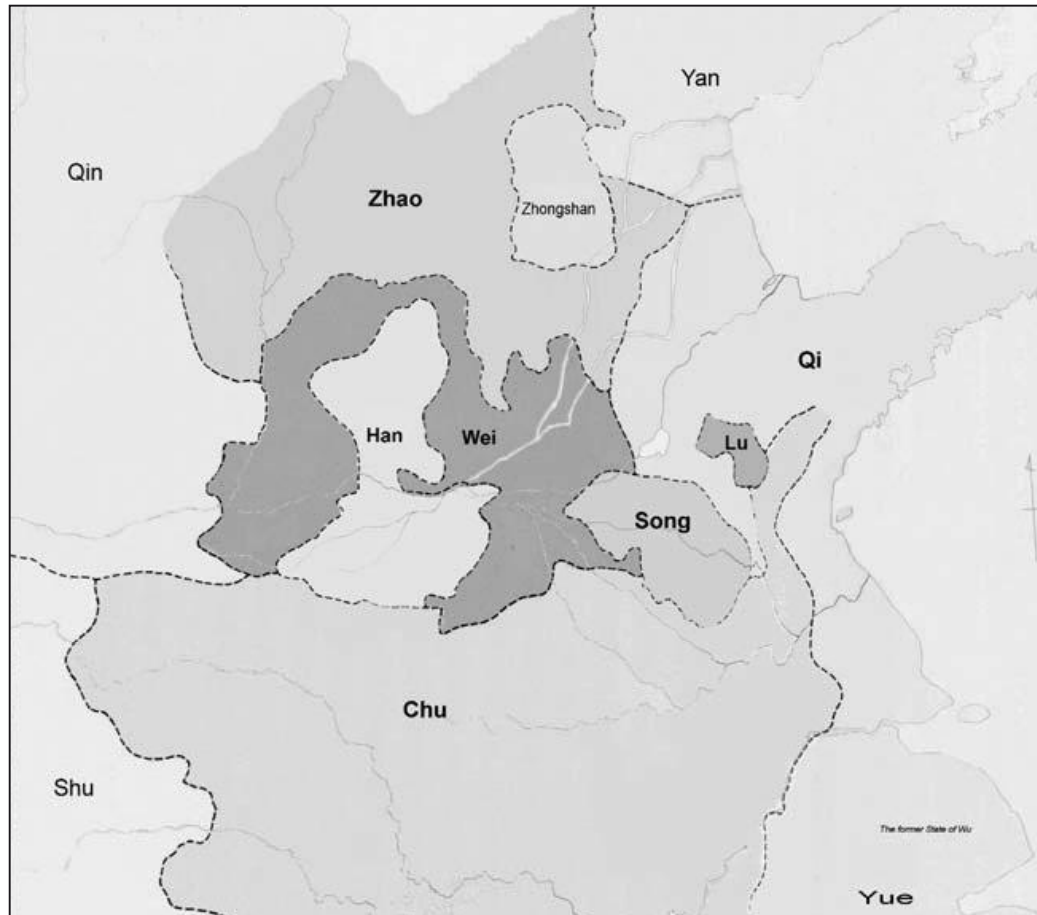
alien intercourse. The nomadic way of life placed formidable obstacles in front of possible Sinification, while nomadic grasslands were of little value for the Chinese. The establishment of the Qin Great Wall, later expanded and restored by the Han dynasty, marked the separation of the two worlds. It also marked, even if unintentionally, the end of Chinese pretensions to build a truly universal empire.¹⁰⁴ For centuries to come the Great Wall symbolized above all the limit to the civilized All under Heaven. While universalistic pretensions of the Chinese emperors did not easily fade away, they had to come to terms with a complex reality.¹⁰⁵ No longer were aliens easily transformed into Chinese; nor, for many Chinese statesmen, should they have been transformed. To the north of China, the threatening “anti-Chinese” *Gegenwelt* emerged.¹⁰⁶ Exclusiveness, albeit not the mainstream of Chinese political thought, was ever henceforth present in political discussions. The revival of the elaborate ritual system in the early empire further strengthened the sense of cultural distinction, reestablishing the imaginary, not only the physical boundary, with the steppe dwellers.

The pre-imperial legacy, however, cannot easily be neglected. Its universalistic approach continued to influence generations of Chinese thinkers. More importantly, the firm Chunqiu-Zhanguo belief in cultural/inclusive rather than ethnic/exclusive identity, and in the transformability of one’s cultural affiliation played a crucial role in facilitating the constant influx of the new ethnic groups into an ever expanding Chinese “nation,” contributing in no small measure to the establishment of the multi-ethnic Chinese identity current well into the present.

¹⁰⁴ Defensive walls existed, of course, long before the unification (see Di Cosmo, “The Northern Frontier,” pp. 961–62), while other walls separated various Chinese states. After the unification “internal” walls have been demolished (see *Shiji* 6, p. 251), while the external rebuilt and expanded following the Qin conquest of the Ordos region in 215–14 (*Shiji* 88, p. 2565). For an interesting interpretation of wall building being a result of Chinese expansion into the former nomadic zone, see Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies*, pp. 127–58. For the importance of the border-line fixation for creating conceptual demarcations between different groups and its consequent impact on individual allegiances later in Chinese history, see N. Standen, *Borders and Loyalties: Frontier Crossings from North China to Liao, c. 900–1005* (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁵ See the discussion in Loewe, “The Heritage,” pp. 998–1002.

¹⁰⁶ I borrow the notion of the threatening “anti-Chinese” *Gegenwelt* to the north (as distinguished from the “not yet Chinese” *Innenwelt* to the south and the distant *Aussenwelt* beyond the reach of Chinese civilization) from W. Bauer, “Einleitung,” in *China und die Fremden: 3000 Jahre Auseinandersetzung in Krieg und Frieden*, ed. W. Bauer (München, 1980), pp. 11–12.



Map 3. China in the Warring States Period (453–221 BCE).

Glossary of Chinese Characters

Ba	巴
“Ba yi”	八佾
Baiyue	百越
Ban Chao	班超
Ban Gu	班固
<i>bi yi</i>	鄙邑
Bicheng	畢郢
Bimu	鮭沐
Bo Pi	伯駘
Boren	樊人
“Bu gou”	不苟
<i>bu rang</i>	不讓
“Central States” (Zhongguo)	中國
Changkaizhu	敞凱諸
Chen An	陳黯
Cheng	成
Chu	楚
<i>Chun qiu</i>	春秋
Chunqiu	春秋
Confucius (Kongzi)	孔子
<i>da yitong</i>	大一統
Dajie	大解
Daner	儋耳
Daren	大人
Di (western ethnic group)	氐
Di (northern ethnic group)	狄
Fan Li	范蠡
Fan Xuanzi	范宣子
Feibin	非濱
Fu Chen	富辰
Fufeng	夫風
Fulou	縛婁
Fuxia	負夏
Gan	干
<i>Gongyang zhuan</i>	公羊傳
Gouzhi	駒支
Guan Zhong	管仲
<i>Guanzi</i>	管子
<i>Guliang zhuan</i>	穀梁傳
<i>Guoyu</i>	國語

Han (river, region and dynasty)	漢
Han Feizi	韓非子
<i>Hanzu</i>	漢族
Hu	胡
Hu Yan	狐偃
Hua	華
Huaxia	華夏
<i>Hua-yi</i>	華夷
Huandou	驩兜
Hui	穢
Hutang	呼唐
Ji	姬
<i>jian'ai</i>	兼愛
" <i>Jie zang xia</i> "	節葬下
Jin	晉
Jin Midi	金日磾
Jin Yu	晉語
King Xiang of Zhou	周襄王
King Wen of Zhou	周文王
King Wuling of Zhao	趙武靈王
<i>li</i> (ritual)	禮
Li River	離
"Li Lou xia"	離婁下
Li Si	李斯
"Lian Hui Wang shang"	梁惠王上
<i>Liji</i>	禮記
Lingyu	陵魚
Lord Huan of Qi	齊桓公
Lord Jing of Qin	秦景公
Lord Wen of Jin	晉文公
Lord Wu of Qin	秦武公
Lu	魯
"Lu wen"	魯問
<i>Lunyu</i>	論語
Luye	鹿野
<i>Liushi chunqiu</i>	呂氏春秋
Man	蠻
<i>manyi</i>	蠻夷
Mencius (Mengzi)	孟子
Mingtiao	鳴條
Mo	貉

Mozi	墨子
Ouyue	甌越
Pianzuo	篇笮
Pingshan	平山
Qi (petty northern polity)	其
Qi (a major state)	齊
Qiang	羌
Qin (state and dynasty)	秦
<i>Qin ren</i>	秦人
Qing dynasty	清
“Qing ying”	青蠅
Qiongqi	窮奇
“Qiu ren”	求人
“Qiu shui”	秋水
Qizhou	岐周
“Qu li”	曲禮
Qu Wuchen	屈巫臣
“Quan xue”	勸學
“Rang wang”	讓王
<i>ren</i>	仁
Rong	戎
“Rong ru”	榮辱
<i>Ru</i>	儒
Shang	商
<i>Shang jun shu</i>	商君書
Shi Hui	士會
<i>Shi jing</i>	詩經
“Shi jun”	侍君
Shun	舜
Shuni	叔逆
<i>si yi</i>	四夷
Sima Qian	司馬遷
Song	宋
Songlong	送龍
Suozhi	所鷲
Tai Wang	太王
Taibo	太伯
Tan	郟
“Tan Gong”	檀弓
Tang	湯
<i>Tang ren</i>	唐人

Taotie	饕餮
“Teng Wen Gong shang”	滕文公上
“Teng Wen Gong xia”	滕文公下
<i>tian ming</i>	天命
“Tian Zifang”	田子方
<i>tianxia</i>	天下
Turen	突人
“Wai chu shuo zuo shang”	外儲說左上
Wang Fuzhi	王夫之
<i>wang zhe</i>	王者
“Wang zhi”	王制
Wei (larger state)	魏
Wei (smaller state)	衛
“Wei ce”	魏策
Wei Jiang	魏降
“Wei Ling Gong”	衛靈公
“Wei yu”	為欲
Wen Zhong	文種
Western Zhou (Xi Zhou)	西周
Wu	吳
“Wu du”	五蠹
Wu Zixu	伍子胥
Xia	夏
“Xian shi”	先識
“Xian wen”	憲問
Xiongnu	匈奴
Xu	徐
Xu Xing	許行
Xukui	須窺
Xunzi	荀子
Yan (southern state)	炎 or 啖
Yan (northern state)	燕
“Yan ce”	燕策
Yang	揚
Yang Zhu	楊朱
Yangdao	揚島
Yangwen	陽文
Yangyu	陽禺
Yangzhou	鷹隼
Yanmen	鴈門

Yaoshan	搖山
Yeren	野人
Yi	夷
Yi Di	夷狄
“Yi shang”	義賞
<i>yi xing</i>	異姓
Yiqu	儀渠
“Yong zhong”	用眾
Yu	禹
“Yu gong”	禹貢
Yue	越
“Yue yu xia”	越語下
Yumi	餘靡
Zhanguo	戰國
<i>Zhanguo ce</i>	戰國策
Zhao	趙
“Zhao ce”	趙策
Zheng	鄭
“Zheng lun”	正論
Zheng Sixiao	鄭思肖
Zheng Xuan	鄭玄
<i>zhong</i>	忠
“Zhong yong”	中庸
Zhongguo	中國
<i>Zhongguo ren</i>	中國人
Zhongshan	中山
“Zhongshan ce”	中山策
Zhongshan Wang Cuo <i>da ding</i>	中山王譽大鼎
Zhongyong	仲雍
Zhou	周
“Zhou yu”	周語
Zhouren	舟人
Zhuangzi	莊子
Zhufeng	諸馮
<i>Zi</i>	子
Zi Gong	子貢
“Zi han”	子罕
“Zi Lu”	子路
Zi You	子游
<i>Zuo zhuan</i>	左傳

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