

General Introduction

Qin History Revisited

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In the long history of what is now known as “Chinese” civilization, the state of Qin occupies a special place. Having conquered or otherwise subjugated most of the East Asian subcontinent by 221 BCE,¹ Qin put an end to centuries of turmoil, internecine warfare, and endless bloodshed between the so-called Warring States. Proudly proclaiming that warfare would never arise again, the king of Qin declared himself the First Emperor (Qin Shi Huangdi 秦始皇帝, r. 246–221–210), inaugurating thereby what he hoped to be a lengthy age of orderly rule, universal compliance, and prosperity for all. Although these goals were not fulfilled, and despite ongoing resistance to Qin’s rule among some of the new subjects, the Emperor and his aides succeeded in a few years to lay the institutional and ideological foundations of all later “Chinese” empires, thus establishing the basis for the most durable succession of imperial polities worldwide. The Qin dynasty itself, however, was exceptionally short-lived: it started to crumble immediately after the death of the First Emperor, and in 207 it was toppled by a popular uprising of unprecedented scope and ferocity. Qin’s remarkable success and its astounding collapse fascinated generations of statesmen, thinkers, and scholars and became the focus of controversies that continue to this day.

For two millennia, debates about Qin’s history, its ideology, its cultural affiliation, and the appropriateness of its policies revolved overwhelmingly around conflicting interpretations of a single major source of Qin history—the *Historical Records* (*Shiji* 史記) by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145–90). In recent decades, however, this situation has changed dramatically. A series of remarkable archaeological discoveries of Qin material remains, of which the First Emperor’s Terracotta Army is only the most famous, has radically expanded our knowledge of Qin’s culture and of

its historical trajectory. Of particular significance are discoveries of Qin paleographic materials. These materials are inscribed on almost every possible material—bronze and iron, stone and jade, bamboo, wood, and clay—and cover an extraordinarily broad range of topics: local and empire-wide administration, edicts, statutes, ordinances, other legal materials, popular and elite religion, political declarations, international relations, historiography, private letters, and much else. The sheer quantity of documents excavated and retrieved so far, which exceeds by far all Qin-related materials surviving in the received texts, explains their revolutionary role in reconstructing Qin history.² These new data, which come to us directly without the mediation of post-Qin ideological biases, and which bring to light aspects that the received texts do not address, allow us not only to expand our knowledge of Qin but, more important, to challenge some of the most strongly held beliefs about Qin history and culture.

The archaeological and paleographic revolution in Qin studies is duly reflected in the huge number of publications on Qin history in China and Japan, where several monographs and well over 100 articles are published annually.³ In contrast, in the Western scholarly community the incorporation of new materials has been considerably slower. For decades, Derk Bodde's seminal *China's First Unifier: A Study of the Ch'in Dynasty as Seen in the Life of Li Ssu* (1938) remained the only scholarly monograph on Qin history in English, serving, together with Bodde's chapter on the Qin in the first volume of the *Cambridge History of China* (Bodde 1986) as the major source of information about Qin for the anglophone public. Even in recent years, and in spite of the worldwide renown of the Terracotta Army, the volume of Qin-related publication activity in the West remains minuscule. The three most notable exceptions are a translation of recently unearthed Qin legal materials (Hulsewé 1985) and two monographs on the earliest known Qin stone inscriptions—those carved on the famous fifth-century "Stone Drums of Qin" (Mattos 1988) and on the steles commemorating the First Emperor's inspection tours (Kern 2000). To these excellent works one should add several books devoted to the Terracotta Army, especially two recent exhibition catalogs in which experts on the Qin collaborated to present the latest findings related to the First Emperor's mausoleum (Portal 2007; Thote and Falkenhausen 2008; see also Khayutina 2013). In addition, a newly published introductory-level work presents a refreshingly novel and updated perspective on Qin (Lewis 2007). These publications are supplemented by a handful of articles and book chapters, many of which written by co-editors

of this volume (e.g., McLeod and Yates 1981; Yates 1985/7, 1987, 1995; Falkenhausen 2004, 2006; Pines 2004, 2005/6; Shelach and Pines 2005). Yet the more we and others have been publishing on Qin-related issues, the clearer it has become that the Western audience needs to be informed of the latest developments in scholarship on the Qin by a volume that makes full use of the newly available materials and utilizes the most up-to-date approaches and methods from all fields, bridging the divides between history, archaeology, paleography, and anthropology.

It is, in particular, the desire to synthesize the scholarly achievements of Chinese and Western researchers that has inspired our endeavor. In December 2008, fifteen scholars from Canada, China (Mainland and Taiwan), Germany, Israel, and the United States gathered for a ten-day workshop at the Institute for Advanced Study of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The group included archaeologists and historians, specialists in paleography and religion, historiography and literature, and scholars working on administrative, intellectual, military, and legal history; they all presented cutting-edge analyses from their respective fields in an attempt to chart new areas of interdisciplinary consensus, to map ongoing controversies, and to explore still-challenging enigmas. Needless to say, we made progress, but Qin studies is now such a large field that we were obliged to focus our attention only on certain areas, while many issues and topics were left untouched, most notably questions relating to the Qin economy and the mausoleum of the First Emperor. The present volume contains some of the papers presented at the workshop and thus conveys, albeit by necessity incompletely, the joint insights of the participants.

The volume is divided into three parts of three chapters each. In the archaeological part I, we use material evidence to address the development of Qin from its earliest traceable origins to the collapse of the Empire. Part II, on the state and society of Qin, elucidates aspects of Qin religious, social, and administrative history, putting them in a broader perspective by comparing them with developments during the subsequent Han dynasty (漢, 206 BCE–220 CE). The chapters in part II primarily use paleographic evidence. Finally, the chapters in part III are based mainly on the transmitted textual data and focus on the image of the Qin Empire in later times and on its historical impact; this section ends with a chapter written by a historian of the Roman Empire, in an attempt to provide a comparative perspective on the Qin imperial enterprise. Each section is preceded by a short introduction that presents a broader picture of agreements and controversies around each of the topics involved.

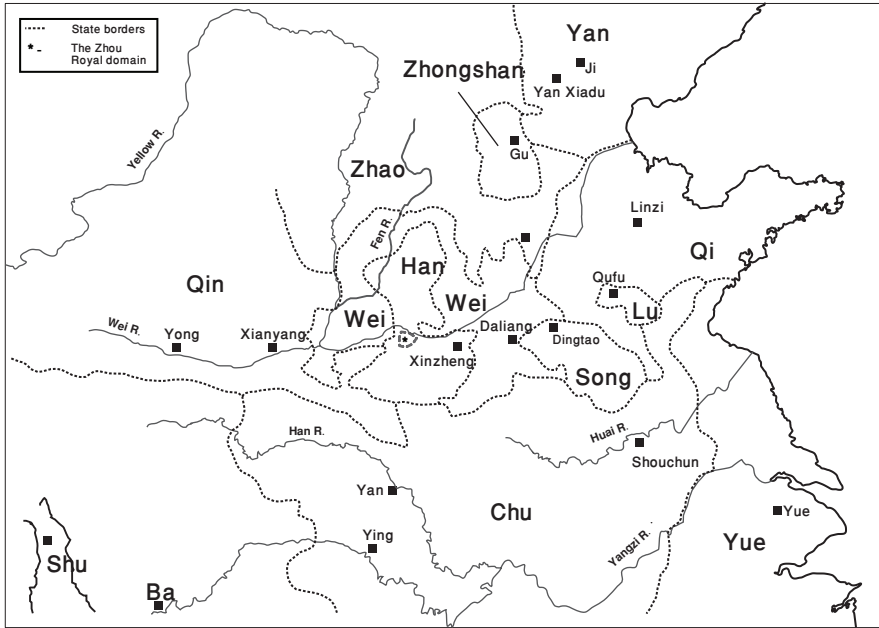
In what follows we present a brief summary of the available sources and then provide an outline of Qin history as we understand it. These introductory sections are aimed primarily at students and a general audience who are not familiar with Qin history; those colleagues acquainted with the topic may wish to skip directly to the thematic sections.

SOURCES FOR QIN HISTORY

The Received Texts

The earliest references to Qin in transmitted textual sources appear in two canonical collections: the *Book of Poems* (*Shi jing* 詩經) and the *Venerated Documents* (*Shang shu* 尚書). The first contains a selection of Qin poems, the majority of which are indistinguishable in their style and content from those of other early Zhou 周 polities. Only one ode—the “Huangniao” 黃鳥 (“The Oriole,” Mao 131)—is of great historical interest, as it supposedly laments the burial of three Qin ministers selected to escort Lord Mu 秦穆公 (r. 659–621) to his grave. Lord Mu, whose exceptional position in early Qin history will be discussed below, is also attributed with the authorship of the last of the *Venerated Documents*: the “Qin Pledge” (“Qin shi” 秦誓). The preservation of Qin-related materials in both collections (especially the latter) may be a result of editorial efforts of the imperial Qin court erudites (*boshi* 博士), who are likely to have contributed to the final shaping of the *Poems* and the *Documents* corpus (Kern 2000: 183–196); however, even if this assertion is correct, it is noteworthy that neither collection appears to single out Qin as particularly important.

While Qin is duly covered in the earliest canonical compilations, it appears quite marginal in the majority of other early preimperial texts. Thus, in the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Commentary*)—our most detailed source for the history of the Springs-and-Autumns (Chunqiu 春秋) period (770–453)—Qin is discussed less frequently than any other important polity of the age. Evidently, the *Zuo zhuan* author(s) did not use Qin materials, and the affairs of that state are mentioned, if at all, only in the context of its interactions with its neighbors, most notably the state of Jin 晉, or when Qin occasionally participated in a variety of interstate activities. By and large, neither the *Zuo zhuan* nor the *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the States*, another important compilation of historical anecdotes from roughly the same period) treat Qin as a significant polity. The same indifference toward Qin affairs characterizes most other early texts, such as the *Lunyu* 論語, *Mozi* 墨子, the slightly later *Mengzi* 孟子,



Map 0.1. The Warring States World around 350

and other such works. In this regard, Qin differs markedly from such states as Jin and its successors, Wei 魏, Han 韓, and Zhao 趙 in the north; Qi 齊 and Lu 魯 in the east; or Chu 楚 in the south (see Map 0.1), the affairs of which are discussed in much detail.

The apparent lack of interest in Qin affairs shown by most early pre-imperial texts may reflect a geographic bias. Most of the texts mentioned above were composed in the eastern part of the Zhou (Chinese) world, especially in the states of Qi and Lu, for which Qin, located on the western edge of the Zhou realm, remained a remote and largely unknown polity. As we shall see below, with the brief exception of Lord Mu's reign, Qin remained indeed a relatively marginal player in the affairs of the states in the Central Plains; the *Zuo zhuan* even predicts that after Lord Mu "Qin would never again march eastward," while Mozi (c. 460–390) omits Qin from the list of powerful regional states. It is noteworthy, however, that, in contrast to the common view of Qin as a cultural "other" during later periods, earlier sources from the Springs-and-Autumns and early Warring States periods do not contain any hint of Qin's cultural otherness.⁴

During the second half of the Warring States (Zhanguo 戰國) period

(453–221), the situation changes markedly. As Qin became the central player in contemporaneous interstate rivalries, its affairs are discussed, even if briefly, in most texts of that age. From that period we have also the first texts that were produced, at least partly, in the state of Qin itself. Of these, *The Book of Lord Shang* (*Shangjun shu* 商君書), attributed to the great Qin reformer, Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338) and his followers, is the most notable. Not only does it introduce the ideas of that major Qin statesman, but even some of those chapters that were definitely written long after Shang Yang's death clearly are of Qin provenance and are informative of socioeconomic and political conditions in the state.⁵ More disappointing for social and institutional historians is another major Qin compilation: *Lüshi chunqiu* (*The Spring and Autumn Annals of Sire Lü* 呂氏春秋), produced on the eve of the imperial unification under the aegis of the Qin prime minister, Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (d. 235). This encyclopedic text was prepared primarily by guest scholars from other parts of the Warring States world (Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 1–55); hence it contains few references to Qin's past or to its contemporary conditions.⁶ Additional information about Qin appears in texts ascribed to authors who had paid visits to the court of Qin, e.g., Xunzi 荀子 (c. 310–230) and Han Feizi 韓非子 (d. 233). Finally, the major compendium of historical anecdotes from the Warring States period, the *Zhanguo ce* (戰國策, *Stratagems of the Warring States*) contains no less than five chapters of anecdotes about and putative speeches by eminent statesmen who served the Qin.

One of the remarkable features of many of the late Warring States period texts is their predominantly negative view of Qin. Texts of that age often treat Qin as the ultimate cultural and political other, the "mortal adversary of the All-under-Heaven," the "barbarian" state, which "has common customs with the Rong 戎 and Di 狄 [alien tribesmen]; a state with the heart of a tiger or wolf; greedy, profit-seeking and untrustworthy, which knows nothing of ritual, propriety and virtuous behavior."⁷ This negative view, which perhaps reflected both natural enmity to a state engaged in aggressive territorial expansion and more objective cultural judgment (see below), remained highly influential well into the early imperial era and beyond.

Despite increasing interest in Qin's conquests, most preimperial texts contain only scanty information about political, social, religious, and cultural life in Qin. It is with this background that Sima Qian's *Historical Records* become particularly important. Sima Qian dedicated two chapters of his "Basic Annals" to Qin, one to the preimperial state of Qin, and the other to the Qin dynasty. In addition, information about Qin is

spread throughout other sections of this book, including the treatises and biographies of important political and military figures. Sima Qian not only incorporated many Qin-related materials from earlier texts, such as the *Zuo zhuan* and the *Zhanguo ce*, but, more significantly, used original Qin sources now unavailable elsewhere. His chapter on preimperial Qin, in particular, relies heavily on the *Qin Records* (*Qin ji* 秦紀), a historical text prepared by the Qin court scribes, which may have been saved by Xiao He 蕭何 (257–193), the future chancellor of the Han dynasty, from the Qin imperial archives before they were burned down in 206.⁸ The *Qin Records* provided Sima Qian with relatively detailed information for the last century and a half of Qin history. For earlier stages of Qin history the value of the *Qin Records* is less apparent, as they may have undergone abridgment or other manipulations, possibly even at the Qin court itself, before being utilized by Sima Qian (Pines 2005/6); but they still contain precious information.

Scholars continuously debate to what extent the account of Qin in the *Historical Records* was shaped by the author's own agenda. We address this topic in part III of this volume (see especially chapter 7, by Hans van Ess); here it will suffice to note that in our opinion the simplistic reduction of Sima Qian's attitude toward preimperial and imperial Qin to uniformly "dolorous, grim and dismal" (Watson 1993: xix–xx) appears untenable. This view neither does justice to the complexity of Sima Qian's approach, nor does it take into account that the *Historical Records* incorporate diverse and multiple sources, resulting in a remarkably multifaceted view of Qin history. Thus, while our study is often critical of the biases and inaccuracies of the *Historical Records*, we cannot deny the perennial indebtedness of historians of Qin to Sima Qian, given that so many of the sources he utilized are no longer available.

The Archaeological Discoveries

Archaeological discoveries of Qin-related sites and artifacts started in the early decades of the twentieth century, but the rate of discovery has accelerated dramatically since the 1970s.⁹ Decades of archaeological excavations and occasional finds resulted in a tremendous expansion of the sources for Qin history. Propelled by the accidental discovery in 1974 of terracotta soldiers and horses in Pit 1 to the east of the First Emperor's mausoleum in Lintong 臨潼 County (Shaanxi) (Zhao Huacheng and Gao Chongwen 2002; Ciarla 2005; Duan Qingbo 2011), Qin archaeology has become one of the most prestigious and vibrant subfields of archaeological research in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Dozens of Qin sites,

such as capitals, towns, palaces, cemeteries and tombs, and remains of walls, roads (for the latter, see Sanft 2011), and canals, have been scientifically surveyed and excavated, yielding a huge sample of archaeological data; among these, mortuary data, especially from elite and subelite tombs, are the most prominent (see, for example, Teng Mingyu 2003). Qin-related excavations span the entire history of the state of Qin, from its earliest stages (Zhao, chapter 1, this volume; Chen Ping 2004) to the end of the Qin dynasty; and they cover a huge territory, from the core Qin settlement area in southeastern Gansu and western Shaanxi to the territories gradually incorporated into the state and empire, such as Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan, and even Guangdong and Liaoning.

Among the major projects of Qin archaeology, the excavation of the huge mortuary complex of the First Emperor is the most famous worldwide. This work is no longer confined to the immediate vicinity of the Emperor's tomb and to the pits of the terracotta soldiers and horses but encompasses an area of some 54 km² (Zhao Huacheng and Gao Chongwen 2002: 16–17). Other large-scale projects include surveys and excavations at the early Qin sites in Gansu (Zhao, chapter 1, this volume); at the site of Yong 雍, the capital of the Qin state between 677 and 383, and the nearby Nanzhihui 南指揮 necropolis, both in Fengxiang 鳳翔 County (Shaanxi); at another capital, Yueyang 櫟陽; and at Xianyang 咸陽, which served as the last capital between 350 and 206.¹⁰

The archaeological data pertaining to Qin are not confined to the core areas of Qin or to the huge royal and imperial sites. Remains associated with Qin commoners, both from the areas that are considered to be the homeland of Qin and from those incorporated later into the Qin realm, provide glimpses into the ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity of Qin society. Once these archaeological data are systematically analyzed, they provide us with refreshingly novel views of Qin's sociopolitical and cultural trajectory, allowing us to supplement Sima Qian's narrative, address issues not mentioned in the received texts, and at times suggest major modifications to the picture presented in the *Historical Records* and elsewhere (Teng, chapter 2, this volume).

Paleographic Sources

Aside from the wealth of material data, a variety of paleographic sources are of particular importance for studying Qin history. Some of these sources are not novel at all: the inscriptions on the Qin stone drums, for instance, have been known since the early Tang 唐 dynasty (618–907 CE), and several Qin inscriptions on bronze vessels and bells, on chime

stones, and on stones were discovered during the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279 CE) and are now preserved only in later woodcut illustrations based on ink-squeeze rubbings made at that time.¹¹ Yet it was only in the twentieth century that a series of astounding discoveries of Qin documents began to elucidate the pivotal importance of these sources for revising the historiography of Qin. For instance, newly discovered Qin bronze and chime-stone inscriptions have not only proved the reliability of the Song illustrations but also provided important clues about the self-image of Qin leaders and their ongoing cultural proximity to the Zhou sphere, *pace* the textual evidence (Kern 2000; Pines 2005/6; introduction to part I of this volume). Even more significant was the discovery of a cache of Qin administrative and legal documents and divinatory manuals, or “daybooks” (*rishu* 日書), from Tomb 11 at Shuihudi, Yunmeng 雲夢睡虎地 (Hubei). These documents, so far the only hoard of new Qin paleographic sources to have been studied to any extent in the West, provide invaluable, even if inevitably incomplete, information about the functioning of Qin administrative and legal apparatus, and aspects of Qin religious, economic, and social life.¹² In addition, letters from Qin conscripts discovered in Tomb 4 at the same site provide us with a rare glimpse into the concerns of simple soldiers who participated in the Qin conquests (Huang Shengzhang 1980; cf. Shaughnessy 1986: 181).

Since the discovery of Tomb 11 at Shuihudi, many more texts originating from preimperial and imperial Qin have resurfaced in different parts of China. Additional administrative texts were discovered in 1980 in Tomb 50 at Haojiaping, Qingchuan 青川郝家坪 (Sichuan), and in 1989 in Tomb 6 at Longgang, Yunmeng 雲夢龍崗 (Hubei); Tomb 1 at Fangmatan, Tianshui 天水放馬灘 (Gansu) (1986), yielded daybooks, maps, and a tale of the resurrection of a dead man, the first of its kind in China; a few more daybooks were discovered in Tomb 36 at Yueshan, Jiangling 江陵岳山 (Hubei) (1986), and additional divination texts were discovered in Tomb 15 at Wangjiatai, Jingzhou 荊州王家台 (Hubei), and Tomb 30 at Zhoujiatai, Jingzhou 荊州周家台 (Hubei) (both 1993). Many other Qin-related paleographic materials were discovered at other sites or found their way into private collections. Most notable among these are jade tablets (*yuban* 玉版) with the prayer of a king of Qin to the spirit of Mt. Hua 華山, the *Clay Document* (*washu* 瓦書) that narrates the grant of a “lineage settlement” to a Qin person in 334, inscriptions on weights and measures from the time of the Qin Empire, and a great number of clay seals inscribed with the titles of various office holders and with short “slogans” through which Qin officials expressed their ideals and expecta-

tions.¹³ Although less comprehensive and exciting than the finds from Shuihudi Tomb 11, these discoveries, when systematically studied, can be extraordinarily informative on aspects of Qin history. In addition, many texts from Han tombs, most notably from Tomb 247 at Zhangjiashan, Jiangling 江陵張家山 (Hubei), contain materials relevant to Qin administrative and legal practices, and Qin history and intellectual life (see, e.g., Yates, chapter 6 in this volume).

The most recent decade has witnessed a new explosion in Qin-related discoveries. Of these, the single most important, which will probably dwarf even the Shuihudi texts, is the discovery in 2002 and in 2005 of portions of a local Qin archive in a well and in a defense moat at the town of Liye, Longshan 龍山里耶 (Hunan), which was apparently the site of an ancient Chu town conquered by Qin and renamed Qianling 遷陵 (Liye 2007; Wang Huanlin 2007; Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2009; Hsing, chapter 4, this volume). Of the reported 37,000 boards and slips, of which 18,000 are blank, only a tiny fraction had been published when we prepared this volume; yet even this small sample provides precious data about administrative, religious, and social life in the Qin Empire. In 2012, long after the draft of our volume had been completed, Chinese archaeologists and paleographers published the first of five planned volumes of Liye documents (Liye 2012; Chen Wei 2012), and we have done our best to update our study so that the reader may appreciate at least some of the extraordinary wealth of these new materials.

In addition to the Liye discoveries, two caches of Qin slips of unknown provenance were smuggled to Hong Kong and repatriated by the Yuelu Academy 岳麓書院 of Hunan University and by Peking University. The Yuelu Academy slips comprise legal and administrative texts, the earliest text on dream interpretation, the earliest work on mathematics, day-books, and other materials (Chen Songchang 2009; *Yuelu shuyuan* 2011, 2012). The Peking University batch of approximately 800 smuggled Qin bamboo and wooden slips and boards has not yet been fully published; according to the preliminary publication they contain a manual for an official's training, a brief text concerning appropriate female behavior, poems, another tale of resurrection, mathematical and medical texts, and texts related to geography, to the production of garments, and more (Beijing Daxue 2012). Altogether the richness of these findings is such that no reliable study of Qin will henceforth be possible without systematically consulting them, despite their dubious provenance.

Given the exponential increase of new material and textual discover-

ies and given that only a fraction of the texts discovered so far have been published, it is still impossible to assess fully the impact that paleographic sources will have on our understanding of Qin history. Nonetheless, the currently available data are sufficient for a reassessment of Qin history, particularly during the six centuries that preceded imperial unification. Thus, in what follows we make a preliminary attempt to outline the history of Qin, synthesizing the textual, material, and paleographic data as much as possible. It would be foolhardy to claim that we are able at the current stage of our knowledge to produce a definitive interpretation of Qin history; our main goal here is to introduce our new understanding.

AN OUTLINE OF QIN HISTORY

Preimperial Qin history as narrated in Sima Qian's "Basic Annals of Qin" can be conveniently divided into three periods: the legendary origins of the Ying 嬴 clan, to which the ruling house of Qin belonged; Qin's history as a regional state (ca. 800–380); and Qin's rise to the position of a major power and the would-be unifier of the East Asian subcontinent in the aftermath of reforms under lords Xian 秦獻公 (r. 384–362) and Xiao 秦孝公 (r. 361–338). Below, we shall follow this division.

Early Origins

The Qin dynastic legend as presented in the *Historical Records* is somewhat confusing. On the one hand, we are told of the glory of the Qin ancestors: descendants of the legendary thearch (*di* 帝) Zhuanxu 顓頊, they gained merit in serving almost every important leader in China's mythical and semimythical past, such as the thearchs Shun 舜 and Yu 禹, and the kings of the Shang 商 (c. 1600–1046) and Western Zhou 西周 (c. 1046–771) dynasties. On the other hand, the Ying clan, or, more precisely, its segment to which the Qin ruling lineage belonged, appears as a relatively marginal player on the fringes of the Zhou world. Even more confusingly, the narrative provides two conflicting perspectives on the origins of the Qin ruling lineage: some statements strongly connect it to the Shang polity in the east, while others emphasize its proximity to the Western Rong 西戎, the major tribal group in the west (see Zhao, chapter 1, this volume). The confusion may be a result of the conflation of several early legends, or possibly of Qin leaders' search for transregional legitimacy.

Another possible clue for the early origins of the Qin ruling lineage is provided by the recently published historical text from the collection

of Chu bamboo slips that were reportedly smuggled to Hong Kong and acquired by Tsinghua (Qinghua 清華) University. The text, named by its editors *Xinian* 繫年, is likely to have been composed in the state of Chu around 370 BCE, and it provides short summaries of major historical events in the Zhou world from the beginning of the Zhou dynasty to the early fourth century BCE. According to its narrative, the Qin ancestors were among the supporters of the Shang dynasty, who rebelled against the Zhou shortly after the elimination of the Shang. After the rebellion was suppressed, they were relocated to the West, to the location named Zhuyu 朱圉; thenceforth they “for generations acted as Zhou protectors” (Qinghua daxue 2011: 141, slip 15). Provided the *Xinian* slips are genuine, they shed new light—if not on early Qin history, then at least on a variant of the Qin dynastic legend as circulated in the early fourth century BCE. In the eyes of some researchers, the *Xinian* narrative appears reliable, particularly in light of a tentative identification of Zhuyu with an early Qin settlement at Maojiaping, Gangu County 甘谷毛家坪, Gansu Province, where Qin cultural remains coexist with remains from a distinct local culture (Li Xueqin 2011; for Maojiaping, see Teng, chapter 2, this volume). Ostensibly this story strengthens the position of those who support the “eastern” origins of the Qin ruling lineage; in addition, possible “Shang” influences on the recently discovered early Qin burials (Zhao, chapter 1, this volume) may further strengthen this assertion. Nonetheless, a word of caution is needed here.

In the twentieth century, as ethnicity became an important analytical tool to archaeologists in China and elsewhere (see, e.g., Heather 2010: 1–35), numerous attempts were made to find archaeological proof for either the eastern or the western origin of the Qin ruling lineage (i.e., of “Qin”). Supporters of each theory turned to material evidence to show that early Qin culture displays either “eastern” or “western” features. This is still a hotly debated topic among Chinese archaeologists, and it was addressed during our discussions. On the theoretical level, we would argue that this controversy, because it is focused on “archaeological cultures” and their correlation with prehistoric ethnic identities, is insoluble (Falkenhausen 2006). Archaeological cultures are at best a heuristic device, as their definition is based on the arbitrary classification of artifacts, usually pottery typology, and they encompass much variability. When such cultures are superimposed on ancient ethnic groups, which themselves are similarly arbitrarily defined and which are much more fluid than either the ancient writers or modern scholars would like to admit, the result appears to be a handy explanation while in reality it

hinders our ability to analyze sociopolitical processes represented in the archaeological data (Shelach 2009: 75–80; see also the introduction to part I of this volume).

At a more practical level, we are faced with the incomparability of textual and archaeological data regarding this question. Because the early history of Qin deals only with the Qin ruling lineage, a small elite segment of the population, it is possible that, while this elite segment came from the east, as suggested in the *Xinian* text, the vast majority who produced and used the artifacts, structures, and graves on which our current definition of “early Qin culture” is based were local inhabitants of the upper Wei 渭 River basin and its tributaries (see Map 1.1). If indeed the Qin elite were “foreign” to this region, it may be indistinguishable in the archaeological record, or its members may have adopted the local cultural traits soon after they arrived in the region (cf. Zhao, chapter 1, this volume). But it is also possible that the story of its foreign origin was made up in order to answer Warring States–period political needs. In historical terms, insofar as we treat the Qin dynastic legend not as a reflection of ancient “truth” but as a legitimating device (or, more likely, several devices) employed by Qin leaders at different stages of their history, the very question of the “real” origins of the Ying clan and its various affiliated lineages appears irrelevant. Similar to societies in other parts of the world (cf. Connerton 1989; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Mendels 2004), it was the invention and manipulation of those stories, rather than their historic “truth,” which mattered most, not only during the rise of Qin to political and military dominance, but also after its demise

A Zhou Polity, circa 800–360 BCE

The *Historical Records* narrate the gradual empowerment of the Qin ancestors in the service of the Western Zhou, their ennoblement and later appointment as rulers of Qin. This process peaked under Lord Xiang of Qin 秦襄公 (r. 777–766), who is said to have provided crucial support to the Zhou dynasty during the crisis of 771, in the course of which the Zhou kings were obliged to relocate from the middle Wei River basin eastward, toward the area of modern Luoyang 洛陽 city (Li Feng 2006: 268–276). As a result, the *Historical Records* tell us, Lord Xiang was granted territories in the old Zhou heartland and elevated to the position of a regional lord (*zhuhou* 諸侯). Qin had become a state.

Sima Qian’s narrative of the first four-odd centuries of Qin history remains laconic; significant portions of it derive from the *Zuo zhuan*, whereas there is little evidence for systematic coverage of that age in the

Qin Records. Yet despite the sketchiness of the account, we can discern the major topos of the narrative: Qin is treated as a political and cultural outsider by the rest of the Zhou world. The historian narrates gradual innovations that may testify to Qin's "acculturation," such as repeated shifts of the capitals from the "remote" west eastward toward the old Zhou heartland, the establishment of the office of scribes in 753, the abolition of human sacrifice in 384 (although the practice actually continued; see Huang Zhanyue 2004: 240–245), and so on. Yet these steps were not enough: hence the historian summarizes that on the eve of its ascendancy under Lords Xian and Xiao, "Qin was remote in Yongzhou; it did not participate in the assemblies and alliances with the lords of the Central States, who treated it like Yi 夷 and Di 翟 'barbarians'" (*Shiji* 5: 202). This view of Qin as backward and insignificant dominates the early part of the Qin-related narrative in the *Historical Records*.

That said, Sima Qian's narrative contains a few notable exceptions to the picture of Qin as a "barbarian" outsider. First, there is the story of Lord Mu—the single early Qin ruler whose reign is treated in considerable detail in the *Historical Records*. Lord Mu was by far the most successful of early Qin rulers: having intervened in succession struggles in the neighboring state of Jin, he had positioned himself as the major player in the politics of the Central Plains. This role was augmented by his support, in 635, of the restoration of the ousted King Xiang of Zhou 周襄王 (r. 651–619). Although in the later part of his reign, Lord Mu failed to advance farther eastward, he compensated this failure by an active expansion into the Rong territories to the west. Interestingly, in one of the anecdotes about Lord Mu, the *Historical Records* present him, contrary to the common picture of Qin rulers, as a representative of the "Central States" culture vis-à-vis the alien Rong (*Shiji* 5: 192–193). Thus, both culturally and in terms of his military successes and diplomatic importance, Lord Mu appears as a marked exception to the common picture of early Qin rulers as narrated by Sima Qian (Pines 2005/6: 31–32).¹⁴

Another important deviation from the pattern of limited knowledge of and limited respect for early Qin rulers is discernible in Sima Qian's accounts of religious activities of the lords of Qin. In several chapters, the narrative depicts the lords of Qin as exceptionally assertive in performing sacrificial rites to the supreme deity, *Di* 帝, ceremonies that were regarded as the exclusive prerogative of the Zhou kings. Sima Qian saw this as the "beginning of the usurpation": Qin, "being in a vassal position, carried out suburban sacrifices [appropriate to the Zhou king]: the superior men were overawed by this" (*Shiji* 15: 685; cf. Poo, chapter 5, this volume).

This notion may appear at first glimpse as a backward projection of the author's knowledge of Qin's eventual expansion eastward, but this is not the case. As we shall see, the archaeological and paleographic evidence suggest that Qin was even more assertive, and much less "barbarian" and "remote," than presented by Sima Qian.

The material and paleographic evidence provides a crucial corrective to Sima Qian's narrative. Most notably, it suggests cultural similarities and political proximity of Qin to the Zhou house, which contradicts the notion of its "remoteness" and "barbarism." This is most clearly seen in the observance by the Qin elites of the Zhou mortuary norms. The hallmark of these norms, established in the wake of the so-called Late Western Zhou "ritual reform" around 850 (Falkenhausen 2006: 29–73) are strict sumptuary gradations of bronze vessel assemblages, the so-called *lieding* 列鼎 system, which prescribed the precise number of bronze *ding*-cauldrons and other status-defining vessels to be used in the tomb and in the ancestral temple. From the analysis of the elite tombs of Qin, it is clear that they observed the *lieding* gradations, especially during the early stages of Qin history. While from the mid-seventh century on the usage of graded sets of bronze vessels in Qin tombs becomes less rigid, overall variations remain within the basic parameters of the Zhou system (Teng Mingyu 2003; Shelach and Pines 2006: 210–213). In certain aspects of Qin mortuary customs we even may observe considerable "Zhou conservatism": thus, Qin did not adopt typological and technological changes in bronze vessel production and usage that occurred elsewhere in the Zhou cultural sphere (Falkenhausen 2006: 326–369; cf. the introduction to part I of this volume). Similar conservatism is observable in the Qin script, as "Qin was the most faithful in carrying on the writing tradition of the Zhou dynasty" (Qiu Xigui 2000: 78). These conservative traits may have a technical rather than ideological explanation: having inherited the Zhou heartland and, perhaps, the Zhou artisans, Qin was prone to be influenced by material aspects of the Zhou cultural tradition. Yet in any case, the material evidence strongly undermines the notion of Qin's alleged "barbarism" as presented in the *Historical Records*.

While definitely belonging to the Zhou ritual-based cultural realm, Qin elites and subelites, whose tombs serve as a major source for our knowledge of early Qin society, were not slavishly following Zhou patterns. In some respects, many of them preserved what may have been indigenous mortuary practices, such as the predominant east–west orientation of graves, as opposed to the south–north orientation common during the Western Zhou and among the eastern states thereafter, and

the so-called flexed burial as opposed to the extended supine posture of the deceased body common in other states. Whether or not these traits can serve as ethnic markers of the Qin population is debatable (cf. Falkenhausen 2006: 215–221; Teng, chapter 2, this volume), but in any case they do not undermine the notion of Qin's belonging to the Zhou cultural sphere. More interesting are apparent innovations made by members of the Qin elite, such as the widespread replacement of bronze vessels in the tombs with ceramic models ("numinous vessels," *mingqi* 明器) from the middle of the Springs-and-Autumns period on. This separation between funerary vessels and bronzes used in the ancestral cult occurred in Qin earlier than in other parts of the Zhou cultural realm and may testify to an early reconceptualization of the ideas about the netherworld (Falkenhausen 2004, 2006: 293–321; cf. Poo, chapter 5, this volume). It is even possible that in this regard Qin acted as a sort of "cultural vanguard" of the Zhou world, rather than its backward periphery, although it is currently impossible to assess whether or not Qin's innovations directly contributed to adoption of *mingqi* elsewhere (cf. Thote 2009).

Another interesting aspect of early Qin history, unnoticed by Sima Qian, is the apparent political association of Qin rulers and the Zhou royal house. Qin-Zhou relations, which are attested primarily in several inscriptions (and are hinted at in such texts as *Xinian* and the *Zuo zhuan*), included ongoing marital ties between the Qin and the Zhou houses, and, even more significant, periodic visits by the Zhou kings to the state of Qin. Since royal "tours of inspection" had otherwise been discontinued after the end of the Western Zhou, royal visits to Qin appear ritually and politically significant. It is possible that Qin's position as a custodian of the Zhou heartland contributed to its special relations with the Zhou; and while the dearth of data prevents us from reconstructing the nature of these relations in full, their very existence testifies to Qin's position as a potentially important political actor in the Zhou realm (see more in Pines 2004: 4–23; cf. the introduction to part I of this volume).

Qin's ties with the Zhou may also explain what appears as a partial appropriation of the Zhou royal rhetoric by the Qin rulers. This appropriation is manifested primarily in a series of inscriptions on the bronze vessels and chime stones of the lords of Qin. These inscriptions identify the lords of Qin as bearers of Heaven's Mandate, who stay, just like the Zhou kings, in the vicinity of the [Supreme] Thearch; according to these inscriptions, the Qin leaders reside "within the footsteps of Yu 禹" (a possible reference to their claim to possess the entire All-under-Heaven), and

they are “cautiously caring for the Man 蠻 and the Xia 夏” (namely, for aliens and Zhou-world peoples alike alike). Each of these claims is unparalleled in the official parlance of other regional states of the Springs-and-Autumns or early Warring States periods, and their combination testifies to the exceptional assertiveness of the Qin rulers.¹⁵

Material evidence provides further indications for the peculiarly assertive posture of the Qin rulers. Although the major Qin capital of that period, Yong, is smaller in size and less centralized in its layout than the capitals of some other contemporaneous polities (Shelach and Pines 2006: 207–208; Qu Yingjie 1991), the Qin rulers’ graves far exceed in scale those in the eastern part of the Zhou world. What Falkenhausen defines in the introduction to part I of this volume as “gigantomania” of Qin rulers is evident already in the earliest known tomb of a Qin ruler, Tomb 2 at Dabuzishan, Li County 禮縣大堡子山 (Gansu). Although the tomb was exhaustively looted in the 1990s, its huge size is far in excess of the tombs of other regional lords and possibly even of the contemporaneous royal Zhou tombs (Falkenhausen 1999: 471–73; Dai 2000; introduction to part I of this volume; Zhao, chapter 1, this volume; Li Feng 2011).

Tomb 2 at Dabuzishan in turn is dwarfed by those from the Nanzhihui necropolis. The only large tomb so far excavated in this cemetery is Tomb 1, tentatively identified as the resting place of Lord Jing 秦景公 (r. 576–537). The tomb is huge: two sloping tomb passages that lead to the bottom of the tomb from the east and the west are respectively 156 m and 85 m long; the burial chamber itself is 60 m long (from east to west), 40 m wide, and 24 m deep. As the tomb was looted in antiquity, its ritual set of bronze vessels and other precious grave goods were not found. However, findings such as the inscribed fragments of chime-stones, 166 human victims each placed in their own coffins, as well as the huge wooden beams used to construct the burial chamber, and evidence for a wooden structure built above ground (Teng Mingyu 2003: 83), all suggest an extraordinarily rich burial. Even though we still lack a systematic perspective on rulers’ tombs from the Zhou period, the evidence heretofore seems to strongly support Falkenhausen’s (1999: 486) observation that Lord Jing’s tomb “may well constitute an infraction, in spirit if not in letter, of the sumptuary privileges due to the rulers of a polity.”

It may be tempting to interpret the evidence we have as indication of Qin becoming a ruler-centered polity already during the Springs-and-Autumns period when the position of most regional lords in the Zhou world was that of *primus inter pares* rather than of omnipotent monarchs (Pines 2002a: 136–163). Yet even though the idea of relative weakness

of the hereditary nobility in Qin has been proposed in several studies (e.g., Thatcher 1985; Teng, chapter 2, this volume), one must be cautious in adopting it uncritically. Sketchy as it is, the evidence of the *Historical Records* suggests that during most of the fifth century, Qin suffered from the same process of deterioration of the sovereign's position vis-à-vis that of powerful aristocratic lineages as did the rest of the Zhou world (Yoshimoto 1995). Domestic struggles weakened the state militarily, and, by the beginning of the fourth century, it faced territorial losses and overall political deterioration. It is against this background that Lord Xian and his heir, Lord Xiao, initiated a series of reforms that propelled Qin into the position of a major superpower and the would-be unifier of the Zhou world.

A Warring Kingdom: 360–221 BCE

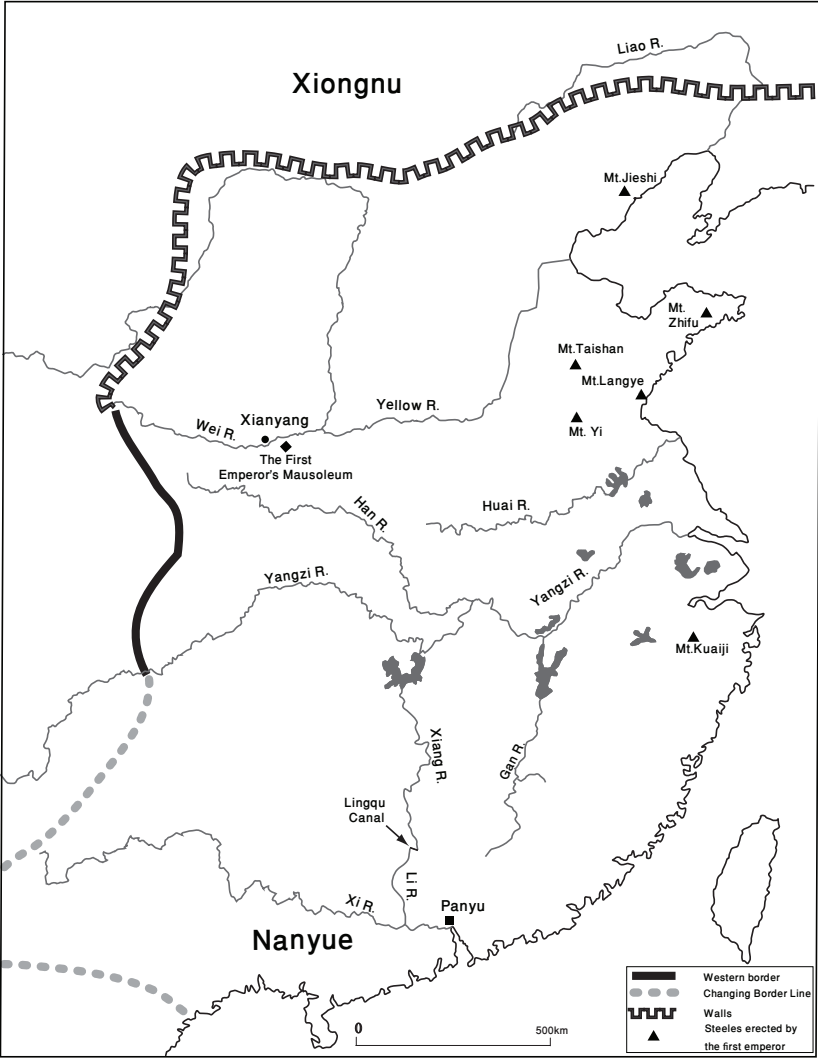
The last century and a half of Qin history is covered in our sources incomparably better than the earlier periods: the relatively detailed narrative of the *Historical Records* is supplemented by a few contemporaneous textual sources and, more significantly, by rich paleographic and material data. The outline of the history for this period can conveniently follow Sima Qian's "Basic Annals of Qin": it is a story of irresistible territorial expansion. Qin revitalized itself under two energetic leaders, lords Xian and Xiao, and especially thanks to a series of profound reforms launched by Lord Xiao's famous aide, Shang Yang (a.k.a. Lord Shang 商君 or Gongsun Yang 公孫鞅). Under Shang Yang's aegis, Qin became "a state organized for war and agriculture" (paraphrasing Lewis 2007), and the results quickly became apparent. Shang Yang personally led the Qin armies to strategically important victories over the neighboring powerful state of Wei 魏, causing the latter to relocate its capital farther to the east (Map 0.1), and restoring thereby Qin's position as a major power. Thus began a century during which Qin gobbled up in a "silkworm fashion" the territories of neighboring states, expanding into the heartland of the Zhou world (Lewis 1999a: 632–641).

After the initial successes of the Qin armies, the eastern states attempted to create a "Vertical Alliance" that was supposed to block Qin's advance; but perpetual disputes among the allies prevented them from effectively withstanding Qin. The latter benefitted enormously from the annexation in 316 of "Heaven's storehouse," the fertile land of Sichuan, which provided Qin with crucial economic advantages over its rivals (Sage 1992). Not only was Sichuan rich in natural resources, such as iron and salt, but, once the raging waters of the Min 岷 River had been controlled

through the efforts of the governor of the region, Li Bing 李冰 (fl. 250) and his son, the Chengdu Plain produced an enormously abundant and reliable harvest of grain, which the Qin used to supply its armies. The colonization of Sichuan through the establishment of military settlements and through sending to the region many thousands of convicts to exploit its mineral and natural resources provided the Qin rulers with a viable model of effective incorporation of the newly conquered territories into their expanding realm (Sage 1992; Korolkov 2010: 58–98).

Sichuan's strategic location in the Upper Yangzi River basin further improved Qin's standing vis-à-vis its powerful southeastern neighbor, the state of Chu. In 278, the Qin armies, led by one of its most brilliant generals, Bai Qi 白起 (also transliterated as Bo Qi, d. 257), inflicted a major defeat on Chu, captured its capital, then located just north of modern Jingzhou, Hubei province, occupied the Chu heartland, and effectively neutralized Chu as a competitor of Qin. Two decades later, Bai Qi achieved another illustrious victory over the state of Zhao, the last of Qin's truly powerful rivals. Qin's final success was delayed by a series of military setbacks, domestic turmoil, and climatic problems; but once its armies set on the final war of unification, they proved to be almost unstoppable. Despite occasional tough resistance, most notably by Chu armies, and despite instances of postconquest guerilla-style warfare against the Qin government, the unification was achieved within just twelve years (233–221) (Map 0.2).¹⁶

Behind this narrative of territorial expansion we may discern several important developments that were of crucial importance for Qin's successes, and which had a lasting impact on the Qin Empire and beyond. Of these, the reorganization of the military is the most notable. Like other contemporaneous polities, Qin transformed a small army primarily based on aristocratic elite warriors mounted in light chariots into a large infantry-based army, filled by peasant conscripts. Military concerns, such as the establishment of universal conscription, ensuring the soldiers' loyalty, providing adequate supplies for the armies, and so on, had far-reaching impact on Qin's administrative, legal, social, and economic policies. To illustrate the degree of militarization of the society, it will suffice to mention that Qin divided its entire population into families of five, for the purposes of mutual surveillance and military recruitment (one man was taken from each family to fill a squad of five soldiers in the army), blurring the differences between social and military organizations. Like members of the general population, the members of the squads were obliged to denounce each other's crimes, particularly absconding



from the battlefield, greatly facilitating the state's control over the population (Lewis 1990: 53–96; Yates 1999, 2007, 2009c).¹⁷ Another indicator of the overall militarization of the society are Qin legal statutes, which stipulate collection of fines in sets of armor or shields rather than in cash or in grain (Yates 2009c). Military merit also became the major avenue

for entering the Qin sub-elite, as minor ranks were granted for cutting off enemies' heads (Zhu Shaohou 2008; cf. Teng, chapter 2, this volume).

Another major change was demographic. Archaeological data from the last two centuries of Qin history testify to a considerable increase in the number of Qin burials in the previously marginal areas in the Lower Wei River valley and into the loess highlands to the north. Qin burials are further found in the areas of its military expansion, most notably in Sichuan, the Han river basin, and further to the south and the east (Falkenhausen 2004: 110–115; Teng, chapter 2, this volume). While several explanations can be provided for the appearance of Qin graves in these areas, the most likely one is that they reflect demographic growth and increasing expansion of Qin population in the wake of concomitant military and economic changes.¹⁸

During the Warring States period, the population of Qin became increasingly mobile. While Qin settlers often followed the Qin armies, migrants from other polities were also lured into Qin lands, especially to the newly developed territories. The “Lai min” 徕民 chapter of *The Book of Lord Shang*, composed, according to the historical data contained therein, around 250, laments the scarcity of population in the Qin territories and proposes a series of measures aimed at attracting migrants. They duly arrived, as is suggested, among other evidence, from Qin burials of that period (Teng, chapter 2, this volume). Aside from voluntary migration, Qin populated the newly developed territories through the forced resettlement of convicts and of recently conquered populations. In turn, Qin also may have suffered from out-migration, which it tried to limit, but not always successfully. Qin legal documents record numerous cases of ordinary individuals who “left the country” (*chu bang* 出邦); and the crime of “absconding” (*wang* 亡) is also vividly present in Qin legal documents and the daybooks (Shi Weiqing 2004c; Zhang Gong 2006). It is impossible to assess the overall population dynamics of that age, but it is likely that the balance was in Qin's favor.

Migration aside, the population increase in Qin may reflect primarily the impact of contemporaneous technological and economic developments. Most notably, widespread introduction of iron tools, that since the fourth century BCE were produced in an industrial fashion (Wagner 1993), revolutionized agriculture, improving cultivation capabilities, increasing yields, and making it possible to turn virgin soils and swampy areas into rich farmland. Qin was exceptionally apt in responding to these opportunities. Its legal statutes testify to strict supervision over

mining, production of iron tools, and their dissemination to the peasants (Hulsewé 1985: C14: 112; A8: 27; A47: 53). More broadly, the Qin government was concerned with all aspects of agricultural production, from the fitness of the draft animals to weather conditions, which were to be reported regularly by the county authorities to authorities in the capital (ibid, A7: 26; A1: 21). These efforts, which are stipulated in an ideal form in the *Book of Lord Shang*, surely contributed to the increasing productivity of Qin agriculture and to corresponding population increase.

One of the most immediate impacts of the “iron revolution” was the possibility to bring wastelands under cultivation through improving irrigation and undertaking other hydraulic projects. In this respect Qin appears to have been one of the most advanced places in the Zhou world, if not the most advanced. It is renowned for the masterful hydraulic construction of the Dujiangyan 都江堰 weir in Sichuan, which remains intact even today. Many other projects brought about similarly impressive results, at least in the short term. Sima Qian tells about Zheng Guo 鄭國, an agent of the state of Han 韓, who initiated a large-scale irrigation project in Qin lands with the aim of distracting it from military expansion. When his plot was discovered, Zheng was not executed but allowed to continue the project because of its obvious benefits to Qin: vast areas of previously unusable wasteland north and east of the capital were turned into fertile fields. The historian tells that after the project was finished “there were no longer any famines in the Guanzhong area [關中, the core Qin territory]” (*Shiji* 29: 1408; cf. Zhang Hua 2003).¹⁹ The archaeologically attestable increasing density of Qin settlement in the lower Wei River valley may be directly connected to irrigation projects in that area.²⁰

The government activism in developing the wastelands, in promoting agricultural production, and in mobilization of the population for economic (e.g., hydraulic) and military tasks may well be thought to make Qin an emblematic case study of “hydraulic” or “agro-managerial” despotism as analyzed by Karl Wittfogel (1957).²¹ Indeed, certain indicators support such a characterization of Qin. Although, contrary to popular caricatures, Qin was neither “totalitarian” nor senselessly autocratic, it was nonetheless an extraordinarily well-organized and powerful state with an intrusive bureaucracy, whose tentacles penetrated the entire society, in a very “modern” fashion “down to the humblest inhabitant of the least of its villages” (Hobsbawm 1992: 80), and which attempted to reshape the social, economic, and even cultural life of the populace. Even a brief look at the Shuihudi regulations discloses an amazing

degree of state activism. The officials were concerned with everything: from the fitness of the oxen, which were measured every season to the inch, with punishment inflicted on local officials and village heads if the oxen decreased in girth, to the number of rat holes in the granaries, to the amount of offspring of cows and ewes—the overseers were punished for insufficient birth rates among the animals (Hulsewé 1985, A7:26; D130: 162–3; C19:115). They closely supervised the life of rural hamlets, where even an appointment of a hamlet head and a postman required the approval of the county authorities (Liye 2012: 8–157; Giele 2005: 362–365; cf. Yates 1995).

Qin's economic policy certainly deserves its "agro-managerial" designation. The state apparatus was actively involved in agricultural production, and appears to have had an impressive impact on the life of peasant households. The economic power of Qin's bureaucracy derived primarily from its control of land resources. *Pace* Han accusations of the Qin as destroyer of the legendary "well-field" system and creator of the land market which "allowed the rich to amass myriads of fields" (*Hanshu* 24A:1162), Qin did not allow free transaction of land. From the currently available data it appears that the rights of Qin peasants with regard to their plots extended only to management and the reaping of harvests, but not necessarily to "alienation" (i.e., land could not be sold to non-kinsmen).²² Part of land was managed directly by the state (the so-called "public fields" 公田 and probably also "fields of the conscripts" 卒田); the rest was possessed by the peasants but closely supervised by the authorities. The "office in charge of the fields" (*tian guan* 田官), which appears frequently in the Liye documents published so far, maintained registration of the plots, prepared cadastral maps (Yates 2012), and closely supervised annual harvest yields, adjusting tax quotas accordingly (Korolkov 2010). Overall, the impact of the state on agricultural production—either through "opening up" fields or through direct and indirect intervention into the lives of the peasants—appears as one of the singularly important features of the State and Dynasty of Qin.

Economic activism of the state was not confined to farming and to production of iron utensils. To assess its breadth suffice it to read a list of evaluations submitted to higher authorities by the Bureau of Finance of Qianling County (Liye): reports on lacquer and on workshops, on bamboo cultivated in groves and on ponds, on orchards and on markets, on convict laborers who died or absconded and on financial transactions, on mining and on ironworks, on arrows, weapons, chariots, craft materials and their equipment, and so on (Liye 2012: 8–454 [456]; 8–493 [491],

etc.).²³ The state officials were engaged in manufacture, transportation and market transactions; few if any areas of economic life remained outside their interest. Yet Qin was not a simplistic “command economy,” as is sometimes imagined; rather its officials were deeply involved in the vibrant market economy of their age, and their economic functioning appears quite sophisticated, on a par with that of the state apparatus under Emperor Wu of Han (漢武帝, r. 141–87) (Yates, 2012).

The Qin government’s activism would not have been possible without an elaborate bureaucratic apparatus. While we lack precise data as for the evolution of Qin’s bureaucracy, it is clear that by the end of the Warring States period it was impressively sophisticated and mature. Elaborate rules governed selection, promotion, and advancement of officials, their ranks and salaries, and, most notably their performance, and the precise amount of time, down to the day, they spent serving in each office (Yates 1995). Everything had to be reported to the superiors: from the amount of spoilt and worn iron tools loaned by the government to the peasants, to deaths of government horses and cattle, to transactions of grain, hay and straw (Hulsewé 1985, A8 and A9: 27, A19–A22: 34–39). In addition to an annual check, officials’ performance was investigated at the end of their term; those responsible for inaccurate records were fined (Yates 1995). The state may have mistrusted its servants: hence, it demanded no less than four signatures to register grain coming into a granary and defined any misreporting of grain transfer as theft (Hulsewé 1985, A85: 79; A87: 81). Liye documents testify to meticulous recording of even minimal transactions, such as selling the leftovers from the state-sponsored sacrifices for a tiny amount of one coin (*qian* 錢) (Liye 2012: 8–1091 [1093]; Chen Wei 2012: 259–260 [who adds slip 8–1002 to 8–1091]; Jiang Feifei 2011). Violations of discipline were mercilessly punished: Liye materials testify to manifold fines imposed on local officials, and even indicate a sort of “inflation of fines” under the Imperial Qin (Yates 2012/13). The tightness of surveillance over the officials under the Qin is so impressive that it appears to some as dwarfing the efficiency of Chinese bureaucracy during the late imperial period (Jiang Feifei 2011), although it should be noted that we still lack sufficient data for a systematic comparison.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the power and assertiveness of the Qin government was its ability to orchestrate a profound social restructuring. This restructuring is attributed to Shang Yang, who reportedly proposed the abolition of the old hereditary aristocracy and its replacement with a new social order, based on twenty ranks of merit for which most males were eligible, regardless of pedigree or economic status. The

eight lowest ranks were distributed in exchange for military achievements, particularly decapitation of enemy soldiers, or could be purchased by wealthy individuals; successful rank-holders could be incorporated into the military or civilian administration and thereafter be promoted up the social ladder. Each rank granted its holder economic, social, and legal privileges, such as the right to cultivate a certain amount of land and to be given slaves to assist in its cultivation, and the right to redeem certain punishments (see introduction in Loewe 1960; Yates 1999; cf. Loewe 2010).²⁴ Although Qin remained a highly stratified society, and ordinary commoners were normally not able to reach beyond the eighth rank in the hierarchy, the former power of the aristocratic lineages and of the close relatives of the Qin ruler had been fundamentally curtailed. More significantly, the state henceforth gained unprecedented control over determining an individual's social status, and, *mutatis mutandis*, over social life in general.

The new rank system, which eventually incorporated a majority of the male population, effectively transformed the society from one based on pedigree in which the individual's position was determined primarily by his/her lineage affiliation, into a much more open one, in which individual merits, especially military merits, for the most part determined social position (Yates 1987; Teng, chapter 2, this volume). The ranks were not fully inheritable; under normal circumstances a man could designate one heir to his rank, but the heir received one or two ranks lower than his father, and the decrease was sharper for the holders of higher ranks (except for the one or two highest ones). This system therefore generated a much higher degree of social mobility than had prevailed in the aristocratic age. Indeed, two of the Liye population registers suggest that the majority of households were headed by ranked individuals, approximately one quarter of whom were identified as "nobles" (*dafu* 大夫), i.e., holders of rank five and higher (Liye 2012: 8-19; 8-1236 + 8-1791; Chen Wei 2012: 32-33, 297; Yates 2012/2013). This high proportion of ranked individuals may reflect either particularly high possibilities of individual advancement in the wake of wars of unification, or lavish bestowal of ranks on the recently subjugated population in an attempt to legitimate the Qin regime (cf. Hsing, chapter 4, this volume); but it also suggests that Qin's ranks of merit did indeed encompass the majority, or at least a significant proportion, of the country's population.

The possibilities of upward (and downward) mobility are duly reflected in predictions of a child's future that appear in the Shuihudi *Daybooks*. These suggest the extraordinarily wide range of possibilities that faced a

new born Qin baby: from becoming a high-ranking minister (*qing* 卿) or a noble (*dafu* 大夫), to becoming an official (*li* 吏) or a local bravo (*yi jie* 邑傑), or, in the opposite direction, becoming a mere bondservant, a fugitive, or, in the case of females, a female slave (Wu Xiaoqiang 2000: 291–311; Yates 2002: 310). Simultaneously, a strong downward mobility existed as well, as suggested by the regulations regarding unranked descendants of the ruling house (Hulsewé 1985, D164: 174). Most amazingly, even a bondservant could receive a rank of merit in exchange for his military achievements (Hulsewé 1985, A91: 83; Yates 2002: 313). Thus, although Qin retained several groups of hereditary occupations (most notably the scribes, see introduction to part II of this volume), overall the degree of social mobility in Qin appears to have exceeded that in other Warring States polities. This in turn may have made Qin an attractive destination for migrants and may have also generated considerable support of the Qin population for its government, despite the many draconian aspects of Qin's legal system (for which see below).

The Qin social reforms were fundamentally successful, at least insofar as they were aimed at dismantling the pedigree-based aristocratic order. The demise of the hereditary aristocracy is duly reflected archaeologically, as ritual bronze vessels and their ceramic imitations disappear from Qin mortuary assemblages in the aftermath of Shang Yang's reforms (Shelach and Pines 2006: 210–212).²⁵ The government's success in radically modifying the aristocratic order might have encouraged it to attempt social engineering in other fields. Thus, Shang Yang reportedly tried to divide large families by adding taxes on households with multiple male adults, so as to accelerate formation of new households, which could be encouraged by tax incentives to move into the wasteland areas. Qin further weakened family solidarity by requiring family members to denounce each other's crimes. While Qin rulers did not reject family solidarity altogether—unfilial behavior was potentially a capital crime (Yates, chapter 6, this volume)—they clearly wanted to subjugate the family firmly to the state. Thus, the authorities punished the parents for unauthorized killing or mutilating their children, as the latter were evidently conceptualized as a sort of state asset (Hulsewé 1985: D56: 139). Neither the family nor other social units could remain autonomous vis-à-vis the state authority.

Introduction of laws dealing with mutual responsibility of family members and of neighbors reflect yet another aspect of Qin's "despotism": the imposition of strict control over the population. Qin is notorious for the severity of its laws, which imposed harsh penalties even for the

slightest offences. These laws were indeed draconian in many respects. For example, they stipulated a variety of mutilating punishments, from shaving the beard and side whiskers to tattooing, cutting off the nose, amputation of a foot, and castration; for many crimes, the entire property of the convict could be confiscated and his family members enslaved by the state. Yet punishments were not arbitrary: Qin statutes demanded careful investigation of legal cases, punished officials for failure to follow proper legal procedure, discouraged abuse of torture and distinguished between intended and accidental offenses (Hulsewé 1985: 1–18; Yates 2009a; 2009d). Moreover, in many cases Qin statutes allowed remittance of mutilations by forced labor for the state's needs; and it is conceivable that one of the aims of the harshness of the laws was to create an additional pool of involuntary laborers to augment the regular labor conscripts.

Qin maintained a huge army of convicts, whose labor was utilized in a great variety of public works: from working in the fields, tending to pasture animals, and building walls, to working in foundries and workshops, fighting in the army and acting as prison wardens (Yates 2002; Yates 2012), and it also owned a large number of public slaves. From the Liye documents it is clear that assigning jobs to convicts was among the major tasks of the county's Bureau of Granaries and Bureau of the Director of Works. The number of these laborers was huge: a single Register of the Convict Laborers (currently on display in the Liye Museum of Qin Slips) mentions no less than 4,376 male and female bondservants working under the Qianling County Bureau of Granaries in the year 213 (Yates 2012), and it is likely that the overall number of involuntary laborers in the county was even higher than this. It is impossible to calculate the contribution of convicts and slaves to Qin's economic and military prowess, but it was surely considerable.

Among manifold means of population control in Qin, mandatory registration appears as singularly important. This measure is stipulated already in the *Book of Lord Shang* but it was only with the Shuihudi and most notably the Liye discoveries that scholars could assess the degree of its actual implementation in Qin. A sample from Liye household registries is discussed by Hsing in chapter 4, this volume; and additional data published in 2012 can supplement his discussion. Thus, previously it was known that the authorities monitored population movements through a system of passports and checkpoints; now we have a sample of such passports, including one that was issued to a five-month old toddler (together with her parent): this may well be the earliest known registration of such

a young child worldwide!²⁶ Another group of Liye documents demonstrate the ability of local authorities in Qin to trace debtors even when those were relocated from one county to another (slips 9-1 to 9-12; Wang Huanlin 2007: 57–93; Zhang Junmin 2003; Sanft, in progress). The aforementioned division of the population into groups of five households, the members of which were connected by the system of mutual responsibility, was also aimed at facilitating population control and preventing free movement of individuals. As mentioned above, these measures were not always sufficient to prevent migration and absconding by those who were impoverished or who moved freely from one location to another due to previous cultural or economic practices;²⁷ but the assertiveness of the bureaucrats who aimed at controlling geographical mobility of their subjects is undeniable.

Popular accounts and not a few scholarly publications tend to depict the post-Shang Yang State and Empire of Qin as despotic and even “totalitarian” polities. These assessments are usually based on selective reading of a few passages from *The Book of Lord Shang* and the *Han Feizi* as descriptive rather than prescriptive, as well as on a peculiar understanding of the infamous “book burning” in 213 as related to “thought control” (see more in the introduction to part III of this volume). The real situation was immeasurably more complex, however: Qin was not an ideologically uniform entity and its intellectual atmosphere cannot be reduced to the “Legalist” thought, which is misunderstood as an antipode of “Confucian” ideology.²⁸ Thus, while strict Qin control over its officials may well reflect a “Legalist” mindset, the manuals employed for the officials’ self-cultivation are much more accommodative of “Confucian” and other ideologies; and the seals of Qin officials commonly refer to such “Confucian” virtues as benevolence (*ren* 仁), sincerity (*cheng* 誠), and loyalty (*zhong* 忠).²⁹ Similarly, the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 reflects a much more pluralistic and less ruler-centered ideology than a caricature of “Legalist” Qin would assume (Sellman 2002; cf. Pines 2009). Nor was Qin a senseless tyranny: the need to “care for the people” and to “love the people below” is not just strongly pronounced in its officials’ manuals, but is even reflected in some of its laws and regulations, which clearly protected the people’s right not to be over-exploited by the state apparatus.³⁰ Overall, Qin—much like other contemporaneous or later polities on Chinese soil—was ideologically “mixed”; uniformity of values might have been a desideratum of certain thinkers but it was never really achieved in practice.

Similar observations can be made with regard to another supposedly “totalitarian” feature of Qin: its attempt at cultural unification of the

people below. There is no doubt that certain members of the ruling elite of Qin were supportive of this unification; not just Qin-related texts such as *The Book of Lord Shang* and the stele inscriptions of the First Emperor reflect the desire to “unify” or “correct” deviant popular customs, but even a speech of a commandery governor recorded in the “Speech Document” (*Yu shu* 語書) from Tomb 11, Shuihudi, advocates abolition of parochial practices which were considered detrimental “to the state and to the people” (*Shuihudi* 2001: 14–16). Qin moreover tried to impose centralized control over religious life, as is reflected both in its statutes (Hulsewé 1985: D141: 166), and in a few Liye documents: in particular, a very detailed list of the officials’ duties to supervise an otherwise unidentified local “temple” (*miao* 廟) is suggestive of the state’s regulatory functions in the realm of religion.³¹ Yet while the drive to make local cults uniform and controlled from above is indeed observable in both the Qin and the subsequent Han dynasty (Yang Hua 2011), its impact should not be exaggerated: not only did religious pluralism remain palpable through these (and subsequent) dynasties, but also the official religion itself might have been too strongly influenced by popular beliefs (Poo, chapter 5, this volume) to allow meaningful “unification from above.”

One final feature of the new state that was established in the wake of Shang Yang’s reforms was its high degree of centralization and the consequent strengthening of the monarch’s position. Like most contemporaneous polities, and probably even more resolutely, Qin was transformed from a loose aristocratic entity into what Mark Lewis (1999a: 597) aptly names a “ruler-centered” territorial state. Independent loci of power, which might from the very beginning have been weaker in Qin than elsewhere in the Zhou world, were largely eliminated; the administration became centralized at the capital, and the officialdom itself subjected to tight control (Yates 1995). The ruler’s position was farther elevated above that of the elite, especially in the aftermath of the adoption of the royal title by Lord (later King) Huiwen of Qin 秦惠文王 (r. 337–311) in 325. This elevation is fully visible archaeologically. Thus, Tomb 1 at the Zhiyang 芷陽 Necropolis in Lintong 臨潼 (Shaanxi), identified as a tomb of one of late Qin monarchs, is the largest of the rulers’ tombs of the Warring States era. It measures 278 m in length and up to 3107 m² in area; with four sloping passageways, as appropriate for kings rather than for regional lords, it displays the high ambitions of its occupant and distinguishes him critically from his subjects (Falkenhausen 2004: 120–121). The exalted status of Qin rulers is further reflected in the layout of the last Qin capital, Xianyang 咸陽 (350–207), which was dominated by tow-

ering palatial buildings (Lu Qingsong 2010). This tendency for rulers to engage in an ever-escalating “gigantomania” peaked in the aftermath of the imperial unification, as is evident from various famous projects associated with the First Emperor, such as his mausoleum complex and the never-completed Epang Gong 阿房宮 palace (Sanft 2008; Shelach, chapter 3, this volume).

The scope and depth of sociopolitical transformation in the state of Qin during the fourth and third centuries allows us to speak of this period as a second birth of the Qin polity. This transformation was duly accompanied by manifold cultural changes, some of which are observable archaeologically. Thus, the disappearance of the hereditary aristocracy, the major bearer of the Zhou elite culture, is duly reflected in the aforementioned disappearance of old mortuary status-defining assemblages; while the influx of previously marginal strata into the Qin social elite is reflected, in turn, by the proliferation of new mortuary practices. For instance, the so-called catacomb burials—placing the deceased in a horizontal chamber adjacent to a vertical shaft, in distinction to a vertical grave [pit] burial common in Qin cemeteries theretofore—became strongly pronounced in Qin cemeteries of the late Warring States period (Shelach and Pines 2006: 214–215; see also Poo, chapter 5, this volume). These and other changes in Qin mortuary customs were not necessarily deliberately introduced from above, but rather were the results of multiple processes “from below,” such as the ongoing re-conceptualization of death, the influx of migrants from the east, intensified cultural interaction with non-Zhou peoples, and, most likely, the new prominence of lower social strata that had been previously archaeologically invisible. Yet these changes, and the diversification of Qin burial customs in general (Teng, chapter 2, this volume), reflect a more culturally diverse society, one in which there was a place even for the customs and symbols associated with the cultures of non-Zhou peoples.

The cumulative effect of cultural changes of the Warring States period on the Qin place in the Zhou world was complex. On the one hand, it seems that these changes, most notably Qin’s abandonment of the Zhou ritual system, might have contributed toward a more “nativist” outlook of the Qin people, increasing the gap between Qin and the core Zhou states of the east. This may explain why during the latter half of the Warring States period the notion of Qin’s cultural otherness and alleged “barbarism” became strongly pronounced, and why it might have even influenced Qin’s own self-image (Pines 2004/5: 23–35; Shelach and Pines 2006). On the other hand, the period under discussion witnessed also the

converse process of increasing cultural integration of Qin into the Zhou world. Qin's ties with its eastern neighbors intensified through either conquest or immigration, in particular, through the influx of foreign advisors, some of whom climbed to the very top of the Qin government apparatus (Moriya 2001; Huang Liuzhu 2002: 41–50). These men served as a cultural bridge between Qin and the eastern and southern (Chu) states. Furthermore, the need to accommodate and incorporate the newly conquered eastern and southern populations required the preservation of the common cultural heritage of the Zhou realm. Hence, while Qin distinguished itself from the Zhou world, it did not abandon its legacy altogether; and, by the end of the Warring States period, its rulers became engaged in what appears as a renewed Zhou “acculturation.” This process is manifested in the activities of the Qin prime minister Lü Buwei, who assembled a group of eastern and southern thinkers at the court of Qin, in the hopes that their work would enhance the cultural prestige of Qin in the Zhou world and facilitate thereby the success of the impending unification.

The complexity of Qin's cultural dynamics explains why no generalization can adequately summarize the cultural appearance of this state. Qin was both innovative and traditionalist; “barbarian-looking” and “Zhou-oriented”; “Legalist” and “Confucian.” It was engaged in a bitter struggle with its neighbors, but welcomed as much elite migrants from the rival states as immiserated peasants; it implemented much of Shang Yang's “Legalist” program but continued to maintain “Confucian” virtues. This complex background may explain some of the contradictory assessments of Qin's cultural affiliation in the Warring States period and in Han literature, as well as in modern studies, and should caution us against the careless adoption of later categories and clichés while analyzing the Qin's political and cultural trajectory.

Many questions concerning the nature and organization of the Qin state on the eve of the imperial unification cannot be adequately answered at the current stage of our knowledge. For instance, more fine-tuning is necessary before we can understand properly the dynamics of resistance and accommodation to the Qin occupation among Qin's eastern and southern neighbors. How efficient was Qin in incorporating the local elites and officials of the conquered territories into its administrative apparatus? How adaptive were its officials to local conditions when coming to impose Qin laws and regulations? When did they try to incorporate newly conquered territories fully into the Qin centralized administration, and when did they allow local customs and practices to

continue *sub rosa*? Which social groups among the occupied populations resisted the Qin, and which were more prone to cooperate? What were, if any, the spatial and temporal fluctuations in Qin policies of conquest and annexation? While these questions still cannot be answered precisely due to the dearth of relevant sources, future studies may address them in a more systematic way.³²

Epilogue: The Qin Empire and Beyond

The last stage of Qin's history, the fourteen years of the unified empire, is incomparably better studied than earlier periods. The *Historical Records* provide a detailed account of the rise and fall of the Qin Empire. Its major ingredients are: the successful conquest of the rival "hero-states" of the Warring States period by King Zheng 政 of Qin; his adoption in 221 of an imperial title (*huangdi* 皇帝, literally "August Thearch"); a series of reforms aimed at solidifying political and cultural unity; the military expansion northward and the building of the Great Wall; the parallel expansion southward into what is now Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces and the northern part of Vietnam; and the increasing tension between the First Emperor and the members of the intellectual community. Sima Qian narrates how the emperor's hubris led him to multiple excesses, which eventually brought about the dynasty's downfall soon after his death in 210. In two years of massive uprisings (209–207), the dynasty collapsed and, after five additional years of civil war, it was replaced by the new Han dynasty.

While the Qin imperial unification is sometimes erroneously presented as a "rupture" in Chinese history, current evidence suggests fundamental continuities on the institutional and cultural level between preimperial and imperial Qin (see introduction to Part I of this volume); hence the set of questions posed above with regard to Qin's territorial expansion during the late Warring States period is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to Imperial Qin as well. That said, the unprecedented territorial scope of Qin's empire makes the issue of the degree of its incorporation of the newly conquered lands all the more intriguing. Currently, both archaeological surveys and the paleographic data, particularly the Liye documents, suggest a very impressive degree of success in terms of radically reshaping administrative, social and cultural life of its new subjects.³³ However, before we draw sweeping conclusions based on these materials, a voice of caution is needed. First, only a small part of the Liye documents has been published so far; and, second, these documents overwhelmingly reflect the perspective of Qin officials, who naturally

present the realm as much more ordered and well-ruled than it might have really been. Some scattered evidence to the persistent “banditry” under the Qin Empire may testify to much stronger resistance of the local population to the conquerors than we currently know about.³⁴ More data will be required before we can conclude to what degree Qin’s “unification” was truly successful.

Aside from the debates over the effectiveness of the Imperial Qin rule over its new subjects, the major controversy over Imperial Qin history is of a different nature than that over the history of the preimperial state of Qin. Although scholars do disagree about certain details of Sima Qian’s narrative and, more generally, about the reliability of this narrative (e.g., van Ess, chapter 7, this volume), the major debate revolves around ideological evaluations of Qin. Was it a legitimate dynasty, a laudable unifier, the founder of an immortal empire, or just a cruel and tyrannical entity, an aberration in Chinese history, a kind of a historical accident? Or was it, alternatively, a fundamentally conservative regime that restored a unity imagined to have been realized during earlier epochs (Pines 2008a)? These debates are treated in the introduction to part III, and they are echoed in several chapters in this volume (chapters 3, 7, 8 by Shelach, van Ess, and Pines, respectively), hence they will not be addressed here. Suffice it to mention that it is the dual position of the Qin dynasty, as both the founder of the imperial Chinese system and as a failed dynasty that barely outlived its founder, that make debates over Qin’s imperial (and, to a lesser extent, preimperial) history exceptionally fierce. Yet as ideological cleavages of the past are losing their former sensitivity, it is becoming increasingly possible to address the impact of Qin’s empire on Chinese history in an evenhanded fashion. This is what we hope to do in the present book.

A few words of caution are needed. In our enterprise, based as it is on contributors from distinct national schools and disciplinary affiliations, it is neither possible nor desirable to impose a uniform perspective, adopt a uniform style, or create a uniform narrative. While we did try to integrate the papers, to propose, whenever possible, a common terminology, and to focus on a common set of questions, differences of opinion, at times considerable, are evident throughout the volume. On certain issues, particularly those related to the reliability of textual data and to its relation with the material and paleographic evidence, we often agreed to disagree.

The very nature of our field, in which any major discovery, or the

publication of previously discovered but not yet published manuscripts, can shed new light on many essential questions, cautions us against an attempt to create artificial consensus. This said, we believe that our cumulative efforts have resulted in a qualitatively new level of understanding of Qin's historical trajectory. In addition, we endeavor to outline some of the routes of inquiry for future research. We hope that this volume will encourage colleagues and students to focus anew on one of the most fascinating and promising fields in Chinese history.